

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning committee **DATE:** 5th July 2017
CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Stimpson, Planning Policy Lead Officer
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 87 5820
WARD(S): ALL

PART I

FOR DECISION

REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH - REPORT OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members about the representations received during the consultation on the Issues and Options document from January to March 2017. It also includes the proposed high level responses to representations which will be set out in detail in the "Report on Public Consultation" which will be published.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

That Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That the summary of the responses received as a result of public consultation on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan and comments set out in this report .be noted
- b) That the "Report on Public Consultation" setting out the Council's response to representations be published

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

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

Ensuring that local needs are met within Local Plans will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

1. *Protecting vulnerable children*
2. *Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities*
3. *Improving mental health and wellbeing*
4. *Housing*

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Ensuring that development is properly planned in Slough will contribute to the following Outcomes:

- *Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.*
- *Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.*
- *Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.*
- *Our residents will have access to good quality homes.*
- *Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents*

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications.

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That the Committee remain aware of work on the preparation of Issues and Options for the Local Plan.	Failure to be aware of the Issues and Options could affect progress on the Review of the Local Plan for Slough.	Agree the recommendations.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

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**

Introduction

- 5.1 The consultation on the Issues and Options document was the latest stage in the review of the Local Plan for Slough. It followed the process set out in the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and was designed to meet the requirements of 'Regulation 18'¹ which provides the rules for the initial stages of plan production. This means the results can be used as evidence to support a final Plan when it is submitted.
- 5.2 The Issues and Options Consultation document was a discussion paper that was intended to highlight the important questions that the new local plan will have to address rather than a formal draft plan.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/regulation/18/made>

- 5.3 Consultation on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan, along with the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulations Assessment and evidence base ran for the required six weeks from 16th January 2017 to 27th February and was extended (due to an administrative error) for additional two weeks for residents in Wexham to respond.
- 5.4 The next stage of the process will be to produce a “preferred spatial strategy” that will bring together the evidence base and responses to the consultations to date. It is anticipated that this will set out a list of preferred sites for development as part of a comprehensive spatial strategy to enable planning to support housing delivery and protect investment, particularly in the Town Centre. Progress on a detailed development management policies and a final plan will then continue but be in part dependent on the time table for deciding about the proposed third runway at Heathrow.

Regulatory requirements for Consultation ('Regulation 18')

- 5.5 The Government sets the rules for who the local planning authority should notify as part of the consultation in order that both specialist knowledge and local opinions can be taken into account in the decision making process. These can be grouped into those with specific statutory responsibilities (such as local planning authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Primary Care Trust); bodies which represent the interests of people affected by the Plan (e.g. people with disabilities); and others who have expressed an interest in the plan such as developers, local businesses and residents.
- 5.6 We also followed the process in the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (January 2017). A Statement of Consultation will be finalised in due course, but the key elements are set out below.
- 5.7 In order to try to engage a broader range of people and try out new ways of consulting on planning matters the Policy team worked with the Communications team to utilise social media to raise awareness and gather informal views on the Consultation by creating a Facebook page, tweeting from the council's Twitter account, and creating a Streetlife page.
- 5.8 The Facebook page, “Planning Slough's Future” was dedicated to the Consultation, linked to the relevant SBC Web page and the consultation form. A targeted advert to people geographically near Slough reached 23,688 people and generated 371 “comments”, “shares” or “likes”. This reached a new audience of people who had not expressed an interest in the Plan. The Communications team also posted a number of ‘Tweets’ about the consultation from the Council's twitter account; and similarly posted on the Councils ‘Streetlife’ page.
- 5.9 This was the first time we have used social media in this way and it has been a useful tool in raising awareness about the Plan. The breadth and informal nature of the responses means they can only be taken into account generally rather than specifically, however it has enabled the plan to reach a new audience and, resources permitting will be used again.

Consultation Process

- 5.10 The formal consultation included notifying people through a range of methods:

- Publishing the full range of consultation documents online making them available to download free of charge.
 - Distribution of over 1000 leaflets and magazines in Council Libraries across the Borough, including the Curve.
 - Direct emails and letters to over 430 persons and bodies on the Council's consultation list (who have asked to be kept informed of the plan) including statutory Consultees such as adjoining local authorities, Parish Councils, organisations and businesses, community groups and interested individuals.
 - Reference copies of the consultation documents made available at Council Libraries with exhibition boards advertising the consultation and public meeting moved around the Borough throughout the consultation period.
 - Radio interviews and press release to local media
 - Awareness raising with Members including notification on Member Briefing note
 - Specialist presentations from Officers at meetings including Parish Councils, Slough Wellbeing Board, Town Centre Partnership and Slough Business Community partnership meeting
 - Evening public meeting on 13th February at the Curve
- 5.11 General feedback received from events and emails was welcomed but those people or organisations wanting to fully engage in the process were encouraged to submit formal representations.
- 5.12 An online response form/questionnaire was made available on the Council's website that asked structured questions about the major issues raised in the Issues and Options document, and their views on the specific Spatial Options.

Results of public consultation

- 5.13 There were 538 representations to the Issues and Options consultation. This included those who completed forms and who submitted their own responses.
- 5.14 These responses came from a mix of individuals, community groups, landowners and developers and other local authorities. The vast majority of responses (470) came from people who were objecting to the proposed option to build a Northern Expansion of Slough in South Bucks.

Specific Consultation Bodies

- 5.15 The Town and Country Planning Act, that sets the rules for consultation, requires that certain 'specific' bodies are consulted. These include those representing particular interests such as flooding and those that geographically adjoin the Borough who are likely to be affected by the plan, or have specialist information to inform it. Their responses and continuous engagement in the next stage of the process will be important in deciding what sites, types and levels of development to promote.
- 5.16 The details of those who the Council consulted are provided in the supporting statement of consultation. These include the Environment Agency, Natural and Historic England, health, water and waste water providers, and county, parish and district Councils. Those that did not respond at this stage include the Homes and Communities Agency, Network Rail and the police. They will be consulted as needed in the evolution of the plan.

