

Review of the Local Plan for Slough

Issues and Options
Consultation

16 January - 27 February 2017

Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options (SA) - RLP3 - January 2017

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CONSULTATION ON THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS

This Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options has been published for public consultation, alongside the Issues and Options document itself.

Your comments on this Sustainability Appraisal are welcomed. Please send any comments by 5:00pm on 27th February 2017 to:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. Slough Borough Council is preparing a Review of the Local Plan for Slough. As part of this process an Issues and Options Consultation Document has been produced. This document sets out the Council's current view of the major issues the new plan will need to address and our thoughts on the policy response to them. It includes a draft vision and objectives for a new local plan and a set of spatial options that could begin to deliver them..
- 1.1.2. This document forms a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the draft objectives and spatial options being proposed in the Issues and Options Consultation document.
- 1.1.3. The SA process is required to highlight potentially significant negative effects that the Local Plan can then avoid, mitigate, or compensate for; including through the assessment of reasonable alternatives. There is also requirement to demonstrate how this evaluation process has been carried out, and present the findings in an Environmental Report.
- 1.1.4. The Issues and Options consultation is not a full plan, and this report does not constitute the Environmental Report required by the SEA Directive. It is however useful to apply the SA process to the draft Plan Objectives and Spatial Options to demonstrate that the SA process has been undertaken at this stage.
- 1.1.5. This assessment and responses to the consultation on the findings can help inform the preparation of the full local plan through highlighting potentially significant effects and helping to find a balance between the social economic and environmental pressures facing Slough that the emerging Local Plan is seeking to address. The assessment will be used to inform the Draft Sustainability Report, and evolution of reasonable alternatives that will feed into a Preferred Option Plan that will be published later in 2017.
- 1.1.6. This report should be read alongside the Draft SA Scoping Report, which summarises the Key sustainability Issues for Slough, and is being consulted on alongside this report.

1.2. Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 1.2.1. There is also a requirement to produce a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening (HRA) report. As a result this has been commissioned from Lepus Consulting.
- 1.2.2. This has assessed whether the development proposed in the Issues and Options Consultation would significantly affect a Natura 2000 site. These are sites designated by the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC (1979) and EC Directive on the Conservation of

Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EC (1992) which cover Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

- 1.2.3. The assessment considered eight SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites within 15km of Slough's border. The screening concluded that, based on the information currently available in the Issues and Options Consultation, a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of Burnham Beeches SAC cannot be effectively ruled out. An assessment of the development sites proposed in the full Local Plan will therefore be needed to assess and address this.
- 1.2.4. More information is available in the HRA Screening Report published in January 2017.

1.3. The Sustainability Appraisal Process

- 1.3.1. A Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process that has to be carried out during the preparation of a plan in order to promote sustainable development. It sets out a framework for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve the identified environmental, economic and social objectives.
- 1.3.2. Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to carry out a sustainability appraisal of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so "with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development".
- 1.3.3. Planning authorities are required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Local Development Documents in accordance with the requirements of a European Directive (2001/42/EC). Sustainability Appraisal fully incorporates the European SEA requirements, but expands it to also take account of social and economic matters. Thus, the requirements of the SEA Directive also apply to the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.3.4. The guidance emphasises that a Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process which identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan and the extent to which its implementation will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. The intention is that SA is fully integrated into the plan making process from the earliest stages, both informing and being informed by it.
- 1.3.5. The guidance also sets out a requirement for the preparation of a series of reports which are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal Preparation Process

STAGE A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope		
A1		Identifying other relevant plans, programmes, and sustainability objectives
A2		Collecting baseline information
A3		Identify key sustainability issues and problems
A4		Developing the SA Framework
A5		Consulting on the scope of the SA
	Output	Consultation on a Scoping Report
STAGE B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects		
B1		Testing the DPD objectives against the SA Framework
B2		Developing the DPD options
B3		Predicting the effects of the DPD
B4		Evaluating the effects of the DPD
B6		Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD
STAGE C: Preparing the SA Report		
C1		Preparing the SA Report
	Output	A Draft Sustainability Report
STAGE D: Consulting on the DPD and SA Report		
D1		Public participation on the draft DPD and SA report
	Output	Consulting on the Draft Sustainability Report
D2 (i)		Appraising significant changes
D2 (ii)		Appraising significant changes resulting from representations
D3		Making decisions and providing information
	Output	A Sustainability Report

STAGE E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD		
E1		Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
E2		Responding to adverse effects
	Output	Information in the Annual Monitoring Report

1.4. The Scoping Report (Stage A)

- 1.4.1. Stage A requires the preparation of a Scoping Report. As a result the Council has commissioned Lepus Consulting to produce a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This was published by the Council on 30th November 2016 for consultation for 5 weeks with the four SEA consultation bodies as required by the SEA directive, and Stage A of the Sustainability Process set out in Table 1 above.
- 1.4.2. The draft Scoping Report identified the scope and level of detail required for the Environmental Report, and resulted in the creation of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework that will be used to assess the evolution of the Plan.
- 1.4.3. Once the results of the consultation are integrated into the draft Scoping Report, Stage A of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Review of the Local Plan will have been completed. The draft Scoping report is being consulted on alongside the Issues and Options consultation. Details can be found online at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan.
- 1.4.4. The Sustainability appraisal framework from the Scoping Report is presented in Table 2 below. That sets out Sustainability Appraisal Objectives and the associated sustainability issue.

