

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee                      **DATE** 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

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**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR DECISION**

**LOCAL PLAN SPATIAL STRATEGY KEY COMPONENTS**

**1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out the content of three of the five “key components” of the Preferred Spatial Strategy which will be the subject of public consultation in November.

**2 Recommendation**

2.1 The Committee is requested to resolve that:

- a) The content of the three “key components” set out in this report be agreed as the basis for the preferred Spatial Strategy for the Slough Local Plan.
- b) A report setting out the proposed content of the “Centre of Slough” and “cross border expansion of Slough” components of the preferred Spatial Strategy be brought to this Committee for consideration
- c) A report setting out principles for future policies to implement the Spatial Strategy be brought to this Committee for consideration.

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

**3a. Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Part of the Spatial Strategy is to enhance neighbourhoods which will help to implement Priority 3

- *Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods.*

**3b Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Ensuring that needs are met within the local area will make a positive contribution to the following SJWS priorities:

- *Economy and Skills*
- *Regeneration and Environment*
- *Housing*

### 3c Five Year Plan Outcomes

The proposed Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan will contribute to the following Five Year Plan outcomes:

- **Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to protect and enhance the local environment.
- **Outcomes 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to ensure that we have a balanced housing market that can meet the range of housing needs in Slough.
- **Outcome 5: Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investments to provide opportunities for our residents.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will promote areas for employment growth in Slough.

## 4 Other Implications

### (a) Financial

There are no financial implications.

### (b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That the Committee approves the recommendation.	Failure to agree the proposed content of the Preferred Spatial Strategy will affect the Council's ability to bring forward the Local Plan and plan for development in the most sustainable way.	Agree the recommendations.

### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications as a result of this report.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 It is proposed to carry public consultation on the Preferred Strategy for the Local Plan for Slough in November and December in order to meet Government's deadline of having an adopted Plan by the end of 2023.

- 5.2 The Spatial Strategy is an important part of the Local Plan which will set out what the pattern, scale and quality of development will be in Slough.
- 5.3 At the previous meeting of his Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> July it was agreed that the overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 5.4 Taking this into account it was agreed that the Spatial Strategy should consist of the following key elements:
- ***Delivering*** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
  - ***Selecting*** other key locations for appropriate *sustainable* development;
  - ***Enhancing*** *our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets*;
  - ***Protecting*** the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;
  - ***Promoting*** the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.
- 5.5 The purpose of this report is to set out in detail what three of these key elements (now called “components”) should consist of. These are the ones dealing with “selecting key locations for development”, “enhancing the suburbs” and “protecting the Strategic Gap”.
- 5.6 A report on the “centre of Slough” component will be made to the next meeting of this Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September. There will also be a separate report on the “Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework” which will provide Members with the opportunity to understand the relationship between the two documents.
- 5.7 The report on the “cross border expansion of Slough” component of the Spatial Strategy will also be reported to the 9<sup>th</sup> September which should give us more time to consider the Government’s recent proposals for changing the way that housing needs are calculated.
- 5.8 The Spatial Strategy is just the first part of the Local Plan. It will not contain any policies. A full set of Development Management policies will be included in the final version of the Local Plan. Outline proposals will be set out for the type of policies that may be needed in order to implement the proposals and mitigate any adverse impacts. These will be reported to the next meeting.
- 5.9 Following consideration of the Spatial Strategy at the meeting of this Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September and Scrutiny and Overview on 10<sup>th</sup> September, approval will be sought for the publication of the document at Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> October. There will then be a six week public consultation from 2<sup>nd</sup> November to 11<sup>th</sup> December.