- 5.17 25 responses were received and their responses to the strategic questions and spatial options are included in the responses section below.
- 5.18 The general comments made by these consultees can be summarised as follows:
- 5.19 Level of detail: there was insufficient detail to provide full response but generally supported the policy responses taken in the document.
- 5.20 Joint working: The desire and need to work jointly as the plan progresses on issues of agreement and differences (on issues such as housing, employment, transport, waste and health) including through the Duty to Cooperate and producing Memoranda of Understanding.
- 5.21 Housing: support for meeting as much of the need as possible, recognition of the challenges faced to meet identified need, including for affordable housing, the need to clarify the actual shortfall within the given range.
- 5.22 Social Infrastructure: the need to also plan for additional infrastructure and respect the capacity of existing facilities (local amenities, parks, schools, GPs, hospitals) to support housing and employment; and protect existing historic sites, including gardens.
- 5.23 Transport infrastructure: Road, rail and bus– **Transport for London** and **Highways England** support a restraint based approach to car use to avoid increased development in Slough impacting on their network capacity (including management of car parking volumes; increasing residential and employment capacity around stations, and introducing bus and cycle infrastructure). **Bucks CC** expressed detailed concerns about traffic effects. This included the need to liaise on phasing and deliverability in order to address cumulative impacts from development arising from the Local Plan with that already committed.
- 5.24 Expansion of Heathrow Airport: Agreement that housing, employment and other development needs are better considered when they are more clearly understood. Support for the approach to preparing the Local Plan once implications around expansion are clearer.
- 5.25 Utilities: Water and waste water, commitment to work with the council to meet capacity needs in the right timescales.
- 5.26 Environment: Climate change, flooding, contaminated land and biodiversity: the need to consider and strengthen where possible the policy response to these both for the health and well-being of the local community as well as meet statutory requirements.
- 5.27 Green Belt: support for relaxation of policy by some (e.g. Wexham Hospital) and objection elsewhere (including strong objection to the northern expansion): more detail is set out in the spatial options below.
- 5.28 Soundness: **Chiltern and South Bucks Councils** stated that they do not consider the Council has met the Duty to Cooperate because we have brought forward the option of building on Green Belt land in South Bucks in a unilateral way. They also state that because Slough cannot deliver certain options outside

of its administrative boundary it fails the test of soundness in terms of deliverability.

Comments:

- 5.29 The consultation was successful in obtaining responses from most of the Specific Consultation Bodies.
- 5.30 One of the themes from these consultees was the lack of detail in the document. It is recognised that, because of its nature, the proposals in Issues and Options Consultation Document have not been fully tested or assessed against factors such as the need for new infrastructure provision. This will be carried out at the next stage.
- 5.31 It is also recognised that, because it didn't contain any policies, the document may not appear to give full weight to environmental issues. Once again this will be addressed in the next stages of the preparation of the plan.
- 5.32 With regards to the comments made by Chiltern and South Bucks, it is hoped that outstanding issues can be resolved through the Duty to Cooperate process and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.
- 5.33 It is recognised that the option of building the Northern Expansion of Slough is outside of the Council's control and, although assumptions may be made about it, it will not be included in the final version of the plan. The test of soundness regarding deliverability will only be applied to proposals in the Slough Plan.

Land Owners/Developers promoting sites

- 5.34 A total of 13 landowners responded to the Issues and Options consultation promoting their sites for inclusion within the Plan and some provided additional supporting information. .
- 5.35 In addition ten landowners submitted information about sites out of the Borough. These will be used to inform the development of options for delivering any shortfall in Slough outside of the Borough (Spatial Options J and K).

Comments:

- 5.36 When the response from landowners is taken into account, along with the results of the previous "Call for Sites" exercise, it appears that there is active support for most of the spatial options which can give some confidence that they could be delivered.

Response to the Spatial Options

- 5.37 The Issues and Options Document contained a series of Spatial Options. Whilst these have not yet been fully worked up it was considered that they were realistic enough to be the subject of public consultation.
- 5.38 A high level summary of the key response to all of the Spatial Options is set out below. This focuses upon the objections that have been received and sets out

high level comments about these objections. Detailed comments and responses will be set out in the Report on Public Consultation document.

Option A: Expansion of Slough Town Centre

- 5.39 There were only a limited number of objections to this which were mainly related to problems of parking and congestion. There were some concerns about “*over towering blocks of high rise flats*” and about some of the “*grotesque, unwanted buildings and developments*” that have taken place.
- 5.40 Additional comments which were provided in response to the question about whether the town centre should be revitalised as a commercial, leisure and retail centre are set out in the section below.

Comments:

- 5.41 The responses to Option A (expansion of Slough Town Centre) are noted. The key issues of parking and congestion in the town centre will be considered as part of emerging Transport Strategy and the traffic modelling that is being carried out to support this.

Option B: Expansion of the centre of Langley

- 5.42 There was only a limited response to the proposal to expand the centre of Langley which may not reflect the strength of feeling that has previously been expressed about proposals in this area. Some objectors take the view that “*Langley is a village and every effort should be made to keep it that way.*”
- 5.43 There were general concerns about traffic.
- 5.44 The main areas of concern expressed by organisations such as **Iver Parish Council**, the **Colne Valley Park** and the **Canal Trust** were about the possible expansion of the centre into the Green Belt to the north and the impact upon the canal.

Comments:

- 5.45 The responses to Option B (expansion of the centre of Langley) are noted. Development will only take place in the Green Belt if it can be shown that there are very special circumstances.

Option C: A new neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/National Grid site

- 5.46 There were very few objections to this proposal although one person was concerned about the loss of employment.
- 5.47 The **Canal Trust** “*supports the proposed redevelopment of the existing industrial site, which is currently not a positive neighbour to the canal*”.

Comments:

- 5.48 The responses to Option C (a new neighbourhood on Akzo Nobel/National Grid site) are noted. It is likely that this major opportunity site will attract more comments when more detailed proposals have been drawn up.