Table 2: Slough Local Plan SA Framework

	SA Objective	Reference information	Sustainability issue	What is included in the sustainability theme?
1	Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	Chapter 3 - Accessibility and transportation (SEA – Population) Key issues box 3.1	Growing road traffic, congestion and dependence on private car use. Cultural and practical/percieved obstacles to walking and cycling, particularly for short journeys New rail connections – Western rail access to	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.

	SA Objective	Reference	Sustainability issue	What is included in the
			<p>Heathrow Airport (WrltH) & Crossrail</p> <p>Finite capacity of junctions on road network</p> <p>Options for SMART technologies</p> <p>New road works delivering increased capacity</p>	
2	Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	<p>Biodiversity and geodiversity.</p> <p>(SEA - Biodiversity, Flora, fauna)</p> <p>Chapter 5 Key issues box 5.1</p>	<p>Declining quality and quantity of ecological sites important for local an regional biodiversity, and their connectivity.</p> <p>Legal duties to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity</p>	<p>Habitats;</p> <p>Species;</p> <p>Nature conservation designations;</p> <p>Landscape features;</p> <p>Geological features.</p>
3	Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	<p>Climate change – adaptation and mitigation</p> <p>(SEA-Climatic factors)</p> <p>Chapter 6 Key issues box 6.1</p>	<p>Reducing contribution: Delivering energy efficiency</p> <p>Carbon Emissions - need to reduce Carbon emissions</p> <p>- compatible with the Council's carbon management plan</p> <p>Adapting to: Considering Heat Islands effect</p> <p>Flooding - localised, short term incidents from surface water; and fluvial flooding. -Consideration of the Councils Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.</p>	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions by source;</p> <p>Greenhouse gas emissions trends;</p> <p>Effects of climate change;</p> <p>Climate change adaptation;</p> <p>Flooding.</p>
4	Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	<p>Economic factors</p> <p>(SEA- Material Assets)</p> <p>Chapter 7 Key issues box .1</p>	<p>Land use constraints to physical expansion to provide additional needs for business and jobs for residential communities.</p> <p>Changes resulting from Heathrow.</p> <p>Role of the town centre, Langley and others.</p> <p>Viability of intensification</p>	<p>Economic Development Need</p> <p>Economic performance;</p> <p>Business start-ups;</p> <p>Employment and earnings;</p> <p>Skills, education and unemployment;</p> <p>Sites and premises.</p>

	SA Objective	Reference	Sustainability issue	What is included in the
			<p>on brown field land – e.g. contaminated land remediation/ demolition</p> <p>High levels of ‘footloose’ B8 identified in the EDNA</p> <p>Disparity between resident skills and incomes compared to local jobs available</p> <p>Shortage of education facilities</p>	
5	Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	<p>Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Climate Change</p> <p>(SEA – Human Health)</p> <p>Chapter 8 Key issues box 8.1</p>	<p>Poverty, deprivation, social exclusion, and overcrowding</p> <p>Shortage of open space in the Borough, Potential shortage of health facilities.</p> <p>Fast growing mixed ethnic population and overcrowding.</p> <p>Risk of flooding from all sources - see climate change</p> <p>Pollution – see below Need to protect and enhance the borough’s cultural heritage – both that that is nationally important but also locally important Need to ensure adequate parks and play spaces</p>	<p>Health indicators; Healthcare inequalities; Sport, fitness and activity levels. Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity (including open space and green infrastructure).</p>
6	Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	<p>Historic environment</p> <p>(SEA – Cultural heritage)</p> <p>Chapter 9 Key issues box 9.1</p>	<p>Need to protect and enhance the borough’s cultural heritage assets– both that that is nationally important but also locally important</p>	<p>Historic development of the town; Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.</p>
7	Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	<p>Housing</p> <p>(SEA – Population, material assets)</p>	<p>High housing need (OAHN) within the Housing Market Area.</p> <p>Land use constraints to physical expansion to</p>	<p>Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality and</p>

