

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Paul Stimpson  
Strategic Lead Planning Policy & Projects  
01753 875820

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I**

#### **DRAFT FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the public consultation on the Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan which ends on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The main alterations are primarily to address the housing and employment issues emerging from the census data since the London Plan was published in 2012. Members should note that these alterations may have an impact on Slough particularly in terms of housing.

##### **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

1.1 The Committee is requested to resolve:

- That the comments in this report be noted.

##### **2 Community Strategy Priorities**

2.1 The changes to the London Plan could have implication for Slough in terms of:

- **A Cleaner, Greener place to Live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

##### **3 Other Implications**

(a) Risk Management

No significant risks identified.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

It is considered that there are unlikely to be any significant implications in relation to the Human Rights Act.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

It is considered there will be no equality impacts.

(d) Workforce

There are no workforce implications.

## 4 **Supporting Information**

### **Background**

- 4.1 The London Plan was adopted in July 2012. This Spatial Development Strategy, which is prepared by the GLA on behalf of the Mayor, is the equivalent of the Regional Plan for London. The London Plan sets out the social, economic and environmental framework for London for the next 20-25 years. It forms part of the Development Plan for the London Boroughs and their plans need to be in general conformity with it.
- 4.2 The 'Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan' (FALP) are currently being consulted for 12 weeks ending on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Although it is not a full review, the document proposes major changes to the plan. There is no statutory "Duty to Cooperate" with the London Plan but we have received a letter informing us of the consultation and welcoming our comments on the draft alterations to the London Plan.
- 4.3 The Alterations have been prepared because of the release of new census data on housing and employment since the publication of the Plan. This shows that the population growth would lead to a housing shortage. As a result the London Plan needs updating to reflect this and help deliver the home and job required for the rapidly growing city.
- 4.4 These changes follow earlier alterations to the Plan in 2012/13 to ensure it reflected the National Planning Policy Framework and the Government's approach to Affordable Housing.

### **Housing**

- 4.5 There is clear evidence that London's population is likely to increase significantly more than anticipated in 2011 when the London Plan was produced. However there is uncertainty as to the actual scale and nature of this increase. The Alteration assumes that London population is set to increase by up to 2 million in the 25 years to 2036.
- 4.6 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment states that London requires between 49,000 and 62,000 additional homes a year from 2015-2036. Consequently the London Plan increases the ten year housing target from 2015 by 100,000 homes to 424,000 the equivalent of 42,000 a year. This could still leave a shortfall of up to 20,000 dwellings a year.
- 4.7 31 out of 32 London Boroughs have had their individual housing targets increased. The table below shows examples of how the West London Boroughs closest to Slough have had their housing targets raised.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2011 Target</b>	<b>2014 Target</b>
Hillingdon	4,250	5,593
Ealing	8,900	2,872
Hounslow	4,750	8,222
Hammersmith	6,160	10,312

- 4.8 As well as higher housing targets the draft alterations to the London Plan include a new requirement for London Boroughs to deliver high density housing in town centres. This will be implemented through looking at the principle of intensification of town centres.
- 4.9 Members may be interested to note that this is similar to the approach adopted in Slough where our spatial strategy in the Core Strategy 2006-2026 Development Plan Document (DPD) is *“concentrating development and spreading the benefits to help build local communities”*.
- 4.10 If this increase in housing need cannot be met within London it is possible that Local Authorities outside London in the South East may have to accommodate this. As a result Boroughs on the outskirts of London like Slough may have to take the housing overspill.
- 4.11 Unmet housing needs in the London Boroughs could lead to an increase in outward migration from London to adjoining areas in the South East. This could put additional pressure on Slough which is already a constrained Borough with its own housing needs to meet.