- 5.49 The proposal seeks to retain the main Akzo Nobel offices in order to minimise the loss of employment.

Option D1: Canal Basin

- 5.50 There were very few objections to this proposal. One person objected on the grounds that objector thought that *“the canal basin is the closest thing that part of Slough has to a quiet area.”* Another objected on the grounds that *“The current proposals for the canal basin site lack ambition and imagination. The scheme fails to exploit the opportunity to expand the area of water space to attract visitors and boaters.”*

Comments:

- 5.51 The responses to Option D1 (Canal Basin) are noted. Environmental impacts will be taken into consideration.

Option D2: New Central Cippenham Strip

- 5.52 There were very few objections to this proposal. The objections that were received were more about the overdevelopment of the area rather than site specific. One person objected on the grounds that *“We’ve had our fair share of new housing in Cippenham. What is really needed is more local jobs for local people.”*

Comments:

- 5.53 The responses to Option D2 (New Central Cippenham Strip) are noted. Although there would be a loss of employment land the current uses do not provide a large number of jobs.

Option D3: Chalvey Regeneration

- 5.54 There were very few objections to this proposal. One person objected to Chalvey *“being given such preferential treatment”*.

- 5.55 The **Chalvey Community Forum** made representations about the proposed redevelopment of Tower & Ashbourne House Site (which is outside of the Regeneration area). It was particularly concerned about the possible loss of the green area and its trees which would be *“a highly retrograde step of concrete over this small and extremely valuable oasis - especially as Slough and Chalvey in particular is already so deficient in public green space at street level.”*

Comments:

- 5.56 The responses to Option D2 (Chalvey Regeneration) are noted. The redevelopment of the Tower and Ashbourne blocks was not specifically included in this option. The retention of the green area will be considered in any planning application.

Option E: Estate Renewal

- 5.57 There were very few objections to this option which could at least be partly explained by the fact that it was not fully developed in the Issues and Options document and no specific sites were identified. One respondent stated *“there is a thin line between a council reinvesting in housing stock and a council becoming a housing developer. This must not drive Slough's regeneration.”*

Comments:

- 5.58 The responses to Option E (Estate Renewal) are noted.

Option F: Intensification of the Suburbs

- 5.59 There were a number of objections to the option of intensifying development in the suburbs. One objector stated *“Far too many houses have already been built and are continuing to be built in Langley - it used to be a nice village but now it is just an overcrowded gridlocked extension of Slough!”*
- 5.60 **Britwell Parish Council** endorsed the view that *“encouraging more infill would risk having a detrimental impact on the distinctive character, erode the openness and impact on neighbouring homes.”*
- 5.61 Further comments in response to the question about whether we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development are set out in the section below.

Comments:

- 5.62 The responses to Option F (Intensification of the suburbs) are noted. The future of Slough's suburban areas will be a major issue to be considered in the production of the Preferred Strategy.

Option G: Redevelopment of Existing Business areas for Housing

- 5.63 There were a limited number of objections to this option which was not site specific.
- 5.64 Objectors were concerned that *“we are losing small business affordable offices and SMEs are being priced out of the market”*. One respondent stated *“Slough is well known as a strategically important employment location benefitting from excellent air, rail and road transport connections, and this position should be maintained and enhanced where possible.”*
- 5.65 Further comments in answer to the question about whether we should continue to promote Slough as a major employment centre are set out in the section below.

Comments:

- 5.66 The responses to Option G (Redevelopment of Existing Business areas for Housing) are noted. The balance between the need for housing and employment will be an important issue to be considered in the production of the Preferred Strategy.

Option H: Release of Green Belt land in Slough for Housing

5.67 There were a significant number of objections to this option. Most of these came from people who were opposed to the principle of building in the Green Belt. Many came from people who were also opposed to Option J which was for the Northern Expansion of Slough.

5.68 A summary of comments received about some of the 10 sites in Option H are set out below:

St Antony's Field, Farnham Lane

5.69 **City of London for Burnham Beeches** "*object to the suggestion of the development of St Anthony's meadow for housing. This is within easy reach of Burnham Beeches and is also an important part of the buffer*".

Wexham Park Hospital Sites

5.70 **Frimley Park** confirm that the sites at Wexham Park Hospital "*remain developable and deliverable within the plan period as set out in the Call for Sites*".

Land North of Muddy lane, Stoke Poges Lane

5.71 The **Parochial Church Council**, who own part of the land, supports the development of the site on the grounds that it "*is surrounded on three sides by development and no longer fulfils the purpose of the Green Belt. The development policy for this site should include flexibility to deliver Church based and residential uses*".

Bloom Park. Middlegreen Road

5.72 **Colne Valley Park** objected to the development of land in Bloom Park on the grounds that "*it is considered further housing would be detrimental to the area and overwhelm the park which is currently being redesigned to incorporate improved access links to the canal corridor.*"

5.73 Another respondent also objected on the grounds that "*Development of Bloom Park would result in the loss of valuable green recreational space alongside the canal.*"

Land East of Market Lane

5.74 The **Colne Valley Park** opposed "*taking land classified as Green Belt for development, in particular land to the east of Market Lane, which is within the boundary of the Colne Valley Park*".

5.75 Another respondent stated "*We do not believe that the land east of Market Lane should be developed for housing. This is an essential barrier to separate urban sprawl from Slough into Iver.*"

Other Sites

- 5.76 **Thorney Lane LLP** owners of Land to the west of Hollow Hill Lane between the railway and Grand Union Canal propose to allocate part of the site for residential development so that the remaining part can be identified for biodiversity improvements.

Comments:

- 5.77 The responses to Option H (Release of Green Belt land in Slough for Housing) are noted.
- 5.78 Each of the individual sites will be assessed to consider the contribution that they make to the Green Belt. They will only be promoted for development if there are very special circumstances to justify this.
- 5.79 The land west of Hollow Hill Lane, Langley will be considered as part of the comprehensive proposals for the Northern Expansion of Slough in Option J1.