	SA Objective	Reference	Sustainability issue	What is included in the
		<p>Chapter 10</p> <p>Key issues box 10.1</p>	<p>provide additional housing and affordable housing</p> <p>Relative affordability of property in Slough within the Housing Market Area and London</p> <p>Quality of existing stock.</p> <p>High occupancy rates, driven by choice and need.</p> <p>Viability impacts on quality of new stock.</p> <p>Availability of high quality housing to meet the aspirations of Slough residents</p>	<p>vacancy rates; Homelessness.</p> <p>Population size and migration; Population density; Age structure;</p>
8	<p>Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.</p>	<p>Landscape and townscape</p> <p>Protect and enhance natural resources</p> <p>(SEA – Landscape) Chapter 11</p> <p>Key issues box 11.1</p>	<p>Need to protect locally valued (but not nationally protected) landscapes and townscapes, including versus purposes of the Green Belt</p> <p>Structural change from Heathrow</p> <p>Impact on the Borough from densification</p> <p>Poverty, deprivation, social exclusion, and overcrowding</p> <p>Desire to avoid negative social, economic and environmental impacts of high density development :e.g. in unsuitable locations, without sufficient amenity or infrastructure</p> <p>Capacity of utilities to meet demand for water ,sewerage, electricity, waste disposal</p>	<p>Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character; Tranquility.</p>
9	<p>Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth</p>	<p>Material assets</p> <p>(SEA – Material assets, natural resources)</p>	<p>Waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle) and Reducing use of landfill</p> <p>Sterilised supply of minerals (sand and gravel)</p>	<p>Renewable energy; Waste arisings and recycling rates; Minerals; Previously developed land.</p>

	SA Objective	Reference	Sustainability issue	What is included in the
			Quality of undeveloped land (Large areas of landfill, low demand and limited supply of versatile agricultural land).	
10	Pollution: Reduce air, noise soil and water pollution.	Water and Soil Climate change mitigation and adaptation (air quality) Human Health (noise) (SEA – water, soil, air)	Risk to quality of local watercourses from storm events. Impacts of contaminated land on development -see Material assets re water and sewerage demand Poor air quality – spatial extent and quantum of exceedences (levels of NOx adding to base levels created by M4 and Heathrow related traffic) Noise pollution from transport and disturbance from higher density development	Air pollution sources; Air quality hotspots; Air quality management. Soils; Watercourses; Water resources; Water quality; Contaminated land.

1.5. Sustainability appraisal (Stages B to E)

- 1.5.1. The SA (incorporating SEA)¹ requires a comparison to be carried out of the options open to plan-makers for delivering the plan’s objectives. Specifically the SEA Directive states that the report should consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan” and it should give “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with”.
- 1.5.2. It should be noted that the results of the SA can only give a considered view of the relative sustainability of alternative proposals. It still remains the role of the plan maker to determine which proposals are taken forward, taking account of all relevant factors including the results of the SA.

¹ A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is also required under the EU Directive 2001/42/EC for all plans that are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. The requirements for SA and SEA are distinct, but guidance¹ from the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) states that it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process and provides a methodology for doing so.

- 1.5.3. In considering what the purpose of the SEA/SA is for the Issues and Options Consultation Document it is important to bear in mind Government guidance² states that a Sustainability Appraisal need not be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is useful for its purpose. It also makes it clear that the form of the SA needs to take account of the objectives and level of detail of the plan, and the stage that has been reached in the decision making process.
- 1.5.4. The next stages will be carried out and consulted on as required alongside the preparation of the Local Plan 2016-2026.

2. The Sustainability appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation document (Stage B)

- 2.1.1. This report carries out elements of Stage B of the Sustainability appraisal process. That requires testing the DPD objectives against the SA Framework, developing the options, and predicting and evaluating the effects of these on the plan area. It also involves the consideration of alternatives and the evolution of the plan area without the plan.
- 2.1.2. This SA has used the Sustainability appraisal framework in the Draft Scoping Report presented in Table 2. As explained above, this sets out sustainability appraisal objectives and the associated key sustainability issues emerging from SA Stages A1 and A2.

2.2. Level of detail

- 2.2.1. This SA has been carried out at a strategic level on the draft Local Plan Objectives and the Spatial Options elements of the Issues and Options Consultation Document. This is because these are elements that we anticipate will be developed into the full Local Plan.
- 2.2.2. In doing so the assessment looks at “potentially significant” effects that any of the local plan objectives or spatial options may have in terms of the ten identified social economic or environmental objectives.
- 2.2.3. This will help the public and other interested parties to be able to comment upon proposals and inform the later decision making process.
- 2.2.4. The full sustainability appraisal framework also includes decision making criteria and possible indicators that could be used in the assessment of the Preferred Options Plan or monitoring of

² Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM, November 2005
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an adopted plan (Stage E). These have not been used at this stage as they are too detailed for the strategic issues being discussed in this consultation.

2.3. Geographical Scope and proposals involving development outside Slough Borough

2.3.1. The geographical scope of the Plan is Slough Borough Council's administrative area, but there are Spatial Options in the consultation that refer to sites that are outside the geographical area of the Plan. These have been included in this sustainability appraisal as they form part of the alternatives for the Slough plan. It is important to note that the development of any areas outside of the Borough cannot be delivered through the Slough Local Plan.

