

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee      **DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Paul Stimpson  
Planning Policy Lead Officer

**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 875820

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I**

### **FOR DECISION**

## **CONSULTATION ON SOUTH BUCKS AND SPELTHORNE LOCAL PLANS**

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

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the progress of Local Plans being prepared in adjoining areas (RBWM, London, South Bucks and Spelthorne) and to respond to the specific consultations from South Bucks and Spelthorne Councils as part of the Duty to Cooperate.

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

- The Committee is requested to resolve:
  - a) That South Bucks District Council be thanked for consulting the Council about its Local Plan 2014 – 2036 Initial Consultation and the comments set out in paragraphs 5.10, 5.12 and 5.15 of this report be forwarded to them.
  - b) That Spelthorne Borough Council be thanked for Consulting the Council about its Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement and the comments set out in paragraphs 5.18 and 5.20 of this report be forwarded on to them.

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

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

The policies and proposals in the Local Plans of adjoining authorities can have an impact upon Slough and its ability to meet the needs of its population. The proposed response to these plans is therefore intended to safeguard the following SJWS priorities:

- *Health*
- *Economy and Skills*
- *Regeneration and Environment*
- *Housing*
- *Safer Communities*

### 3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

One of the key elements of the Five Year Plan is the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. This requires cooperation with adjoining authorities which includes responding to proposals in their emerging plans. Influencing proposed development in adjoining areas can help to ensure that:

- *Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow, and stay*
- *There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough*
- *The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living, and cultural opportunities*

### 4. **Other Implications**

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

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

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

It is considered that the risks can be managed as follows:

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That comments on Local Plans be forwarded to the relevant authorities.	Not commenting upon the proposals of other Local Authorities risks losing the ability to influence the way that development takes place in adjoining areas, and begin building relationships for our Duty to Co-operate obligations.	Send comments to relevant Authorities.

#### (c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications** *(compulsory section to be included in **all** reports)*

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

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

There are no equality impact issues.

### 5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Members will recall that it was formally agreed to carry out a Review of the Local Plan for Slough at the last meeting of this Committee.

5.2 One of the reasons for starting the review at this at this stage is that all of the surrounding authorities are also in the process of reviewing their plans and it is important that strategic issues are addressed in a coordinated way. Reviewing the

plans at the same time also provides opportunities for joint working and it makes it easier for all of the Councils to comply with their obligations with regards to the Duty to Cooperate.

- 5.3 South Bucks have published an Initial Consultation on their Local Plan which requires a response from this Council at this stage.
- 5.4 Spelthorne has started to review its Local Plan and has consulted Slough on both a Draft Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement and a draft Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.5 Windsor and Maidenhead have been working towards producing a new Local Plan for some time and are proposing to carry out a Second Preferred Options consultation in June 2015.
- 5.6 The Further Alteration of the London Plan were adopted by the Mayor on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015 on the basis that a full review of the Plan will begin immediately. This has raised the issue as to how planning authorities outside of London can be properly engaged in this process.
- 5.7 An update of the progress that is being made with each of the adjoining plans and, where necessary, a suggested response is set out in detail below.

#### **South Bucks Local Plan**

- 5.8 South Bucks published an Initial Consultation (Regulation 18) on their Local Plan 2014 – 2036 that will close on 24<sup>th</sup> April. This invites comments on the scope and the approach to the review of the plan.
- 5.9 The consultation paper outlines some of the work that South Bucks intends to do which includes:
  - Working with other authorities within its Strategic Housing Market
  - A Green Belt assessment to identify land that could be removed for development
  - A capacity study of the built up areas
  - Analysis of development constraints other than Green Belt
  - Seek ways to protect and enhance quality of life
  - Assess impact of HS2, Western Rail Access and potential Heathrow expansion
- 5.10 It is considered that the opportunity to work jointly with South Bucks on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment should be welcomed. The proposed Green Belt assessment is also supported, subject to an appropriate methodology being used. It should be recognised that Green Belt is a strategic policy and so any assessment of the value of a piece of land can only be made by reference to emerging or alternative strategies. The continued support for the Western Rail Access to Heathrow is welcomed.
- 5.11 The consultation paper also recognises that it may be necessary to test a number of different spatial strategy options. These include:
  - Making more efficient use of land in built up areas

- Urban extensions to the principal settlements of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham
- Urban extensions of secondary settlements such as Denham, Stoke Poges and Iver
- Review of settlements in the Green Belt

5.12 Whilst it is not considered appropriate to express a preference for a spatial strategy at this stage, it doesn't appear logical to rule out testing the urban expansion of Slough and so this should be added to the options.