Option I: Release of Green Belt land for Employment in Colnbrook & Poyle

- 5.80 There were a significant number of objections to this option even though it didn't contain any specific sites. Most of these came from people who were opposed to the principle of building in the Green Belt and those who were also opposed to Option J which is for the Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.81 **Colnbrook Parish** objects on the grounds that *"the community will be severely affected by any such loss as the land is currently used by our residents for a wide range of recreational, social, educational, and sports and fitness pursuits. The issues and options in this plan will increase development pressure for housing and employment requirements, which will in turn have a negative impact upon the amenity, and attractiveness of the Parish."*
- 5.82 **Spelthorne** It is considered premature to release Green Belt until further information is made available on the possible Heathrow Expansion
- 5.83 **Colne Valley Park** objects to the proposed option and stated that *"If this option is to be taken forward into the local plan there must be a Colne Valley Regional Park policy to ensure that opportunities are taken from all development proposals that provide mitigation and compensation in line with the objectives of the Colne Valley Park."*
- 5.84 Another objector stated that *"any exemptions to Slough's current policy of protecting the Greenbelt "strategic gap" between it and West London, at Colnbrook, would severely damage the Colne Valley Park as well"*.
- 5.85 One respondent stated that *"Colnbrook/Poyle is very air cargo driven and release of Greenbelt for employment would attract more freight forwarders with massive trucks/trailers leading to further congestion on the roads"*.
- 5.86 **Grundons** stated that *"Whilst not strictly airport related employment development, Option I indicates that it may be appropriate to relocate the Lakeside Facility and other waste management facilities affected by HR3 within this land. This is supported."*

5.87 **Heathrow airport** *“are also supportive of your proposed approach to the development of Colnbrook and Poyle, being that Heathrow’s expansion proposals need to be confirmed before any unrelated development can be approved.”* Two Green Belt sites in the Colnbrook and Poyle area were submitted for warehousing. (Wiggins) (Goodman) .

Comments:

5.88 The responses to Option I (the release of Green Belt land for employment in Colnbrook & Poyle) are noted.

5.89 It is recognised that proposals for the expansion of Heathrow airport will have an impact upon the Colnbrook and Poyle area.

5.90 Any relaxation of existing Green Belt and Strategic Gap policies will only take place once the future of the Heathrow has been determined and it can be shown that there are very special circumstances for more airport related development in this location.

Option J1: Northern Expansion of Slough

5.91 There were a large number of objections (470) to this proposal which mainly came from residents of South Bucks.

5.92 A summary of the objections from Councils and organisations is set out below:

5.93 **Chiltern & South Bucks Councils**, are preparing a joint Local Plan for the two Councils. As part of this they have produced a Green Belt Assessment which has considered the Northern Expansion area but has rejected it for development on the grounds that it would be contrary to Green Belt policy. They are proposing to release some Green Belt land but have an agreement with Aylesbury Vale to accommodate 5,800 dwellings and a proportionate amount of employment land.

5.94 They consider that the spatial option involving Green Belt land in South Bucks has been brought forward by Slough BC in a unilateral way outside of the Duty to Cooperate which requires local authorities to engage constructively and actively on strategic plan making matters.

5.95 The fact that there has not so far been an opportunity to engage in a meaningful way at an early stage on strategic matters such as transport is a matter of concern.

5.96 **Buckinghamshire County Council** consider that it is unlikely that proposed urban expansion can be properly planned within the emerging Chiltern and South Bucks joint Local Plan.

5.97 *“The spatial strategy for Slough should focus on enabling as much development as possible within the existing boundaries of Slough and conserve Buckinghamshire’s distinctive rural character and landscapes”.*

5.98 *“BCC would like to see the Green Belt protected in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.”*

- 5.99 *"This level of development will have major operational impacts on Black Park and Langley Park changing them from rural urban fringe to full urban fringe sites."*
- 5.100 They stated that they would like to *"work with Slough Borough Council, South Bucks and other relevant bodies to better understand the infrastructure implications of the northern expansion and how infrastructure needs will be funded, delivered and managed."*
- 5.101 **Iver Parish Council** object on the grounds that *"it will require a significant erosion of the increasingly important South Bucks Green Belt, large parts of which are already under threat and likely to disappear under the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan. This has obvious and significant adverse impacts on flooding and drainage, landscape, conservation, ecology and other environmental considerations."*
- 5.102 *"Secondly, the massive impact of the increased traffic that 5,000 new 'garden suburb' dwellings would generate over the wider area will be difficult if not impossible to deal with effectively. This would undoubtedly have a very significant effect on Iver Parish which already has a serious problem with unacceptably high levels of traffic and adverse traffic impacts."*
- 5.103 **Stoke Poges Parish Council** objects on the grounds that the proposal *"is likely to destroy the character of this part of the County and in particular the areas around Wexham and Stoke Poges"*
- 5.104 *"It is in conflict with and ignores the principles of the NPPF which emphasises the importance of the Green Belt and in particular its role in checking unrestricted urban sprawl, preventing neighbouring towns from merging, and to assisting in safeguarding the countryside."*
- 5.105 **Burnham Parish Council** main area of concern is East Burnham, bordering the George Pitcher Memorial Ground to the west, and Blackpond Lane to the east. They object on the basis that *there is insufficient evidence that Slough has robustly assessed all other reasonable options for meeting its needs, prior to considering the northern expansion, and therefore the test for 'exceptional circumstances' has not been passed. The land has already been assessed and discounted by SBDC / CDC in their emerging local plan*
- 5.106 **Farnham Royal Parish Council** *"would not support any Northern expansion of Slough. To do so would fundamentally destroy the character of the semi-rural settlements that mark the boundary between Slough and South Bucks"*
- 5.107 *"It is important to ensure that the village retains its separate cultural and historical identity by maintaining as much of the Green Belt buffer zone between it and Slough as possible."*
- 5.108 **Wexham Parish Council** *"rigorously objects to the northern expansion plans of Slough's emerging Local Plan that involves the taking of Green Belt land in our Parish and its environs for housing. We respectfully point out that, as identified within the emerging plan that areas within the boundaries of Slough could be developed and housing densities increased."*
- 5.109 *"It is our view that the Chiltern & South Bucks emerging Local Plan respects the value and quality of our countryside and the character and setting for our*

villages. The proposal from Slough will inescapably destroy the character of this part of South Buckinghamshire and in particular the areas around Wexham”.