2.4. Role of this SA in the decision making process

2.4.1. It should be noted that the Issues and Options Consultation is not actually making any decisions at this stage. There is still evidence gathering to be undertaken before a Preferred Options plan is published. It is considered however that there is sufficient level of detail to consult on them.

2.4.2. The finding of this SA process will be used to inform the approach taken in the Preferred Options stage in the production of the Local Plan 2013-2056. This report will therefore inform the preparation of the full plan but does not in itself meet the regulatory requirement of Stage C1 (to produce a draft Sustainability Report).

2.5. Methodology

2.5.1. The first part of this SA tests the Sustainability Appraisal objectives against the draft objectives in the Issues and Options consultation document; and the second the spatial options. The process is set out below..

2.5.2. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report contains 10 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives which are reproduced in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The Sustainability Appraisal objectives

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.2. Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.3. Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.4. Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation |
|--|

- with higher value, lower impact activities.
5. **Health:** Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.
 6. **Cultural heritage:** Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.
 7. **Housing:** Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population
 8. **Landscape:** Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.
 9. **Use of resources:** Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth
 10. **Pollution:** Reduce air, noise soil and water pollution.

2.5.1. The Issues and Options Local Plan Objectives and Spatial Options have been tested against the SA objectives on a high level basis to see whether there is a significant positive or negative effect between the ability of each Local Plan objective or Spatial Option to deliver the SA Objectives. In some cases the compatibility of the Objectives cannot be predicted because of uncertainty or lack of information. In many cases there may not be relationship in which case this has been recorded.

2.5.2. The results of this exercise have been set out in the form of a matrix in Table 5 below. An explanation of the symbols used is explained in Table 4.

Table 4: Explanation of symbol used in assessment matrices

Predicted effect	Description	Symbol used
Positive impact	The option supports the achievement of the SA Objective and has a positive effect	+
Neutral	This option does not have an effect on the achievement of the SA objective	0
Negative impact	This option conflicts with the achievement of the SA objective and has a negative effect	-
Uncertain	It is unclear whether there is the potential for a negative or positive effect on the SA objective	?
Positive/Negative impact	Some elements of this option support the achievement of the SA objective while other elements conflict with the SA objective.	+/-

3. Testing the Local Plan objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (Stage B1)

3.1.1. The Issues and Options Consultation Document contains fourteen Objectives for the Local Plan which give an indication as to how the Vision for Slough can be achieved through the

Review of the Local Plan (para 2.2.6 page13).These are set out as Objectives A to N in the first column of the table 5 below. The compatibility of each option with the SA objectives is then shown alongside, using the symbols in Table 4.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. Table 5 shows that there is generally a good compatibility between the Local Plan Objectives and the Sustainability Objectives. The Local Plan Objectives that have the most uncertainty or potential conflict with some of the Sustainability Objectives are those that are proposing or seeking to accommodate growth. These potential conflicts are highlighted below.

Table 5: Stage B1 Testing the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework

Local Plan Objective	SA Objective	1-Transport	2-Biodiversity	3-Climate Change	4-Economy	5-Health	6-Cultural Heritage	7- Housing	8-Landscape	9-Use of resources	10-Pollution
<i>A. To meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN)of 927 dwellings per annum within the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises within a balanced housing market</i>		+/-	?	?	?	+/-	0	+	?	?	?
<i>B. To provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough’s population that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard.</i>		0	0	+	0	+	0	+	?	+	+
<i>C. To support innovation, growth and regeneration and ensure the Town Centre is the focus for high density housing and major retail, leisure, office and cultural development</i>		+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	?/-
<i>D. To ensure Slough’s economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse by retaining its multinational HQs, having a diverse resilient economic base, and including opportunities for business start-ups and Smart technology.</i>		?	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	?	0
<i>E. To create 15,000 jobs supported by a competitive local workforce who have the skills to meet businesses’ changing needs.</i>		+/-	0	0	+	?	0	0	0	?	?/-
<i>F. To ensure Crossrail, the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and growth at Heathrow deliver benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.</i>		+	0	+/-	+	?	0	0	0	0	?/-
<i>G. To encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, reduce the need</i>		+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+

Local Plan Objective	SA Objective	1-Transport	2-Biodiversity	3-Climate Change	4-Economy	5-Health	6-Cultural Heritage	7- Housing	8-Landscape	9-Use of resources	10-Pollution
	<i>to travel, make non-car modes the best choice for short journeys and tackle traffic congestion.</i>										
	<i>H. To improve the health and well-being of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives</i>	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+
	<i>I. To provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.</i>	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	?
	<i>J To make Slough feel like a safe place through minimising the opportunity for crime and antisocial behaviour.</i>	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>K To improve the image and attractiveness of the town through insisting on high quality design for all new buildings and enhancing the public realm. To support the vitality, viability, distinctiveness of local centres and ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place</i>	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	0
	<i>L To increase opportunities for leisure and recreation and improve the quality and use of Slough's parks and open green spaces and the links to these and the surrounding countryside including the Colne Valley Regional Park.</i>	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0
	<i>M Protect the environment, and adapt to climate change and minimise its effects through protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity and water environment, and addressing flood risk, carbon emissions and pollution.</i>	0	+	+	?	+	0	0	+	+	+
	<i>N To protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value</i>	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	?	0

