

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Slough Wellbeing Board **DATE:** 26th January 2017
CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Stimpson, Planning Policy Lead Officer, Slough Borough Council
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875820
WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

LOCAL PLAN (2016-2036) ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

1 Purpose of Report

To seek comments on the Local Plan “Issues and Options” document, which is currently the subject of a six week public consultation exercise.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Board is requested to note and comment upon Local Plan “Issues and Options” document (at Appendix 1).

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2016 - 2020, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The review of the Local Plan is directly linked to the following priorities in the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

- 3 Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities
- 4 Housing

The key link between the Local Plan and the new Wellbeing Strategy is housing. The “Issues and Options” document gives top priority to meeting the housing need in Slough, which will mean building up to 20,000 new homes in or around the borough.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The Review of the Local Plan will contribute to the following outcomes:

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

4. Other Implications

- (a) Financial - There are no financial implications arising from the proposed action. The costs of the proposed consultation are being met from within existing budgets.
- (b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	No risks identified	
Property	No risks identified	
Human Rights	No risks identified	
Health and Safety	No risks identified	
Employment Issues	No risks identified	
Equalities Issues	No risks identified	
Community Support – There will be a need for a formal public consultation exercise.	A public consultation strategy will be developed.	
Communications	No risks identified	
Community Safety	No risks identified	
Financial	No risks identified	
Timetable for delivery – The review of the Local Plan is dependent upon a number of internal and external factors which could delay the time table.	Contingency plans for a delay to the timetable can be put in place.	
Project Capacity – The review of the plan will require additional resources.	A Project Plan for the Review of the Local plan has been produced, a budget secured.	
Other	No risks identified	

- (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications - There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications.
- (d) Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) - Not applicable at this stage in the Plan's preparation process.

5. **Summary**

This item provides members with an update on:

- The review of the Council's Local Plan; and
Public consultation on the "Issues and Options" document.

6. Supporting Information

6.1 The Government requires all Local Authorities to have an up to date Local Plan that sets out how many homes it will provide, and its approach to permitting new development. We have reached an important stage in the Review of the Local Plan which involves producing an "Issues and Options" document. It is important to note that this is not a draft plan but a discussion document which is being put forward for public consultation.

Aim of the Plan

6.2 At its simplest the Local Plan wants to make Slough a better place for Slough people. We also recognise that it has an important role to play within the region and want Slough to continue its role as a thriving commercial centre.

6.3 Slough has been very successful in accommodating growth in the past and we want it to continue to do this for the benefit of future generations. Most of the new housing and facilities that we are proposing are required to meet the needs and aspirations of our existing population and so it is important that it takes place in a way that supports our local communities.

6.4 We want to enable our residents to improve their health, wealth and well-being, and establish the reputation of the town as a place where people '*choose to work, rest play and stay*'. One of the key words within this statement is that we want Slough to be a place where people want to stay. Our aspiration is to make Slough a place where people have everything that they need to be able to 'live locally' and are able to stay throughout the various stages of their life.

Objectives

6.5 In order to achieve our vision for Slough we have identified 14 objectives. One is to meet the need for around 927 new houses a year in or around Slough and the second is to create 15,000 new jobs over 20 year period.

The Big Strategic Issues

6.6 The "Issues and Options" consultation document (at appendix 1) identifies the following big strategic issues for Slough:

- *How can we meet as much of our Objectively Assessed Housing Need of 927 dwellings a year as close as possible to where these needs arise?*
- *How we can offer a wide choice of high quality housing and create balanced communities?*
- *How can Slough maintain its role as an economic "powerhouse"?*
- *How can we support the creation of an additional 15,000 jobs?*
- *How we can revitalise Slough town centre as a major retail, leisure and commercial centre?*
- *How can we get the maximum benefits out of the growth of Heathrow airport and mitigate for any adverse environmental effects?*
- *How can we enable our suburban areas to continue to absorb the growth in population without losing the distinctive character of individual neighbourhoods?*
- *How can we deal with the problems of traffic congestion to ensure that people can get around Slough?*
- *How can we enhance the quality of the built and green environment in Slough and improve the overall image of the town?*

6.7 The formulation of these issues and options has taken into account national and local policies, the results of all of the technical evidence that has been gathered and other existing strategies.

New Spatial Options for development

6.8 In order to provide more housing we have produced a number of strategic 'Spatial Options' to be put forward for public consultation , including:

- A. Expanding the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
- B. Expanding the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
- C. Creating a new residential Neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
- D. Regenerating selected areas:
 - D1 - Canal basin
 - D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip
 - D3 – Chalvey regeneration
- E. Estate Renewal
- F. Intensification of the suburbs
- G. Redeveloping Existing Business Areas for housing
- H. Releasing land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
- I. Releasing land from the Green Belt for 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. Building in other areas outside of Slough

6.9 More details of these options are set out in the Summary document at Appendix 1.

6.10 It is recognised that developing these options will be very difficult given the shortage of land in Slough and the level of congestion. Some of the options involve building outside Slough which is outside of our control. Not meeting housing needs locally would, however, increase overcrowding, homelessness and force people to move away from Slough. It would also reduce our ability to provide affordable housing.

6.11 The document makes it clear that it is important that we provide the right type of housing in order to create a balance community in Slough. This will mean providing housing of the right size, tenure and design. It will be important to provide more family housing and specialist accommodation. We will also have to insist upon making sure that new housing is well designed and meets minimum size standards.

6.12 We need to make the most of our diverse neighbourhoods to enable people to be able to live locally within their community which means providing facilities and creating an environment where people feel 'happy and at home' and they can meet many of their day to day needs without using their cars. Although housing may be the top priority it will be essential that all necessary physical and social infrastructure is provided to support residents.

6.13 The Local Plan will also have to plan for economic growth to ensure that there are sufficient jobs in Slough. The shortage of land means that new employment development will have to be focused in the town centre and close to Heathrow. We also need to halt the decline of the town centre as a shopping centre and revitalise it as a commercial and residential area where people choose to work and live.

6.14 To achieve all of this we will have to change the perceived image of Slough. One way in which we will do this is by insisting that all new development is high quality and well

designed. We will need to have a strategy for encouraging investment in the town and making sure that we get the best value for every pound that is spent in Slough.

6.15 It is recognised that the scale of growth being proposed to meet the needs of our population will add to congestion and, if not properly controlled, will have an impact upon the attractiveness and quality of environment. As a result the plan will have to find ways of mitigating these effects as far as is possible. This could include having to have policies which restrain the use of the private car so that more people use public transport or walk or cycle.

Next Stages for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough

6.16 The consultation on the “Issues and Options” document is mainly being carried out online (at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan). A consultation event for the public will also be held at The Curve on 13th February at 7pm.

6.17 It is important that we engage with as many stakeholders as possible and so any suggestions the Wellbeing Board may have as to how this can be done would be welcome.

6.18 Once we have taken account of the responses to the consultation and carried out the necessary technical work, we anticipate producing a “Preferred Options” Local Plan by October 2017.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The Local Plan is an important document for Slough. It sets out the kind of place the Council wants Slough to be and (once finalised) will be used to make decisions about planning applications and development projects for the next 20 years.

7.2 Comments are being sought on the “Issues and Options” document for the Review of the Local Plan and further reports to the Wellbeing Board once the “Preferred Options” document has been finalised can be provided as required.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Planning for Slough’s Future: Summary of the Issues and Options Consultation document