- 5.110 **Wexham Parish Residents Association** object to the option on the grounds that
- 5.111 *“The expansion into South Bucks would mean the disappearance of valuable Green belt land that enhances the lives of both Slough Borough and South Bucks residents. The important separating margins between Slough and South Bucks boundaries will be eroded leading to the deterioration of the local identity of the villages and the pride of the villagers”.*
- 5.112 *“Development on the areas covered by the proposed Northern expansion of Slough (into South Bucks) plan will increase impervious area and will increase surface water flows in already fragile water courses. The increases in flows will lead to increased flooding of areas that already experience water ingress during storm events and also will increase the flood risk to properties not subjected to water ingress at the present time.”*
- 5.113 **Colnbrook Parish Council** *“strongly objects to the general expansion of Slough into the parished areas.”*
- 5.114 **Historic England** *“would be unlikely to consider any housing development within the Registered parkland to be acceptable and any proposed housing within the setting of the Park should have regard to the potential impact on its significance”.*
- 5.115 **The Colne Valley Park** *“objects to Slough’s proposed expansion northwards into SBDC area, given that the Chiltern & South Bucks authorities are already looking to release Green Belt land to satisfy their own housing need. A lot of this released land will be within the boundary of the Colne Valley Park. Any encroachment of Slough’s housing need into SBDC within the Colne Valley Park will exacerbate the losses to Green Belt land and the contiguous nature of the Colne Valley Park”.*
- 5.116 *“If this option is to be taken forward into the local plan there must be a Colne Valley Regional Park policy to ensure that opportunities are taken from all development proposals that provide mitigation and compensation in line with the objectives of the Colne Valley Park.”*
- 5.117 **Inland Waterways Trust** Object on the grounds that *“The canal between Bloom Park and Hollow Hill Lane is of strategic importance as a green corridor. The loss of the Green Belt to the north of the canal within South Bucks District Council would destroy this valuable recreational amenity.”*
- 5.118 **Burnham Beeches** *“strongly object to the area of search that includes part of East Burnham as this has the capacity to greatly increase negative impacts on Burnham Beeches. Development in the Stoke Poges area also has the potential to negatively impact on Stoke Common SSSI (also owned and managed by the city of London)”*
- 5.119 The general public submitted a range of individual objections. Although they were all different many of them made the following points:

- The plan is at variance with the principles of the National Planning policy Framework which emphasise the importance of the Green Belt and in particular its role in checking unrestricted urban sprawl, preventing neighbouring towns from merging and to assist in safeguarding the countryside.
- It goes against the principles of the Chiltern and South Bucks Local plan currently in development which has already considered and discounted the areas in question for their own Local plan.
- The Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan will respect the value and quality of our countryside and the character and setting of our towns and villages. Slough's proposal would destroy the character of this part of Buckinghamshire and in particular the areas around Wexham Stoke Poges Farnham Royal and Burnham. It should be noted that a planning application to build a school on land to the west of Crown lane which lies in the defined area in Burnham has been refused in the past year
- The proposals are grossly unfair to the people of South Bucks who have chosen to live in a semi-rural location safe in the knowledge that their environment is protected by the Green Belt which covers Slough's Northern Boundaries. The urbanisation of the Green Belt in South Bucks would also destroy a valuable part of the Green Belt that specifically fulfils the function described within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- South Bucks are in a similar position but they have resolved the problem by coming to an arrangement with Aylesbury vale District Council for them to make land available for the excess houses and Slough could come to a similar arrangement with one or more of the Berkshire Authorities.
- Slough's housing needs should be met in Slough.
- Some of the areas are subject to flooding
- The development will result in more traffic and congestion
- There is a lack of infrastructure to meet existing facilities. Additional development will make this worse
- It will have an impact upon the countryside, open space and wildlife
- There will be an increase in pollution due to more car usage.

5.120 Some Councils made representations which were not objecting to the proposed Northern Expansion.

5.121 **Windsor & Maidenhead** *“recognise that a northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks is a possible way of meeting a greater proportion of the housing needs in the Housing Market Area and could see the benefit of further work in this area.”*

- 5.122 **Bracknell** “supports Slough Borough Council in pursuing these Options further since they appear to represent logical expansions of the built up area of Slough and potentially sustainable forms of development.”
- 5.123 **Wokingham** commented that *The deliverability of development in the adjoining South Bucks District Council and RBWM is unknown. “From the consultation material it would appear that Slough Borough has made approaches but no response is referenced.”*

Response

- 5.124 It is recognised that there are very strong objections to Option J which is for the Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.125 One of the main arguments made by objectors is that the proposed northern expansion is contrary to Green Belt policy.
- 5.126 It is recognised that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 5.127 It is also recognised that the urban expansion could conflict with some of the purposes of the Green Belt such as checking unrestricted sprawl, preventing towns from merging and safeguarding the countryside. The Issues and Options document identified a wide area of search. The Council has now commissioned some more work to identify a form of development which will, amongst other things, seek to minimise the impact of development upon the Green Belt.
- 5.128 It is recognised that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances but the NPPF allows this to happen through the review of the Local Plan.
- 5.128 Chiltern, South Bucks and Windsor & Maidenhead are all currently reviewing their Local Plans and are releasing Green on the grounds that there are very exceptional circumstances to justify this. The same test will have to be applied to the proposed Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.129 The Chiltern and South Bucks Plan has not identified any land north of Slough for Green Belt releases even though this was suggested by Slough Borough Council as a way of meeting local housing needs. It is, however, now necessary for them to reassess whether this should be released to meet Slough’s un met housing needs. This would require a different Green Belt assessment to the one that has been carried out so far and could form part of a strategic review of Green Belt in the area.
- 5.130 The Council has considered an option of seeking to build the housing elsewhere in a similar way to which Chiltern and South Bucks have got an agreement with Aylesbury Vale. It has not yet identified a District that is prepared to take this additional housing. In any case failing to meet yet more needs in the local area where it arises would add to the problems of affordability and the lack of affordable housing in the area.
- 5.131 It is recognised that greenfield development will inevitably result in the loss of some open land and a change in the character of the area. The proposed

“Garden Suburb” could, however, be built in such a way as to increase access to countryside and green spaces and designed to create a new attractive environment.