3.3. Key sustainability issues

Local Plan Objective A

3.3.1. Local Plan Objective A has two main elements. The first is to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need by building 927 houses a year. The second is to try to provide these houses within the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises. The scale of new housing proposed is higher than has been achieved in the past and there are some major capacity issues that would need to be overcome. One of these is the capacity of the transport

network to accommodate this amount of new housing. As a result there is a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective A** and **SA Objective 1** (transport). There could be a significant negative impact if the scale and location of new housing development causes congestion and reduces the overall efficiency of the transport network, including public transport. There could be a positive impact if the scale and location of the proposed new housing creates the critical mass and investment opportunities to *“Improve the efficiency of the transport network by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes.”*

- 3.3.2. There could also a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective A** and **SA Objective 1** (health) if the scale of the proposed new housing development has an adverse effect upon the environment and resulted in sub-standard housing conditions. Meeting housing needs would, however, have a significant positive impact upon *“community health, safety and well being.”*

Local Plan Objective C

- 3.3.3. Local Plan Objective C is to support regeneration and growth, particularly in the town centre. This has a lot of potentially positive impacts but there is a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective C** and **SA Objective 10** (pollution). This is because an increase in congestion in the centre could result in an increase in *“air pollution”*.
- 3.3.4. Local Plan Objective E is to create an additional 15,000 jobs in Slough. This could have an effect upon ability of the transport network to accommodate this amount of new employment. As a result there is a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective E** and **SA Objective 1** (transport). There could be a significant negative impact if the scale and location of the new jobs causes congestion and reduces the overall efficiency of the transport network, including public transport. There could be a positive impact if the scale and location of the proposed new employment creates the critical mass and investment opportunities to *“Improve the efficiency of the transport network by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes.”* There is also a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective E** and **SA Objective 10** (pollution) if the increase in jobs creates congestion which results in an increase in *“air pollution”*.

Local Plan Objective F

- 3.3.5. Local Plan Objective F assumes that the proposed Western Rail Link to Heathrow and proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport will go ahead. As a result it seeks to ensure that Slough residents and businesses benefit from this and the new Crossrail service. It is considered that the new rail links will have a positive benefit but recognised that the expansion of Heathrow could have some significant adverse environmental impacts. There is therefore a potential conflict between **Local Plan Objective F** and **SA Objective 3** (climate change) and **SA Objective 10** (pollution) if the expansion of Heathrow takes place.

3.4. Overall Conclusions

- 3.4.1. The results of this assessment show that there is the potential for some internal conflicts between the Objectives of the Local Plan and the SA Objectives. Some of the Local Plan Objectives are competing for scarce resources and may be mutually exclusive. For example the shortage of land in Slough means that the objectives associated with providing housing and those which aim to provide enough employment may not be compatible. All development will inevitably put pressure upon the environment.
- 3.4.2. The important thing is to highlight potential conflicts at this early stage so that they can be considered within the Framework. It may not be possible to produce a 'win-win' solution but some compromises could be made to ensure that most of the objectives can be achieved.
- 3.4.3. It is important to note that the objectives have not been prioritised at this stage. This can take place later in the appraisal process in order to ensure that the most sustainable results are achieved.
- 3.4.4. It is also important that the Sustainability Objectives are reflected in at least one of the Local Plan Objectives in order to ensure that the plan is prepared in a balanced way. The table shows that all of the Sustainability Objectives have significant positive links with at least two Local Plan Objectives.
- 3.4.5. The four Sustainability Objectives which could potentially have a significant conflict with the Local Plan are SA Objective 1 (transport), SA Objective 3 (climate change), SA Objective 5 (health) and SA Objective 10 (pollution). As a result the Local Plan will have to ensure that suitable mitigation is provided to ensure that new development does not have a significant adverse effect upon these Sustainability Objectives.

4. Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Spatial Options using the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives (elements of Stages B3 and B4)

- 4.1.1. After testing the Objectives of the Plan against the SA framework the next part of Stage B is to develop, predict and evaluate the effect of the options that are being developed in the Plan.
- 4.1.2. The Issues and Options Consultation Document does not contain any detailed policies. It does, however, contain eleven Spatial Options that have been developed to implement the draft Local Plan Objectives. It is considered that the Spatial Options contain enough detail to be the subject of a high level Sustainability Appraisal to predict the effects of implementing them by

testing them against the Sustainability Objectives so the results can inform the development of policies and site allocations that may be presented in the Preferred Options and full draft plan.

