

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 18th November 2013

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Commissioner for Finance and Strategy, Councillor Anderson, Leader of the Council

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL LAND USE PRIORITISATION

1 Purpose of Report

To provide an overview and conclusions of current Council strategies and policies that relate to the competing demands for land within Slough.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to note the amalgamated strategic priorities, and to endorse the strategic approach set out:

- Within the town centre the priority uses will be those that have the potential to re-invigorate the town centre as a place to do business, to shop and to live and reflect a continuation of the Heart of Slough masterplan strategic commitments.
- Outside the town centre, and outside existing employment areas the key priority uses of land will be those that contribute to the key themes of the Council's Wellbeing Strategy – housing and health with appropriate development to support the local economy.

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

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

This report addresses, and integrates, key themes of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy with other policy and strategy statements of the council where they are relevant to decisions about competing uses for land within the Borough.

The priorities of the SJWS are:

Health – by 2028, Slough will be healthier, with reduced inequalities, improved wellbeing and opportunities for our residents to live positive, active and independent lives.

Provision of good quality housing contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents, as well as contributing to educational attainment of children, and is essential for the economic wellbeing of residents. Higher levels of physical activity would lead to a healthier local population.

Economy & Skills – By 2028, Slough will be an accessible location, competitive on the world stage with a sustainable and varied business sector and strong knowledge economy, supported by a local workforce who have the skills to meet local businesses' changing needs.

For Slough to continue to be economically prosperous excellent transport links must be maintained and developed, while regeneration of the town centre will make it an attractive place for businesses to locate. Good quality housing, leisure and public facilities must be provided to make Slough a place of choice for business.

Housing – by 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth

Housing an essential element to contributing to the wellbeing of the population while better quality housing will contribute to economic prosperity by encouraging those who work in higher income roles to live locally and support the local economy.

Regeneration and environment – by 2028, Slough will be distinctive from its competitors, harnessing the diversity and creativity of our people and our cultural and physical fabric to create an attractive local environment for our residents and businesses

Supported by the Corporate Plan's aims to improve the competitiveness and economic vitality of the town centre, deliver The Curve and community facilities. Supported by the Economic Development Strategy aims to improve transport, deliver maximum economic prosperity through regeneration.

Safer Communities – by 2028, Slough will have levels of crime and disorder that are not significantly higher than in any other town in the Thames Valley. Agencies will be working collaboratively to address the underlying causes of crime and communities will feel safe and able to play an active part in making Slough a better place to live, work and visit.

There are also two cross cutting themes:

Civic responsibility is the part that residents can play in delivering the strategy and in improving Slough for the benefit of everyone.

The image of the town is important for all of us. We need to find ways to improve the image and promote the many benefits of living and working in Slough.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal		A coherent strategic approach by the Council supports robust decision making
Property Failing to be clear about how available resources meet land use requirements may result in inability to deliver essential services in the most appropriate locations	Plan projected requirements against available land resources to ensure best fit to meet councils defined priorities	Facilities located on most appropriate sites, available resources used effectively
Human Rights		
Health and Safety		
Employment Issues		
Equalities Issues		
Community Support No capacity to deliver services in communities with an identified need due to lack of resources/capacity	Identify which priorities are essential to future of each community and ensure where possible services can be delivered locally	Deprived communities have access to services and facilities which supports their future prosperity
Communications		Clarity of strategic purpose supports the Council's communications by 'telling the story of Slough and the council's priorities'
Community Safety		
Financial		
Timetable for delivery If hierarchy of priorities not determined, individual opportunities may not be exploited as they arise, decision making process delayed	Set out order of priorities at early stage, with plan of how these can be met	If opportunities to deliver on the councils priorities arise unexpectedly, the council can act quickly to exploit the opportunity to the benefit of residents
Project Capacity		
Other		