#### Green Belt

- 4.12 Despite the likely shortage of housing, the approach to Green Belt is unchanged, with the policy stating the strongest protection should be given to London's Green Belt. This means that whilst areas outside of London, such as Windsor and Maidenhead, have had to look at Green Belt releases, the London Boroughs are not being asked to do so in order to absorb their own smoke.
- 4.13 In order to protect the Green Belt, the capacity expectations for existing areas identified for regeneration and intensification (such as at Opportunity Areas and Intensification Areas) have been increased.

#### Infrastructure

- 4.14 The alterations include an addition to the economic policy that promotes the role of investing in new infrastructure in securing sustainable growth and development. The policy approach to aviation that strongly opposes a third runway at Heathrow remains unchanged. The supporting text has been updated to refer to the Davies commission and that further alterations to the Plan will be made as necessary in response to the Government's approach.

#### Economy

- 4.15 The Economy chapter covers a range of subjects including offices, industrial land, visitor accommodation, retail floor space demand and the digital economy. The Economic Strategy supports a broad based growth that recognises the importance of core sectors in London such as financial services, leisure and retail, but also the need to meet demands for all employment types, the contribution of diverse and flexible workspaces to this (such as hybrid office/ industrial), and the need to support conditions for new employment sectors to emerge.

- 4.16 Town Centres and transport nodes are seen as the appropriate locations for increased density and release of surplus industrial land to provide housing. There is also promotion of the 'Smart London' initiatives to promote and realise the potential of new technologies to make the best use of infrastructure and so mitigate adverse impacts of demand growth, including the provision of ultrafast broadband. These are also initiatives being developed in Slough.

#### Opportunity Areas

- 4.17 The Plan identifies Opportunity Areas which are major 'reservoirs' of brownfield land identified as having potential to deliver at least 5,000 jobs or 2,500 new homes or a combination of the two. The FALP identifies 5 additional areas giving 38 in total which are supported by policy changes that put additional focus on housing provision over employment uses in town centres and opportunity areas.

Those Opportunity Areas relevant for Slough are:-

- (i) (in existing plan) **Heathrow** - this recognises the importance of aviation as an economic driver for the area and the need for an 'integrated approach' to addressing the environmental and growth issues within London and along the Western Wedge. The policy is unchanged so refers to growth that is possible *without the third runway*. It highlights the contribution of Stockley Park to providing R&D and office facilities including 'Prestigious national and European headquarters'. Smaller scale regeneration opportunities are also identified. [Area 700 ha; employment capacity 12,000; new homes 9,000].

Stockley Park is a high quality out of town employment centre which is a similar market to Slough Trading Estate, but arguably has a higher quality environment due to its water based setting and provision of other services on site such as purpose built restaurant / bar and leisure facilities.

- (ii) (new area proposed) **Old Oak Common** – identified as an area for significant regeneration and the contribution it could make to London's position as a, 'world business centre'. Proposals are based on a new strategic public transport infrastructure hub on the HS2 line between London and Birmingham with an interchange with Cross Rail, other national rail lines and the London Over ground. The vision published in June 2013 develops the site's potential for large scale housing and employment provision around a network of new open spaces, a cluster of tall buildings, and links to the wider Park Royal Opportunity Area. [Area 155 ha, employment 55,000; new homes 24,000].
- (iii) (in existing plan) **Bexley Riverside** – this includes protection for inter-modal freight exchange facilities at Howbury Park. [Area 1,347 ha; employment capacity 7,000; new homes 4,000].

This is relevant for the SIFE application in Colnbrook as the Howbury Park area has an existing permission which has yet to be built out.

#### Next Stages

- 4.18 The consultation on the draft further alterations to the London Plan will end on the 15<sup>th</sup> April. The proposed changes will then be considered by an Independent

Planning Inspector at a public examination in 2015. The Alterations are intended to provide a robust, short to medium term planning framework which gives a clear 'direction of travel' for the longer term, recognizing that this may well have to be reviewed.

## **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 Members should note the alterations to the London Plan and the potential implications for Slough.

## **6 Background Papers**

- 1. Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (January 2014)