- 4.1.3. There will, however, inevitably be a lot of uncertainty about many aspects of these Spatial Options until they have been developed in more detail.
- 4.1.4. The Spatial Options are listed in table 6, and an assessment of compatibility of each option with the SA objectives is described below; a summary of effects is shown in Table 7. The methodology is in section 3.5.
- 4.1.5. Details of the spatial options are set out in Chapter 5 Section D of the Consultation Document. Some of the options are generic and do not contain specific sites or areas of search because they are not identifiable at this stage. Most of the options have been worked up in order to demonstrate how they could be implemented. This includes identifying some of the key sites and a broad indication as to how much development each option could provide.

Table 6: The Issues and Options Spatial Options

A. Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
B. Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
C. Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
D. Regeneration of the selected areas: D1 - Canal basin D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road D3 – Chalvey regeneration
E. Estate Renewal
F. Intensification of the suburbs
G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
H. Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
I. Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
J. Expansion of Slough J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb) J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
K. Build in other areas outside of Slough

4.2. Options involving development outside of the Slough Local Plan area (J1, J2 and K)

- 4.2.1. The Slough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report recognises that Slough has aspirations to meet its housing needs in full as close to where they arise but this may mean development taking place outside its boundary. Paragraph 2.4.2 states:

“...The scoping report therefore seeks to support the assessment of policies in the Plan by considering the relative sustainability of meeting Slough’s need within the Borough, outside the Borough (either adjoining or further away or not meeting the need in full....”

- 4.2.2. The Issues and Options consultation document has a number of options that reflect this which are:

J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks

J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead

K - Build in other areas outside of Slough.

- 4.2.3. It is recognized that the delivery of these options cannot be brought forward by Slough and that any development would have to be fully assessed against the plans, policies and programs of the relevant authorities. It is also recognized that any proposed development would have to be assessed against the relevant Sustainability Appraisal for these authorities.

- 4.2.4. Option J1 – the northern expansion of Slough, forms part of one of the 11 possible options identified in the Chiltern and South Bucks Issues and Options consultation. This Option (Option D) is to the extend the principle settlements outside of the plan area such as Wycombe, Slough and Maidenhead. No decision has yet been made about the Preferred option for the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan but it is assumed that Option D will in due course be considered against a revised Sustainability Appraisal for the plan.

- 4.2.5. One of the two sites which form Part of Option J2 – the southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead, has been included in the latest Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Draft Borough Local Plan (2013 – 2032) Regulation 18 consultation. This Council has requested that the other site (south of Austin Way) should also be proposed for housing development in the Local Plan. Both of these sites can then be considered against the Sustainability Appraisal for the plan.

- 4.2.6. In the meantime, in order to progress the Review of the Local Plan for Slough, it is considered appropriate to assess the sustainability of these options at this stage. In order to be consistent in considering the relative merits of these options it is necessary to use the Sustainability Objectives which have been devised for the Slough Sustainability Appraisal.

- 4.2.7. As a result Options J and K have been included in the table below in order to help to inform decision making about what the most sustainable options will be for the future development of Slough.

4.3. “Do nothing” option

- 4.3.1. The Issues and Options Consultation Document does not contain a “do nothing” option. The SA process however requires an assessment of a ‘do nothing’ approach, which is considered to be similar to the evolution of the plan area without the Plan. A “do nothing” option has therefore been added to the assessment of the Spatial Options in Table 7.

- 4.3.2. This shows that this Option could have a significantly adverse effect upon SA Objectives **1 Transport and accessibility, 4 Economy , 7 Housing and 9 Use of resources.**

4.4. Methodology

- 4.4.1. As explained above, the Sustainability Appraisal framework in the draft Scoping Report identifies 10 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives which are set out in Table 3 above.

- 4.4.2. Each of the Spatial Options have been assessed against the individual Sustainability Objectives on a high level basis to see whether there is a significant positive or negative effect between any of them. In some cases the compatibility of the Objectives cannot be predicted because of uncertainty or lack of information. In many cases there may not be relationship in which case this has been recorded.

- 4.4.3. The results of this exercise have been set out in the form of a matrix in Table 7 below. An explanation of the symbols used in the matrix is explained in Table 4.above.

Table 7: Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Spatial Options using the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

SA objective	Spatial Options													Key Issues
	A: Expand the centre of Slough	B: Expand Langley centre	C: New residential neighbourhood west of the Uxbridge Road	D: Regeneration of three selected areas	E: Estate Renewal	F: Intensification of the suburb	G: Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing	H: Release Green Belt for housing	I: Release Green Belt for employment	J: 1 Area of search South Bucks	J2: Area of search Windsor and Maidenhead	K: build in other areas	Do nothing	
1. Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	-	?	?	-	-	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
2. Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	?	?	?	?	?	0	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;
3. Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	?	?	?	?/-	?	?	?	?/-	?/-	?/-	?/-	?	?	Climate change adaptation; Flooding.