5.13 The paper specifically asks questions relating to:

- The Vision for the plan
- The issues that need to be addressed
- Challenges and opportunities
- How local needs for housing and employment could be met
- What infrastructure is needed

5.14 The consultation paper also states that in addition to the Duty to Cooperate with adjacent local planning authorities South Bucks may need to explore scope for nearby settlements outside of the District to accommodate development if it is unable to meet its needs sustainably.

5.15 This Council will work closely with South Bucks on Duty to Cooperate matters but it is considered that the starting point for all aspects of the Plan is that it should seek to meet its housing and employment needs within its boundaries.

### **Spelthorne**

5.16 As the first stage in the review of its Local Plan Spelthorne Borough Council has prepared a Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The DtC Scoping statement is to help ensure that it has identified all relevant strategic cross boundary issues, and the authorities/bodies that it will need to engage with and the mechanisms for that engagement.

5.17 Spelthorne has joined with Runnymede to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment which this Council has already been involved in. The key issues identified for the Local Plan are how additional housing requirements within Spelthorne can be met and whether Spelthorne requires assistance from or can give assistance to other authorities in meeting needs across the local or sub housing market area?

5.18 It is considered that the starting point for the Local Plan is that it should seek to meet its housing needs within its boundaries but it is recognised that a range of options need to be tested.

5.19 One of the other key issues that has been identified is what the balance between housing and jobs should be in the Borough and how this could be affected by the expansion of Heathrow.

5.20 It is considered that it is vitally important that the Spelthorne Local Plan takes full account of the possible expansion of Heathrow.

- 5.21 The Scoping statement for the Local Plan has identified a number of other topics including retail, leisure, transport, open space & recreation, climate change, Green Belt and biodiversity. Slough Borough Council has been identified as an authority to be engaged in discussion about all of these topics.

### **Windsor and Maidenhead**

- 5.22 The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead has been seeking to replace its Local Plan for a number of years. In January 2014 it carried out a public consultation exercise on a set of preferred policy options for the Plan. This included inviting comments on the suitability of developing 23 areas for housing that are currently in the Green Belt. At the Cabinet meeting last month it was decided not to permit building on 21 of these sites.
- 5.23 This decision was influenced by the Ministerial statement made in December 2014 which stated that Councils should carefully consider whether there are policy constraints such as Green Belt which impact upon their ability to meet housing needs in full. This statement also makes it clear that Councils will have to consider whether there are opportunities to cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities to meet needs across housing market areas.
- 5.24 The Royal Borough is proposing to have a Second Preferred Options Consultation in June. They have stated that prior to this they will engage with other local authorities under the Duty to Cooperate to explore the scope that they might have to accommodate additional housing in their areas to address the unmet need in Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 5.25 No specific actions are required at this stage but Members will be kept informed of any progress on the Windsor and Maidenhead plan.

### **London Plan**

- 5.26 The GLA has recently adopted the Formal Alterations to the London Plan. This sets out a new requirement for London to build 49,000 houses a year but was only able to identify a supply of 42,000 a year.
- 5.27 The Inspector who held the examination into the Alterations made it clear that the evidence before him strongly suggested that the London Plan would not deliver sufficient homes to meet the Objectively Assess need. He therefore recommended that a full scale review of the Plan should be begun as soon as the Alterations are adopted.
- 5.28 He also recommended that the mayor needed to engage local planning authorities beyond the GLA boundary about options for growth and how this could be coordinated.
- 5.29 The mayor has responded to this by agreeing to review the Plan immediately and by setting up a Wider South East Summit on 19<sup>th</sup> March. This will be attended by a Berkshire representative and is seen as the first step in establishing a more effective method of understanding and engagement in strategic planning for London and the south east.
- 5.30 Members will be updated about the issues related to the review of the London Plan in due course.

## 6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 Proper engagement with adjoining authorities is an important part of the plan making process and a specific requirement under the Duty to Cooperate. This report informs Members of the progress that is being made in the preparation of plans in adjoining areas and recommends appropriate responses to the various consultations that are taking place.

## 7. **Background Papers**

- '1' - South Bucks District Council Local Plan 2014 – 2036 Initial Consultation (Regulation 18) – February 2015
- '2' - Spelthorne Local Plan Duty to Cooperate Scoping Statement – February 2015
- '3' - Further Alterations to the London Plan – March 2015