- 5.132 Whilst local residents may have the expectation that Green Belt land would remain permanently open, the NPPF does allow for the periodic review of Green Belts through Local Plans. Slough has previously released land for housing from the Green Belt for housing through its Local Plan and South Buck and Chiltern are currently proposing to do the same. Carrying out a further review of Green Belt to accommodate a Northern Expansion of Slough is therefore part of the normal planning process which residents should be aware of.
- 5.133 Any proposal for a Northern Expansion of Slough would have to be judged upon its own merits and so previous decisions on development in the Green Belt should not be taken as a precedent.
- 5.134 Respondents have also raised a number of non-Green Belt objections to the proposed Northern Extension.
- 5.135 Any development of this scale will generate additional traffic which has the potential to cause congestion upon the local roads. As a result the Council has commissioned work to produce a form of development which will seek to reduce this by reducing the need to travel and encouraging other forms of transport. This will be subject to testing once the new transport model for the area has been completed.
- 5.136 It is recognised that some areas within the area of search for the Northern Expansion are liable to flood. As a result the Council has commissioned work to identify a form development which will minimise flood risks. It may be possible to use the new development to provide flood storage which will reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 5.137 It is recognised that there is pressure upon existing infrastructure in the area. The scale and nature of the proposed Northern Expansion is such that there should be enough land and finance available to ensure that the proposed development is able to provide all of the infrastructure that residents will need. The Council has commissioned work to demonstrate how this could be done.
- 5.138 Any development would have to ensure that it met the highest environmental standards.

Option J2: Southern Expansion of Slough

- 5.139 There were a significant number of objections to this option. Most of these came from people who were opposed to the principle of building in the Green Belt and those who were also opposed to Option J which is for the Northern Expansion of Slough.
- 5.140 **Windsor & Maidenhead** was surprised that sites in RBWM had been included in the Issues and Options document since they had been included in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Borough Plan. It therefore requested that in order to prevent duplication and confusion these sites should not be included in the Preferred Options.

- 5.141 **Chiltern and South Bucks** state that *“the consultation document fails to acknowledge that it is proposing to accommodate Slough’s unmet housing needs on a site brought forward in another local plan in order to meet the needs of the borough in which the site is located.”*
- 5.142 **Colnbrook Parish Council** stated that it *“strongly objects to the general expansion of Slough into the parished areas. Colnbrook with Poyle has a particularly historic environment dating back to 12th Century, being first mentioned as a settlement in 1106 and this must be preserved.”*
- 5.143 The only site specific comment came from **Historic England** which stated that *“the area north of The Queen Mother Reservoir contains three grade II listed buildings at Ditton Farm and may be within the setting of the grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden of Ditton Place. Development here would be only be acceptable if it retained the listed buildings within a sensitive setting, which suggests that only the northern half of the site may be appropriate for development.”*
- 5.144 **Bracknell Forest Borough Council** *“supports Slough Borough Council in pursuing these options further since they appear to represent logical expansions of the built up areas of Slough and potentially sustainable forms of development”*.

Comment:

- 5.145 The responses to Option J2 (Southern Expansion of Slough) are noted.
- 5.146 It is recognised that there is an overlap between this option and the proposals within the Windsor & Maidenhead Borough Plan. We will continue to pursue this option through representations on the plan and discussions under the Duty to Cooperate.

Option K: Build in other areas outside of Slough

- 5.147 There were a number of objections to this option. Where reasons were given for this it was mainly because people objected to the principle of building outside of the Borough. One respondent stated *“Slough is best improved by developing it as a dense 'city' rather than as a sprawling conurbation.”*
- 5.148 The response from adjoining Local Authorities focused upon some of the technical evidence behind the plan and the extent to which this should inform where un-met need might go.
- 5.149 **Chiltern and South Bucks** do not agree that South Bucks is within the same Housing Market Area as Slough have formally requested that *“Slough BC should re-consider the Berkshire housing and economic geography on functional and best fit basis, taking into account the Buckinghamshire work that identified housing and economic market areas.”*
- 5.150 They are also concerned that the division of Berkshire into two housing market areas means that *“there does not appear to have been any exploration of options within Western Berkshire for meeting unmet housing needs arising in Slough as part of the Eastern Housing Market Area”*

- 5.151 With regards to meeting more housing in RBWM, Chiltern and South Bucks state that *“Slough have not robustly challenged Windsor & Maidenhead on a number of matters relevant to accommodating unmet housing needs”. “The Royal Borough effectively stopped looking for Green Belt options once it had identified sufficient land to meet its own objectively assessed development needs.”*
- 5.152 **Wycombe** recognise that Slough have a different view on the position of South Bucks within the East Berks HMA but *“believe that that there is, on a best fit basis in relation to the local plans being prepared, a Bucks HMA consisting of the four Bucks Districts of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe”.*
- 5.153 In terms of the scope for accommodating unmet needs, Wycombe considers that *it does not have capacity to accommodate unmet needs from Slough.*
- 5.154 **Bracknell** considers that *“further effort should be focused on Slough Borough’s full objectively assessed housing need being met within the HMA. If, after rigorous examination of all possible sites (including those in the Green Belt) in the HMA, there remains unmet need, Duty to Cooperate discussions should be held with Authorities in all surrounding HMAs (not just the West Berkshire HMA).”*
- 5.155 **Spelthorne** *“wish to be assured that all of the options have been fully explored both within Slough and through a consistent dialogue with the surrounding authorities under the Duty to Cooperate, especially with the potential options of a north and south expansion of Slough.”*

Comment

- 5,156 The responses to Option K (build in other areas outside of Slough) are noted.
- 5.157 It is recognised that there are different views upon the functional geography of the area, but the plan is being prepared on the basis that Slough is in the same Housing Market Area as Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks and is in the East Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area.
- 5.158 It is noted that no Authorities have identified any capacity with their area to meet Slough’s un-met need but discussions will continue to take place under the Duty to Cooperate.