<p>4. Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.</p>	+	-	-	?	0	0	-	0	+	0	0	0	-	<p>Economic Development Need Economic performance; Sites and premises.</p>
<p>5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	<p>Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity</p>
<p>6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance</p>	?	0	0	0	?	0	0/-	0	?/-	0	?	?	0	<p>Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.</p>
<p>7. Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population</p>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	-	-	<p>Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality Homelessness.</p>	
<p>8. Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.</p>	?	?	?	?	?/-	?	?	?	?/-	?	?	?	<p>Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character;</p>	

<p>9. Use of resources: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth</p>	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/-	?/-	?/-	?/-	?	-	Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.
<p>10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.</p>	-	?	+/?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land

4.5. Results

4.5.1. Table 7 shows that most of the Spatial Options score in a consistent way when compared against the Sustainability Objectives. The one exception is the “do nothing” option which has a number of negative scores.

4.5.2. The Sustainability Objectives which have the most significant effects upon the performance of individual Spatial Options are discussed below.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 1

4.5.3. This Objective is to improve the efficiency of the transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and promoting policies which reduce the need to travel. **Spatial Option A** (town centre), **B** (Langley) and **C** (Akzo Nobel) could make a significant positive contribution to this Objective by locating development close to existing transport hubs. **Spatial Option I** (Colnbrook & Poyle) could make a negative contribution because Poyle is currently very poorly served by public transport. **Spatial Option K** (building in other areas) could have a negative impact if it results in people travelling long distances back into Slough for work or pleasure.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 2

4.5.4. This Objective is to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity. **Spatial Option F** (building in the suburbs) and **Spatial Options H, I, J and K**, which involve building on greenfield land, could affect biodiversity but the sites do not contain areas of recognised importance.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 3

4.5.5. This Objective to minimise the borough’s contribution to climate change. Until more details are available about the form of development that is proposed it is uncertain as to what effect any of the options would have upon this objective. **Options D2, D3, H, I, J1, and J2** all contain some land that is liable to flood. As a result inappropriate development on these sites could worsen the effects of climate change.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 4

4.5.6. This Objective is to develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy. **Spatial Options B** (Langley), **C** (Akzo Nobel) and **D2** (Cippenham) would all result in a significant loss of existing employment land. **Spatial Option G** (housing in existing business areas) could also result in a significant loss of employment. **Spatial Option I** (employment at Heathrow) would have a significant positive effect upon the economy.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 5

- 4.5.7. This Objective is to safeguard and improve community health, safety and well being. It is uncertain as to how **Spatial Option K** (build outside Slough) would not contribute to community well being if people have to move away from Slough.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 6

- 4.5.8. This Option is to protect, enhance features of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance. There are not many features of significant importance in Slough. One of the sites in **Spatial Option H** (release of Green Belt land) involves building upon a Historic Park and Garden which could cause significant harm. The area of search for **Spatial Option J1** (northern expansion of Slough) contains or is close to features of cultural heritage importance.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 7

- 4.5.9. This to provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population. **Spatial Option I** (employment at Heathrow) is the only option that would not produce more housing. If **Spatial Option K** (build outside Slough) was adopted instead of the other options this could have a negative impact because it would not provide affordable housing for the local population.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 8

- 4.5.10. This Objective is to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape. There are not many features of significant importance in Slough. **Spatial Option F** (building in the suburbs) could have a significant adverse effect upon the townscape. **Spatial Option J1** (northern expansion of Slough) could have an adverse impact upon the landscape.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 9

- 4.5.11. This Objective is to promote the efficient use of land. **Spatial Options A to G** involves the redevelopment of brownfield sites which could have a positive effect upon the use of resources. **Spatial Options H, I, J1 and J2** all involve building on greenfield land which could have a negative effect upon the use of resources. One of the sites within **Spatial Option H** (Market Lane) would involve the sterilisation of minerals.

Sustainability Appraisal Objective 10

- 4.5.12. This Objective is to reduce air, noise, soil and water pollution. Part of Slough town centre has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area. As a result **Spatial Option A** (town centre) could have a significant adverse impact upon this objective. The development of

Spatial Option C (Akzo Nobel) would involve the decontamination of this site which would have a significant positive effect.

