

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet **DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014

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**WARD(S):** Haymill, Farnham and Baylis

**PORTFOLIO:** Councillor James Swindlehurst (Neighbourhood & Renewal)

### **PART I** **KEY DECISION**

#### **PROPOSED ADOPTION OF THE SLOUGH TRADING ESTATE SIMPLIFIED PLANNING ZONE (SPZ)**

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

The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet approve the Simplified Planning Zone Scheme for Slough Trading Estate for adoption. This will come into effect on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 for 10 years.

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

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the adoption of the Simplified Planning Zone Scheme 2014-2024 for the Slough Trading Estate be delegated to the Planning Policy Lead Officer subject to the signing of a Section 106 Legal Agreement.

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

###### **• 3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –**

The SPZ forms part of the Council's planning framework and will help to deliver the following priorities of the Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

- Economy and Skills
- Regeneration and Environment

The regeneration of the Slough Trading Estate through the Simplified Zone Scheme will facilitate access to a variety of employment opportunities for local people and improve its competitiveness.

###### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

The SPZ contributes to achieving one of the priorities of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

- Increase skills and employment opportunities.

## **Corporate Plan 2013-14**

The SPZ contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan through

- provision of high quality employment premises and maintaining and increasing employment opportunities in the town; and
- supporting the Aspire training centre
- implementing sustainable transport measures to reduce congestion.

### **4 Other Implications**

#### **(a) Financial**

If the SPZ scheme is approved for adoption it will provide economic benefits to the local economy, and hence the Council, from increased business rates local employment and support for the Aspire centre.

#### **(b) Risk Management**

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
None identified	None identified	None identified

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

There are no Human Rights Act Implications.

#### **(d) Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening was carried out. The EIA did not identify any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

#### **(e) Workforce**

Renewal of the SPZ is part of the existing work programme for the Planning Policy Team.

### **5 Supporting Information**

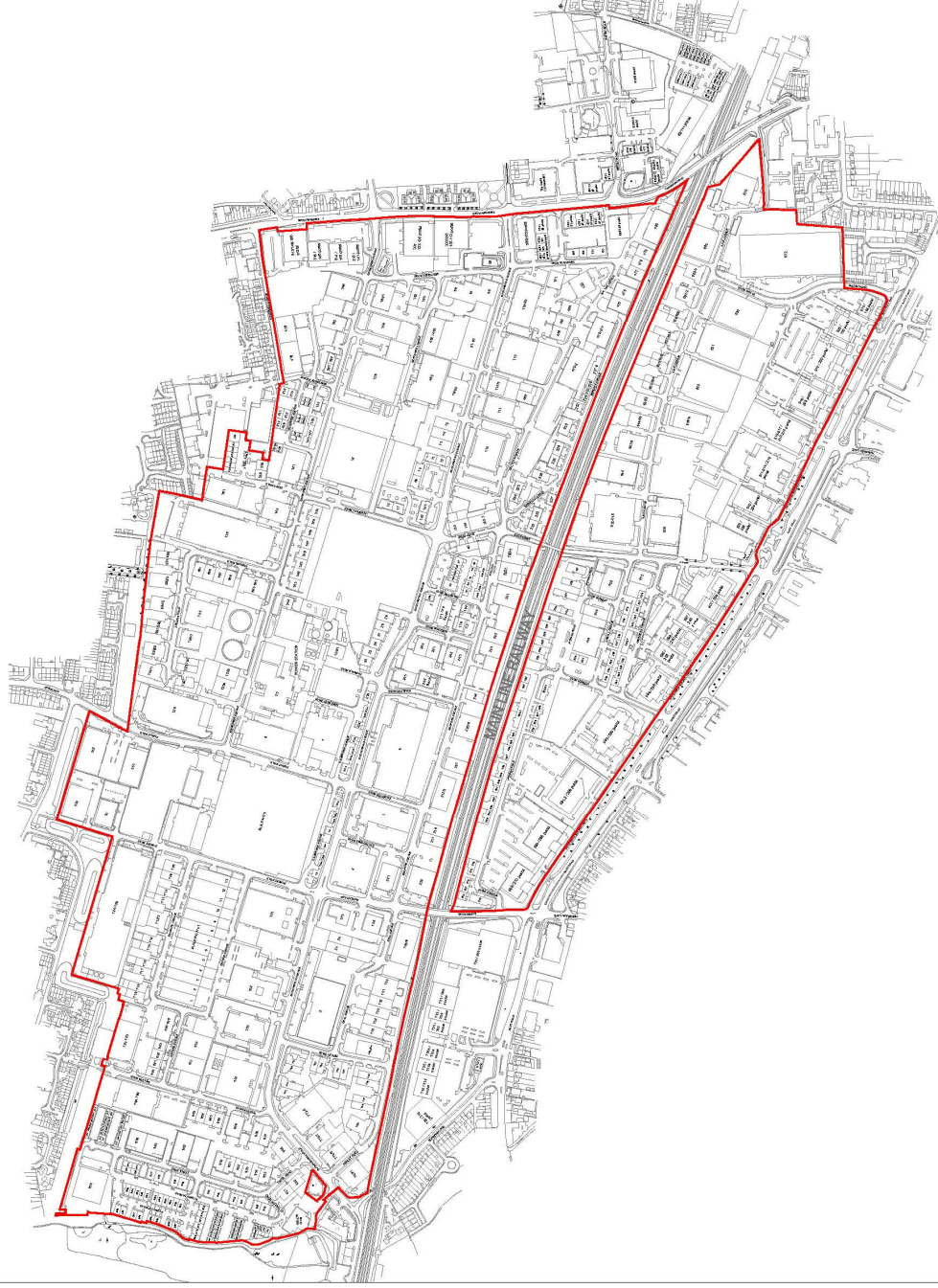
- 5.1 Slough Trading Estate is the largest business area in the Borough and provides around a quarter of the jobs in Slough. As a result its continued success as an employment centre is important to the local economy and the prosperity of the town as a whole.
- 5.2 In order to facilitate the development of the Trading Estate the Council has had a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for the last twenty years. The first ran from 1994 to 2004 and the second one is due to expire in November 2014. As a result a new SPZ has been drawn up to cover the period up to 2024.
- 5.3 An SPZ effectively grants planning permission in advance for specified types of development within defined areas, provided they meet given criteria. On the Trading Estate the permitted uses include research & development, industrial units, warehouses and data centres.