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None identified.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Land use in the borough should serve the needs of all sections of Slough's community. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out at the time of allocating land for a specified purpose.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Slough is a capacity constrained densely populated urban area, and urban development has reached the borough boundaries in all directions. The last opportunities for major urban extensions are currently being developed. Future opportunities for substantial development are likely to come from a combination of redevelopment of a limited number of suitable brown field sites together with intensification of residential use as a result of regeneration. It is clear that the services and facilities required to meet the needs of the current and future population, alongside the council's aspirations to meet its strategic priorities will lead to competition for the limited number of remaining sites, and more creative land uses.
- 5.2 The strategic and policy context in which continuing development will take place is set out in a number of agreed and adopted strategies and policies. These documents set out priorities and actions across a range of service areas and are described in more detail in the next paragraphs.
- 5.3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy sets out council and partner aspirations for the town, and could therefore be considered as the parent document which guides all others along the 'golden thread'. The council also produces an annual Corporate Plan which sets out the council's priorities and how it plans to deliver over the following year.
- 5.4 The range of directorate and service specific strategies, some of which are listed under 'background papers' at the end of this report, all contribute to the achievement of the council's overall vision. In the limited number of cases where priorities conflict with regards a specific site, the outcome is determined on a case by case, circumstances driven basis using all available information. This may arise if for example regeneration of an area requires a land use which conflicts with another need. It may be determined that the outcomes of regeneration outweigh the loss of the specified land use. Similarly the council may support development which promotes the economic wellbeing of the town, but which causes disruption or loss to residents, however the economic benefits may be judged to outweigh the other factors.
- 5.5 While this case by case prioritisation has served the council adequately to date with increasing pressure on resources, it is pragmatic for the council to assess and weight its various priorities against likely resources, including financial and physical. With the last few substantial green and brown field sites either currently being developed, or about to be, it is imperative that the council prioritise the future use of remaining land and brownfield development opportunities. Once the council has identified the future development requirements and compared this to the available developable or re-developable land, there is likely to be a shortfall of available land within the borough, which may require the council to look beyond its own administrative boundaries in the future.

Current strategic and policy priorities

- 5.6 In considering the competition for land use the starting point is the Core Strategy 2006-26, the Local Plan and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

These form the spatial strategy for Slough and describe in detail the forms of development which are appropriate in defined areas, based on criteria such as commercial, town centre, residential, high and low density development zones.

- 5.7 The Wellbeing Board's current priorities are based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and expressed in the Wellbeing Strategy, are an amalgam of all the data for need in the borough and focus on:
- Health – some of the shortest life-spans and poorest health outcomes in the south east
 - Housing – acute housing shortages of all types, sizes and tenures and poor housing condition
 - Community safety – poor though improving crime and anti-social behaviour statistics
 - Regeneration and environment – the need to improve the quality and maintenance of the built environment and the quality and usage of the green environment
 - Jobs and skills – the need to maintain the number of jobs in the borough and to fit the local population with the skills to access them
- 5.8 There are consequent demands on developable land for housing, leisure and community facilities, health centres, faith centres and education to begin to address these issues. The Borough Council has a responsibility to address all these needs both those arising from the unsatisfied needs of the existing population and those arising from population growth.
- 5.9 In addition to these local needs Slough is also home to a nationally significant vibrant economy, the location of a number of major international businesses. The benefits of this immensely productive economy stretch far beyond Slough's boundaries, providing jobs to residents of surrounding areas and being a net contributor to the economy of UK plc. The economic attractiveness of Slough is going to further intensify with the delivery of Crossrail in 2018 and Western Rail Access to Heathrow later in the decade.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

This report has not been considered by any other committees.

7 **Conclusion**

Taken together the strategic intent of these documents and the context of the town simple conclusions can be reached about the competing priorities for developable land as follows:

- Within the town centre the priority uses will be those that have the potential to re-invigorate the town centre as a place to do business, to shop and to live and reflect a continuation of the Heart of Slough masterplan strategic commitments.
- Outside the town centre, and outside existing employment areas the key priority uses of land will be those that contribute to the key themes of the Council's Wellbeing Strategy – housing and health with appropriate other development to support the local economy and provide the infrastructure necessary for the local community.

Background Papers

1. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2013 – 2016
2. Corporate Plan 2013 – 2014
3. Local Asset Backed Vehicle/Slough Regeneration Partnership
4. Asset Management and Capital Strategy 2011 – 2016
5. Housing Strategy 2005-2010
6. Economic Development Strategy (awaiting approval)
7. Capital Programme
8. Slough Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2006-2026
9. Slough Local Plan (adopted March 2004) Saved policies 2010)
10. Site Allocations Development Plan Document (November 2010)