4.6. Key Sustainability Issues for the Spatial Options

- 4.6.1. Some caution should be used in applying the results of this high level Sustainability Appraisal to the broad Spatial Options that have been included in the Issues and Options Consultation Document because of the lack of detail that is currently available about how the sites would be developed. Any proposed mitigation is also not known about at this stage. The options are also not directly comparable because they contain different levels of development which will mean that the potential adverse and beneficial effects will be of a different scale,
- 4.6.2. Nevertheless it is possible to draw some high level conclusions from the analysis set out in the table above.
- 4.6.3. Spatial Option A (Expand the centre of Slough) scores well in terms of SA Objectives **1 transport and accessibility, 4 economy** and **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **10 pollution** because of the impact upon the Air Quality Management Area.
- 4.6.4. Spatial Option B (Expand the Langley Centre) scores well in terms of SA Objectives **1 transport and accessibility** and **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **14 economy** because of the loss of existing employment areas.
- 4.6.5. Spatial Option C (Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites) scores well in terms of SA Objectives **1 transport and accessibility** and **7 housing**. There could have a significant positive effect upon SA Objective **10 pollution** as a result of the decontamination of these polluted sites. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **14 economy** because of the loss of existing employment areas.
- 4.6.6. Spatial Option D (Regeneration of the selected areas) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **13 climate change** because sites D2 at Cippenham and D3 at Chalvey contain land that is liable to flood.
- 4.6.7. Spatial Option E (Estate Renewal) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**.
- 4.6.8. Spatial Option F (Intensification of the suburbs) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be an adverse effect upon SA Objective **8 Landscape** because of the impact upon the townscape.

- 4.6.9. Spatial Option G (Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **14 economy** because of the loss of existing employment areas.
- 4.6.10. Spatial Option H (Release land from the Green Belt for housing) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **3 Climate Change** because some sites contain land that is liable to flood and SA Objective **6 cultural heritage** because of the impact upon the Ditton Park Historic Park and Garden.
- 4.6.11. Spatial Option I (Release land from the Green Belt for employment for Heathrow) scores well in terms of SA Objective **4 economy** . There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **3 Climate Change** because some of the land that is liable to flood.
- 4.6.12. Spatial Option J1 (Northern Expansion of Slough into South Bucks) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **3 Climate Change** because some of the land that is liable to flood. There could also be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objectives **3 Climate Change** because some of the land that is liable to flood and SA Objectives **6 cultural heritage** and SA Objective **8 Landscape**..
- 4.6.13. Spatial Option J2 (Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead) scores well in terms of SA Objective **7 housing**. There could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **3 Climate Change** because one of the sites contain land that is liable to flood.
- 4.6.14. Spatial Option K Build in other areas outside of Slough could have a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective **1 transport and** SA Objective **7 housing** depending upon where development takes place and how far away from Slough it is.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1.1. This document sets out the results of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan objectives and Spatial Options that have been included in the Issues and Options consultation. It follows Stage B of the Sustainability Appraisal Process.
- 5.1.2. The main purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal is to help people participate in the consultation exercise. As a result the sites have just been tested against the key social and environmental sustainability factors which are most relevant at this stage.
- 5.1.3. Table 5 shows that there is generally a good compatibility between the Local Plan Objectives and the Sustainability Objectives. The Local Plan Objectives that have the most uncertainty or

potential conflict with some of the Sustainability Objectives are those that are proposing or seeking to accommodate growth.

- 5.1.4. Table 7 shows that most of the Spatial Options score in a consistent way when compared against the Sustainability Objectives. The one exception is the “do nothing” option which has a number of negative scores. This shows that this Option could have a significantly adverse effect upon SA Objectives 1 Transport and accessibility, 4 Economy , 7 Housing and 9 Use of resources.
- 5.1.5. All of the policies and sites proposes in Slough will be the subject of a full Sustainability Appraisal which will take account of the social, economic and environmental benefits that development can bring before they are brought forward into the Publication version of the full Plan (Stage C – Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report). This will be published in the Final Sustainability Appraisal that will accompany it.

5.2. Alternatives

- 5.2.1. The SA and SEA processes require a comparison to be carried out of the options open to plan-makers for delivering the plan’s objectives. Specifically the SEA Directive states that the report should consider “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan” and it should give “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with”.
- 5.2.2. The Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan is intended to identify what the reasonable alternative options are for the Local Plan so that they can be the subject of public consultation.
- 5.2.3. The analysis of the issues facing Slough has shown that it will be very difficult to meet Objectively Assessed Housing Need and employment needs because of a shortage of developable land, the problems of traffic congestion and environmental constraints. As a result, although the consultation document contains a number of options, in most cases they do not represent “alternatives”. This is because the priority has been given, as required by the NPPF, to meeting as much as possible of the demand for housing and economic development.
- 5.2.4. It has not been possible to identify sufficient housing sites within the Borough to meet Objectively Assessed Need, nor has it been possible to produce options which would provide for 180 hectares of new employment land, which is the highest of the three scenarios for potential need identified in the Economic Development Needs Assessment.
- 5.2.5. The Issues and Options document has already considered the option of removing major policy constraints to development such as Green Belt. It is not considered that the remaining practical constraints to development can be overcome in the same way. As a result the work to date on

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