## Key Components of the Spatial Strategy

- 5.10 For the purposes of the Spatial Strategy, the Borough has been divided up into four broad geographical areas. These are the “Centre of Slough”, the “suburban” areas, Colnbrook and Poyle and the rest of the town.
- 5.11 The proposed detailed content of three of the five Key Components are set out in the Appendices
- 5.12 Before considering the individual Components of the Strategy, it is important to explain how they fit together.
- 5.13 One of the main tasks of the Spatial Strategy is to decide what the best use of scarce land in the Borough should be, in doing so the following factors have to be taken into account:
- Based upon the current standard methodology for calculating objectively assessed housing needs, there is a need for 15,460 houses over the remaining 16 years of the plan period at an average of 966 a year. (This may change as a result of the Government’s latest proposals to change the standard methodology.)
  - There is also a significant need for affordable housing and for a range of house types including family housing.
  - We are unable to set a target for the number of jobs that are required to support the Slough economy but will continue to aim to provide an additional 15,000 jobs in order to meet the needs of the growing resident workforce. This should not be regarded as a maximum figure.
  - There is a general demand for land for warehousing in the Slough area.
  - There will be a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace in Slough town centre in recognition that it will no longer be a sub-regional shopping centre.
  - Slough will become an increasingly important transport hub
  - There continues to be a shortage of public open space in the Borough.
- 5.14 There are three important themes for the Spatial Strategy which can be derived from the Local Plan Vision and analysis of the big issues that are facing Slough.
- 5.15 The first of these is making Slough a place where people want to “work rest, play and stay”. One of the most important elements of this is making sure that people who have prospered in Slough have the opportunity to “stay” in the Borough.
- 5.16 The second is making sure that we have “inclusive growth” in Slough. This

means making sure that more of the wealth that is generated in Slough stays in Slough. This can be achieved by residents taking more of the well paid jobs in the town and providing more facilities in the Borough for people to use and enjoy.

- 5.17 The third is making Slough a place where residents can meet all of their needs and be able to “live locally” in their own community if they want to. This will help to develop local communities and reduce the need for people to travel.
- 5.18 In order to achieve this we have developed some guiding principles to help determine what the Spatial Strategy should be and what strategic policies will be needed to deliver it in the most sustainable way.
- 5.19 We should plan to meet our needs, as far as is practical, within the plan area, as close as possible to where they arise.
- 5.20 Development should be located in the most accessible locations possible in order to reduce the need to travel and encourage more sustainable modes of travel. This will also reduce our carbon foot print and help to reduce the impact upon the environment and air quality.
- 5.21 One of the other core principles is to make the most effective use of land by using that which has been previously developed.
- 5.22 We can only have sustainable development if, in addition to meeting our economic and social objectives, we are able to protect and enhance the natural and built environment including addressing climate change and health issues.
- 5.23 How all of these factors have influenced each of the five Key Components of the Spatial Strategy is explained below.

Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”:

- 5.24 The overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 5.25 One of the other core principles is to make the most effective use of land by using that which has been previously developed. The centre of Slough contains a lot of these brownfield sites which should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact. The centre of Slough is also the area with the most demand for new development and so should be the area most likely to be able to deliver this.
- 5.26 As a result concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is at the heart of the Spatial Strategy. The “square mile” as it is sometimes referred to will provide the bulk of housing that will be built in the Borough. The proposed

expansion of the Central Business District with new office development provides the main opportunity for employment growth in Slough.

5.27 The centre's role as a transport hub will make it the focus for the Council's forthcoming Transport Strategy. Although it is currently failing as a shopping centre it has the potential to provide a smaller but more attractive retail offer. There is a lack of leisure and cultural facilities in Slough and so there is an opportunity to create a range of these throughout the centre.

5.28 As explained above a report on the "Centre of Slough" component of the Spatial Strategy will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee. It is important that the detailed proposals for the rest of the Borough are seen in the context of the fact that the central area is proposed to provide the bulk of the housing, employment and new facilities that are needed in Slough.

Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;

5.29 There is potential for development to take place outside of the centre. The "Enhancing the Suburbs" component of the Spatial Strategy proposes to retain the existing stock of family houses in the suburbs and protect all existing open space. There is also a need to retain existing business areas which support the economy.

5.30 Within the context of an overall shortage of land in Slough, the Spatial Strategy has identified some "Selected Key Locations" that are suitable for large scale regeneration or development. It has also identified a number of other "Key Locations" which have an important role in the Borough but are unlikely to be able to provide many opportunities for large scale development.

5.31 The largest and most important part of the Borough, outside of the centre, is Slough Trading Estate. As a result it is identified as a Selected Key Location where continual renewal will take place to meet changing needs. This is likely to be implemented through the preparation of a new Simplified Planning Zone for the Estate.

5.32 The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough which also needs to be identified as a Selected Key Location. Proposals have been set out for this could be regenerated primarily for airport related development.

5.33 The regeneration of Chalvey has been underway for some time. It has been decided to continue to identify this as a Selected Key Location for regeneration in order to ensure that the remaining major sites are fully integrated with the neighbourhood.

5.34 There is an opportunity to redevelop the former Trade Sales area on the Bath

Road for residential use. Some nearby properties on the Bath Rd could also be redeveloped. This has been identified as a Selected Key Location known as the Cippenham Central Strip.