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Revision	Date	Dm	Ckd
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Legend

	SPZ Site Boundary
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**Draft**  
Project  
Slough SPZ

Drawing Title  
SPZ Site Boundary

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
02.06.14	NTS	M.S.	J.P.
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
20712	20		

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#### 5.4 **Purpose of the SPZ**

5.5 The SPZ provides SEGRO, the owners of the Estate, with a number of commercial advantages as it seeks to deliver bespoke premises which serve the needs of modern businesses and provide the sort of facilities that are necessary to continue to attract inward investment and retain its competitive position locally and nationally. These advantages include:

- **Flexibility** to respond quickly and effectively to changes in market demands and tenants' bespoke requirements
- **Certainty** for owners and occupiers about what development is acceptable to the Council under the scheme, and will therefore not require detailed planning approval
- **Speed** of development being brought forward- as individual applications are not required and consistent parameters are established by the SPZ, they are not subject to the normal planning permission timeframes
- **Marketability** of the Estate in a way which enhances the perception of the trading estate for investment, and has led directly to companies choosing to locate and expand on the estate.

5.6 The SPZ will help to implement the Council's adopted strategic plan for the trading estate set out in Core Strategy and the Site Allocation Document (which includes SEGRO's Master Plan for the trading estate).

#### 5.7 **The Contents of the SPZ**

5.8 The Council has been working with SEGRO for some time to produce a new SPZ which follows the same principles as the previous ones but also meets the needs of modern commercial employment markets and changing planning requirements. The development it permits complements the approved Leigh Road regeneration proposals for a new commercial core with offices, retail, hotels and conference facilities that are needed to maintain the economic growth of the Estate and its market share.

5.9 The key parts of the renewed scheme that have been retained from the previous SPZ scheme are as follows:

- Limited to new buildings for general industrial uses, storage and distribution, and data centres
- Maximum 50% built footprint, and 49% office floorspace (gross external area)
- No open storage permitted, and screening of all plant
- Requirement for minimum 6% green landscaping on each development
- Continued protection of Buckingham Avenue Retail area to serve employees
- Highways requirements including safe manoeuvring and servicing within the site boundary
- Retention of sensitive sub-zones where the estate adjoins residential areas

5.10 One of the main changes to the SPZ is that it is now proposed to allow taller buildings in order to meet the current design and operational needs of research and development facilities, data centres and high bay warehouses. This has been done by identifying zones in the central part of the Trading Estate where taller buildings can be accommodated on larger plots. At the same time some tighter height controls have been introduced around the boundaries to try to reduce the impact upon adjoining residential areas. The area of the SPZ has also been slightly reduced.