Alternative Options

- 5.159 **Chiltern and South Bucks** criticised the consultation document for not including an option that seeks to meet all of the Borough’s development needs within its own boundaries. The Councils stated *“it would be reasonable for a ‘Slough to consume its own smoke’ option to be considered further, particularly as, for example, the housing supply that might result from Option E (Estate Renewal) and Option G (Re-develop existing business area for housing) have not been quantified and require further testing.”*
- 5.160 A number of respondents (such as Chiltern, South Bucks, RBWM and Bracknell) criticised the Issues and Options Document for not being clearer as to what the extent of the housing shortfall was. Nevertheless there was general recognition that there would be un- met need.

- 5.161 **Windsor & Maidenhead** stated that *“there is a recognition that due to the tightly drawn boundary around the authority, its built up nature and large quantity of employment land that meeting this need in full will be difficult to achieve.*
- 5.162 **Wycombe** noted *“the challenge you face as an authority in seeking to meet your assessed need for housing and other forms of development”.*
- 5.163 **Spelthorne** noted *“that Slough will be unable to meet its OAN within its own boundary.”*

Comments:

- 5.164 The lack of a precise quantification of Slough’s potential un-met housing need is recognised. All of the options require further testing and technical work before the Preferred Strategy can be produced. This will enable the size of the potential shortfall to be firmed up.
- 5.165 With regards to Chiltern and South Bucks criticisms, the Housing Capacity Study did quantify how much net additional housing could come from the Estate Renewal option and included a figure for new housing from prior approvals for the change of use of existing business premises to residential. The option for further loss of business areas to housing has not been fully assessed.
- 5.166 Chiltern and South Bucks have also raised questions about the balance between the planned housing and job growth in Slough. Building more houses on existing business areas would mean that even more of Slough’s employment land needs would not be met within the Borough.
- 5.167 It is noted that no respondent put forward any new options.
- 5.168 Subject to further technical work being carried out, it would appear that there is no reasonable option or combination of options that would enable Slough to meet all of its housing and employment needs within its boundaries.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

- 5.169 In order to aid the consultation process we included ten questions in the Issues and Options document for people to answer. These reflected the major issues that have been identified.
- 5.170 116 people or organisations chose to answer at least one of the questions in the questionnaire. Although this may not be statistically very significant this does provide a flavour of people’s views. The extent to which people agreed with each question and a high level summary of the responses are set out summarised below:

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD BE PLAN TO MEET OUR LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS IN OR AROUND SLOUGH?

- 5.171 Over sixty percent (61%) of the people who answered the questionnaire agreed that “we should plan to meet our local housing needs in or around Slough”. Most of those who objected to this did so on the grounds that they thought that all of

needs should only be met in Slough. This was reflected by the hundreds of South Bucks residents who objected to the northern expansion of Slough but did not fill in the questionnaire.

- 5.172 People who did not agree that we should plan to meet our needs locally were asked where the new housing should go instead. Suggestions for this included:

“To the West or South of Slough within the county of Berkshire as Buckinghamshire have their own plans”

- 5.173 Others suggested that we should *“Explore Dedham and Pinewood area as they are not over populated.”* and that *“Other options to be considered, including further growth at sustainable settlements and transport hubs within South Bucks and Chiltern Districts”*.

- 5.174 There were no suggestions that we should look either to London or Surrey to meet Slough’s housing un-met needs.

- 5.175 Critically, when asked where the new housing should go, nobody came forward with any new proposals for where development could take place in Slough that we were not already aware of from the Call for Sites exercise and which had not already been considered in preparing the Issues and Options document.

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD BE BUILDING MORE HIGH QUALITY HOMES TO MEET FUTURE ASPIRATIONS OF LOCAL PEOPLE?

- 5.176 Three quarters (74%) of people who answered the questionnaire agreed that *“We should be building more high quality homes to meet future aspirations of local people.”* Those that disagreed mainly suggested that more affordable housing should be built.

- 5.177 Typical comments were: *“Affordable, not aspirational. Somewhere that existing residents can part-buy and part-rent”* or *“Modern versions of the Britwell housing seem a good model”* or *“Affordable housing for people struggling to get on the property market. Not Luxury apartments by the River that we see in Maidenhead.”*

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROMOTE SLOUGH AS A MAJOR EMPLOYMENT CENTRE?

- 5.178 The vast majority (82%) of people agreed with the suggestion that *“we should continue to promote Slough as a major employment centre.”*

- 5.179 Some people disagreed because they thought it wasn’t necessary to promote Slough stating that *“Slough is overflowing with people and the employment rate isn’t particularly high so no need to attract more people to the area”*.

- 5.180 Others were concerned about commuting and the effect upon infrastructure stating that *“We don’t need more commuters congesting our roads”*.

- 5.181 The overall conclusion to be drawn from the response to the public consultation is that the Local Plan will need to promote major employment in Slough.

5.182 A number of landowners or developers put forward sites for employment development. Most of these were previously submitted in the Call for Sites exercise and had been considered in the preparation of the Issues and Options Document.

DO YOU AGREE THAT SLOUGH TOWN CENTRE SHOULD BE REVITALISED AS A COMMERCIAL, LEISURE AND RETAIL CENTRE?