- 5.35 Elsewhere we have previously considered expanding the centre of Langley around the railway station. The opportunity for doing this appears to have gone because key sites, such as Langley Business Centre, are no longer available for large scale residential or commercial use. As a result this is no longer identified as a Selected Key Location. Suggestions have been put forward for this Key Location should circumstances change.
- 5.36 Langley and Farnham Road are both District Shopping Centres which have an important role to play. They have therefore been identified as Key Locations but it is not envisaged that there will be any major new development in these areas. There will be no new major out of centre retail development.
- 5.37 It is not proposed that there be any further loss of the defined Existing Business Areas within the Borough. Apart from Slough Trading Estate and Poyle Trading Estate, none of them have been identified as Selected Key Locations for major development.
- 5.38 Due to the shortage of land for housing in Slough and the lack of opportunities to provide family and affordable housing it is proposed to consider releasing some green field/Green Belt land for residential development. Ten possible sites have been identified but they will have to go through a separate consultation process which also takes account of the results of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result none of these have been identified as Selected Key Locations for development at this stage.
- 5.39 As a result it can be seen that there are selective opportunities for major development outside the Centre of Slough but these are not likely to produce much of a net increase in commercial floorspace or a significant number of new residential units.

Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;

- 5.40 Enhancing the areas where most people live is an important part of the Spatial Strategy. The Protecting the Suburbs report, which was approved by Planning Committee on 24th June, showed why it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost. There is, however, scope for redevelopment on non garden land such as garage courts and other brownfield sites. It is also important that we protect and enhance the open spaces, parks and other assets of community value within the residential areas in order to support healthy and active lifestyles.

- 5.41 At the same time we want to our neighbourhood centres to be vibrant and have an improved range of facilities within them so that people are able to “live locally” if they want to, without the need to travel. This will enable residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives. This will be partly implemented through the Council’s hubs strategy.
- 5.42 As a result both protecting and promoting the neighbourhoods and the suburban residential areas within them is an important part of the Spatial Strategy.

Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;

- 5.43 In the “emerging” Spatial Strategy the proposals for the Colnbrook and Poyle area was to “accommodate the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigate the impacts”
- 5.44 For the purposes of the Local Plan it is now assumed that proposals for the third runway will not come forward in the short to medium term which means that if they do, they can be dealt with by a review of the plan.
- 5.45 In the absence of any policy support or any demonstrable need for airport related development it is considered that the most appropriate approach is to revert back to restraining development in order to protect the Green Belt, Colne Valley Park and Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London. This will also effectively safeguard land from being developed which could be needed for the expansion of the airport in the future.
- 5.46 Proposals for the improvement of the area have been included within this component of the Spatial Strategy. Although the Poyle Trading Estate sits within the Strategic Gap, it has been identified as a Selected Key Location where regeneration can take place in order to take advantage of its location next to Heathrow and provide new airport related facilities.

Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs

- 5.47 The main conclusion from the results of the Issues and Options consultation was that there were no reasonable options, or combinations of options, which would enable all of Slough’s housing and employment needs to be met within the Borough. This is one of the reasons that the Council has been promoting the proposed Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.48 It should be noted that the proposed “garden Suburb” has also been promoted as the best way of meeting unmet needs in southern Buckinghamshire as well as Slough. It would also be able to provide much needed family housing and



create a more balanced housing market in the area.

5.49 Although a Northern Expansion of Slough remains the Council's preferred option, it is just one of many that are currently being assessed in the joint Wider Area Growth Study. We are not seeking to anticipate the results of Part 2 of the study which will not be available until the end of the year. As a result the Spatial Strategy is just promoting the "cross border" expansion of Slough.

5.50 Details of this component of the Spatial Strategy will be reported to the meeting of this Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

## **6 Conclusions**

6.1 The Spatial Strategy is an important part of the Slough Local Plan which will set out what the pattern, scale and quality of development will be in Slough. It is proposed that the bulk of new development will be concentrated in the Centre of Slough. This report sets out proposals for how the rest of the Borough could be planned in the future.

## **7 Background Papers**

7.1 Review of the Local Plan for Slough – Issues and Options Consultation Document 2017

## **8 Appendices**

Appendix A – Spatial Strategy Key Component – "Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development".

Appendix B – Spatial Strategy Key Component – "Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centre and environmental assets

Appendix C – Spatial Strategy Key Component – "Protecting the "Strategic Gap" between Slough and Greater London".