

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 14th December 2020

CONTACT OFFICER: Shabnam Ali,
Service Lead for Economic Development,
(For all enquiries) 07597 392742

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Balvinder S. Bains, Inclusive Growth & Skills

PART I NON-KEY DECISION

UPDATE ON SLOUGH'S INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY 2020-25

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the delivery and implementation of the Inclusive Growth Strategy, adopted in June 2020 and the set up of the new Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board (RES) Board.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That it be noted that the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the associated action plan forms the organising framework for the public-private Slough Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board.
- (b) That the initial key projects being delivered under the framework for the Inclusive Growth Strategy which also forms part of the Recovery and Renewal Strategy be noted.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy has the vision that:

Slough will be an economy which epitomises inclusiveness, diversity and resilience – where small businesses flourish, where large employers invest, and where residents have the opportunity to aspire and prosper. We will harness the value of our international connections and the potential of redevelopment and regeneration to present a confident and dynamic image to the world, where a rounded and sustainable approach to growth is intrinsic to our collective success.

It therefore complements the ambition with the Joint Wellbeing Strategy and the outcomes identified in the Five-Year Plan.

3a Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020 -2025

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy aligns with the Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025. By embracing the behaviours set out in the inclusive growth strategy, it

can contribute to the realisation of all four Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020 2025 priorities. The Inclusive Growth Strategy can contribute most directly through the activities included in Priority 3: Strong Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods which focuses on both and existing and newly created neighbourhoods. Actions under this priority include:

- Increase levels of resident satisfaction with local place, and improve levels of happiness.
- Improve life chances of residents, by focusing on areas such as housing, poverty, education and employment.

In addition, Priority 4: Workplace Health sets out priorities which include :

- Build connections with local businesses in Slough to promote information about Workplace Health, and establish a set of Wellbeing Awards to celebrate success and best practice from employers.
- Create a toolkit of resources and materials relating to Workplace Health for employers and staff in Slough, particularly in relation to the COVID-19 recovery.

3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy has the vision that “Slough will be an economy which epitomises inclusiveness, diversity and resilience – where small businesses flourish, where large employers invest, and where residents have the opportunity to aspire and prosper. We will harness the value of our international connections and the potential of redevelopment and regeneration to present a confident and dynamic image to the world, where a rounded and sustainable approach to growth is intrinsic to our collective success.”

The implementation of the Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy is therefore closely aligned with the Outcome 5 of the Five-Year Plan that “*Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents.*”

It will also help to address the following outcomes of the Five-Year Plan:

- *Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.* Tackling inequality and taking a broader view of growth are two of the behaviours enshrined in the Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy. Improving job matching between residents and local demand for workers will raise the employment rate, directly impacting the income; employment; and education, skills and training domains of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- *Outcome 1: Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.* In delivering the strategy and embracing the behaviours, particularly *tackling inequality* and *taking a wider view of growth*, pathways to high-quality employment can be created and promoted to Slough residents, including vulnerable young people. These pathways can lead to higher educational attainment across the Borough and help efforts to reduce the numbers of residents not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- *Outcome 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.* In the Inclusive Growth Strategy, under priority 3: Regeneration and Infrastructure the strategy aims to

improve affordable housing provision reflecting demand, while more broadly the drive to offer rewarding work in the Borough together with a new higher education presence can drive relocations to Slough, supporting house building and building on successful residential-led regeneration delivered through the completion of Mile Stone, the Old Library and Wexham Green.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications for this Strategy and the RES Board, in year. However, the expectation is that when the delivery of the aim, objectives and associated Action Plan with projects identified commences, there will be demands for funding that will be made through Growth Bids as required in future financial years.

(b) Risk Management

The strategy explicitly identifies the need to take “*managed risks* to ensure the Borough reaches its full potential” (page 69).

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board (RES) has now been set up.	Action planning has now started to ensure the Economy of Slough gets back to the position before COVID 19 and can be maintained at that level.	Ongoing. Will continue to meet and follow through with actions set out. Thus will continue in the implementation and future development of the Strategy	6 (marginal impact, low probability)	Continue with Governance Plans, Terms of Reference and Actions Plans will be developed jointly with Stakeholders Ongoing monitoring of delivery of social value and impact on deprivation.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

It is not considered that there are any Human Rights Act implications resulting from this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy explicitly identifies differing rates of economic participation across Slough, with the ambition of allowing all residents to thrive. The Strategy advocates interventions that support people from harder-to-reach backgrounds and the Borough’s diverse communities to enter work, which offers flexible employment and introduces opportunities to be economically engaged.

(f) Property

Projects mentioned in bullet points 5.3 and 5.4 are located in Observatory House 5th Floor using external funding from MHCLG to fit out and design spaces appropriate to the projects.

(g) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

The Inclusive Growth Strategy has the ambition that, including the reduction of emissions, the improvement of environmental quality and an increase in renewable energy provision among its measures of success.

5 **Supporting Information**

5.1 **Inclusive Growth Strategy**

Slough Borough Council (SBC) new Inclusive Growth Strategy (IGS) 2020-25 sets out the need to deliver growth that all Slough residents can benefit from. It will create an environment that will allow people to thrive and enjoy an exceptional quality of life. This strategy is closely aligned to the council's emerging Recovery and Renewal Strategy and complements the ambition in the Wellbeing Strategy and outcomes identified in the Five-Year Plan.

To deliver the vision in the IGS, six strategic priorities have been developed:

1. Creating secure and productive jobs
2. A skills system working for all
3. Regeneration and infrastructure unlocking growth
4. Enterprise and scale up ecosystem
5. Inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods
6. Connecting and celebrating Slough

5.2 **Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board**

The Regeneration, Economy and Skills Board (RES) was set up as a strong private-public sector partnership to implement and deliver key projects as identified in the IGS. It will ensure businesses are able to thrive and people and communities that live and work in the borough enjoy inclusive and exceptional quality of life.