5.11 The various Height Controlled Zones are as follows:

Sub Zone	Maximum height
Sensitive Boundary Sub Zones	7 metres
Northern Height Controlled Zone	12 metres
Outside these Zones	16 metres
Warehouses on sites over 1 ha	20 metres
Research and Development or data centres on sites over 1ha	23 metres

- 5.12 As a result of a request from the Planning Committee, the width of the Northern Height Controlled zone, which runs along the boundary with the Northborough Estate, has been widened from 15 to 30 metres. This should help to reduce the visual impact of new development upon the residential properties.
- 5.13 In order to reduce the impact of taller buildings on the street scene new conditions have been added to make sure that there is an appropriate set back from the road (up to 13m), and proper tree planting and landscaping is provided in ‘boulevards’ along identified main routes consistent with the wider regeneration plans for the estate.
- 5.14 New car parking standards have also been introduced for all types of development which specify a minimum as well as a maximum number of spaces and agreement has been reached with SEGRO to ensure that cumulatively the new SPZ schemes will not increase the overall amount of parking on the Trading Estate.
- 5.15 In addition all of the conditions have been reviewed to make sure that they are “future proofed” as far as possible for the next ten years. The changes aim to promote sustainable design and construction and transport measures, and reduce impacts on the street scene and adjoining residential amenity. This includes measures to address flood risk, drainage, landscaping, archaeology and ecology, and promote walking and cycling.
- 5.16 A draft version of the SPZ was agreed by the Planning Committee in November 2013 for public consultation. This was subject to public consultation for 7 weeks from 10<sup>th</sup> January- 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The results of this were considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Despite extensive leafleting to 3,000 homes and 600 businesses and holding public exhibitions, there was very little response from the general public.
- 5.17 Responses were, however, received from all of the statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, Highways Agency and Network Rail. There were a number of comments and suggestions which have generally been incorporated into the SPZ. Since there have not been any substantive objections there is no need to hold a local Inquiry.
- 5.18 Appendix A contains the revised version of the SPZ which takes account of comments made during the consultation process and other changes that have been agreed with SEGRO. As a result it forms the basis of the SPZ scheme that it is proposed to adopt.

5.19 Part 1 of the document contains the introduction and context for the SPZ. Part 2 defines the boundary, period of operation, types of development that are permitted and the conditions that all proposed development must comply with. Parts 3 and 4 contain other information and Planning Informatives. More detail, such as that on travel planning, is provided in appendices.

## 5.20 **Section 106 Agreement**

5.18 The new SPZ will also have a Section 106 legal agreement, the key components of which are:

- To continue to financially support the Hoppa Bus service (or equivalent)
- To fund improved pedestrian/cycle/bus access to Burnham station (Crossrail)
- Estate wide Travel Plan
- Improve signage and crossings
- On street cycle parking
- Improved pedestrian/cycle links to the residential areas north of Estate
- Continued support for the Aspire skills, training and education centre (for 5 years)
- Agreement on implementing a car parking cap

5.19 The contents of this have been agreed with SEGRO, subject to the final drafting of the actual legal agreement.

## 5.20 **Timetable**

5.21 Subject to Members' approval, the next step will be to complete and sign the Section 106 legal agreement with SEGRO who are the owners of the Trading Estate.

5.22 The regulations then require that the intention to adopt the SPZ has to be advertised for a minimum of six weeks. This will be carried out in time to adopt the SPZ on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 which is the day after current SPZ expires.

5.23 There will then be a six week period in which the adoption can be subject to a High Court Challenge.

5.24 Assuming there are no legal challenges, the SPZ will then run for a period of 10 years (until the 12 November 2024) unless it is revoked by the Council.

## 6 **Comments of Other Committees**

6.1 As explained above the Planning Committee considered the results of the public consultation on the Deposit Draft of the SPZ. It recommended that the Cabinet should adopt the revised SPZ subject to the Northern Boundary Height Controlled Zone being extended in width to 30 metres.

## 7 **Conclusion**

7.1 The Cabinet is recommended to agree to adopt the Simplified Planning Zone Scheme for Slough Trading Estate in November 2014.

8 **Appendices Attached**

'A'- Draft version of Slough Trading Estate SPZ (2014 – 2024) as proposed to be adopted (to follow – to incorporate amendments following the Planning Committee).

9 **Background Papers**

'1' The Local Plan for Slough (2004)

'2' Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006–2026 (Adopted December 2008)

'3' Slough Local Development Framework Site Allocations DPD (Adopted November 2010)

'4' Simplified Planning Zone for Slough Trading Estate (2004)

'5' Slough Borough Council Planning Committee Report of 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Slough Borough Council Planning Committee Report of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013