RES Board members:

<u>Company / Organisation</u>	<u>Job Title</u>
Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce	CEO and Chair of RES
Slough Borough Council	Service Lead Economic Development AD Schools Services
The Windsor Forest Group	CEO
Royal Holloway University	Head of Knowledge Exchange & Enterprise
Learning to Work	Operations Director
Heathrow Airport Limited	Local Authority Business Engagement Lead
Morgan Sindall - SUR	Senior Development Manager
JLL	Head Of South East Office Markets

British Land	Planning Executive
British Land	Development Officer
Segro	Business Unit Director
Akzonobel	Head of Communications & Public Affairs, UK&I
Slough CVS	CEO
DWP	Partnership Manager
Telefonica O2	CEO

The key role of the board is to own the Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-25 (IGS) and help direct successful implementation. Although the council plays an active leadership role in the execution of the strategy, this is about wider economic impacts. We want key stakeholders, partners and residents to feel involved and connected to the strategy and ensure they have had the opportunity to play an active role in its success.

Members of the Board are a good mix of senior strategic partners in the private, education, regeneration and community sectors, who take a long term view of the needs of the Borough and can support collaboration and partnership working for the good of the economy. Such a joint approach of these Partners in the Borough, has not existed for a while. It presents an opportunity to deliver and achieve much more collectively.

The first RES Board meeting (July 2020) resulted in the creation of work streams and working sub-groups, to work on the development of specific initiatives.

If this was important before Covid-19, this is now going to be a critical vehicle for our town and region as we face these unprecedented and challenging times. We need to work together, quickly and effectively to build a strong economy needed now and for the future by responding effectively to the Covid 19 related challenges.

Several vital projects are already in development phase including the creation of Slough Innovation Space, Future Skills Hub and a sector specific academy approach. All of which have been identified as projects that will support the challenges around business survival and high unemployment due to Covid 19.

5.3 Slough Innovation Space

Slough Borough Council has been awarded ERDF funding to develop the Slough Innovation Space (SIS), that will improve Research & Development and innovation, collaboration across the Berkshire eco-system of local authorities, businesses, academia and other innovation providers such as the Growth Hub

The project will create:

- new 924 Sq/m innovation space that helps tech SMEs successfully commercialise innovative products and services
- The SIS 'Hub' will promote close collaboration between the universities, Slough Borough Council and SIS businesses through a busy schedule of R&D focussed talks, events and workshops
- It will also host frequent Slough Solves brains trusts events to solve local social, economic and environmental issues
- The SIS facilities and environment actively support the Smart Specialisation, for example by providing an ongoing process of learning, a strong focus on innovation, and adding value to innovation actions via the established links with the local economy

The procurement process for the Design & Build operator as well as the Service operator of the SIS are in progress and the scheduled opening of the SIS is planned for April 2021.

5.4 Future Skills Hub

The aim of the Future Skills Hub project is to bring together partners across the borough, employers, Further Education and Higher Education providers and the Department for Work and Pensions to offer services to individuals in an accessible place within the town centre using innovative technology.

The immediate need to address the vast and rising unemployment level and a significant displacement of the labour market will be addressed by the Future Skills Hub through a coordinated approach to the brokerage of various services. By helping to link communities, education and skills providers and employers the Hub will play a central role in supporting with the recovery from the current Covid 19 related crisis. The Hub will bring alignment, structure and support to help those many who have faced or are at risk of redundancy and unemployment. By bringing HE provision to the borough for the first time, the Hub will also act as an enabling mechanism for crucial upskilling and reskilling and raise career aspirations preparing residents for future demands of the world of work. The ultimate aim of the Future Skills Hub is to enable residents to gain the relevant skills to be employable now and in the future by adapting to the changing needs of the labour market.

The services of the Future Skills Hub will include:

- employability training interventions incl. CV and interview techniques
- individual careers mentoring
- community outreach and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- qualifications and skills delivery
- apprenticeship, traineeship and Kickstart placement brokerage
- sector academy delivery

The opening of the Future Skills Hub is scheduled for April 2021.

5.5 Sector specific academy approach

The Future Skills Hub will offer a sector based academy approach to host the delivery of industry specific interventions with the support of DWP, FE and HE partners. The Construction Academy model has been developed to deliver specific employability and retraining services to residents and support construction business partners operating in the borough with the supply of a skilled workforce.

Our ambition is to introduce a new Berkshire-wide (East & West) Health and Care Academy that will fill an existing skills gap in the community, care and hospital sector. We have been liaising with Frimley Health Integrated Care System and Wexham Park Hospital regarding the potential to get more people (locally) trained into Nursing and Midwifery and wider health and care jobs. The new Health and Care Academy would complement the proposed Construction Academy, providing a broader range of opportunities for local people – providing an “easy pathway” into local and sustainable employment. We would also tackle the shortfall of trained BAME staff within the health and social care sector and would explore positive action in training to redress this imbalance – thus simultaneously creating jobs and tackling inequality. We will look at volunteering and apprenticeships as part of the package of opportunities. In addition to the Construction Academy, the proposed Health and Care Academy will have close ties to the Future Skills hub and proposals for a local university in Slough.

5.6 Strategic Context

The table below illustrates how the Strategy and Board interact with each other and support particular themes for projects.



6 Comments of Other Committees

This report has not been considered by any other committees.

7 Conclusion

The RES Board has now been set up and action planning has started, several vital projects such as the Future Skills Hub and Slough Innovation Space are already in development with new projects planned for the future as Board meetings become more regular and capacity allows.

Appendix

- '1' RES Board Terms of Reference