5.183 The vast majority (83%) of people agreed with the suggestion that “Slough Town Centre should be revitalised as a commercial, leisure and retail centre”.

5.184 Some people thought that it was not possible on the grounds that “*The town centre is dead and cannot be revitalised.*”

5.185 A few put forward alternative solutions such as “*Make the town centre smaller and use the space for what you need people*” or “*Redevelopment to nice apartments*”

5.186 As a result there is almost universal agreement that something needs to be done to the town centre.

5.187 Not everyone is appreciative of the regeneration that has taken place so far with comments like “*the biggest mistake was the pedestrianisation of the High Street area*” and “*The ugly 'Curve, what a monstrosity*”.

5.188 Some people think that we should limit what goes in the town centre to “*Leisure and retail only. Commercial should be left at the Industrial park.*”

5.189 The vast majority of respondents think that there should be a wide range of uses. “*The town centre needs a critical mass of few quality shops, supported by easy and plentiful parking and destination features. There also needs to be a university, and high-spending students in the centre. Given the town's ethnic diversity, it could develop quality ethnic shopping areas which would have regional pull*”.

5.190 One respondent stated “*Retail outlets should be a mixture of household names and local stores providing a wide range of products and services. Leisure facilities must appeal to all ages and pockets. Above all it should be welcoming, clean and safe to walk through.*”

5.191 Another made the point that “*The lack of a cultural offer and night time economy is the main barrier to economic growth in Slough. We need a strong arts, cultural and creative offer and related night time economy.*”

5.192 The main conclusion to be drawn from the consultation is that we need major new investment to comprehensively revitalise the town centre as a commercial, leisure and retail centre. This would support the expansion of Slough town centre as proposed in Option A of the Issues and Options document.

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROTECT THE SUBURBS FROM MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS?

5.193 The majority of respondents (68%) agreed that “we should continue to protect the suburbs from major development”.

- 5.194 Most of the objections came from South Bucks residents who are objecting to the Northern Expansion of Slough and are of the opinion that Slough should meet all its housing requirements in the borough boundary.
- 5.196 Comments included *“Meeting the future housing requirements of the borough within the existing boundaries of Slough should be the priority. This includes development within the existing suburbs of Slough and not outside the Slough borough boundary”*
- 5.197 Those that agreed that we should continue to protect the suburbs and stated: *“The suburbs are oversubscribed already - leave them..”* and *“.. the need for Slough BC to protect the distinctive sense of place of neighbourhoods such as Britwell”*
- 5.198 In taking the plan forward it will be necessary to balance up the legitimate view of South Bucks residents that the Green Belt should be protected with the views of Slough residents who may want the suburban areas where they live protected.

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD PLAN TO GET THE MAXIMUM BENEFITS AND MITIGATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE GROWTH AT HEATHROW?

- 5.199 The vast majority of people (83%) agreed that “we should plan to get the maximum benefits and mitigate the environmental impacts of the growth at Heathrow.” Those that objected were mostly opposed the expansion at Heathrow Airport as highlighted below:
- 5.200 One stated *“I totally oppose it - pollution levels already exceed that allowed and nothing can remove the impact of the horrendous noise the planes make..”*
- 5.201 Another made the point that *“The third runway will affect everyone with increased traffic and noise.*
- 5.202 Some people supported the expansion at Heathrow Airport on the grounds that *“The presence of a major international airport in such close proximity to Slough is a huge asset for the town. The opportunities to which Slough is exposed with regard to international business cannot be understated..”*
- 5.203 Another respondent suggested we should *“Support the third runway and work with companies and job seekers with regards to filling the extra vacancies that it will bring”*
- 5.204 Regardless of whether they supported or objected to the expansion at Heathrow Airport, respondents are concerned about the environmental impacts of growth at Heathrow Airport.

DO YOU AGREE WE SHOULD USE STRONG MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE PEOPLE USING THEIR CAR FOR SHORT JOURNEYS?

- 5.205 The majority (60%) of the respondents agree “we should use strong measures to discourage people using their car for short journeys. This would be by using other modes such as buses, walking or cycling”.

- 5.206 Some people disagreed as they thought that the bus service needs not only improving but made cheaper and more frequent *“Only if the bus services are vastly improved and routes reinstated, with evening and weekend services being re-provided to a number of areas”* and *“cycle routes are poor”*
- 5.207 Furthermore others stated that making it more expensive to use the car is not the solutions *“raising car parking cost is not the way to go otherwise people will shop OUTSIDE Slough”* and *“there shouldn’t be a congestion charge”*
- 5.208 Suggestions were put forward for measures to try to stop congestion getting worse such as *“Encourage local provision of shops, schools and leisure facilities, and a higher percentage of Slough jobs going to Slough people. Provide extra capacity at choke-points on congested road”*
- 5.209 Park and ride was also suggested by a few respondents as a way to stop congestion getting worse.
- 5.210 Another suggested we should *“Improve the cost of public transport”*
- 5.211 The main conclusion is that we do need to have measures to discourage people using their car for short journeys. However improved public transport needs to be in place to enable this and other transport solutions to reduce congestion. Even with all the measures in place it’s a culture change will be needed which is not that easy to achieve.

DO YOU AGREE THAT WE SHOULD INSIST UPON BETTER DESIGN TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF SLOUGH?

- 5.212 The vast majority of people (89%) agreed that we “should insist upon better design to improve the image of Slough. How we achieve this is something that will be taken forward in the next stages of the plan.

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE SLOUGH SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

- 5.213 A draft Scoping Report for the Local Plan was prepared and sent for comment to the prescribed Consultation bodies and relevant duty to cooperate bodies on 30th November 2016 (for 5 weeks to 5th January 2017); and consulted on as part of the Issues and Options Consultation.
- 5.214 Responses were received from Historic England (formerly English Heritage) which raised no objections just general comments; and Natural England who considered it would be pertinent to include reference to Burnham Beeches SAC in future reports; and advice for tackling climate change. Responses were received from South Bucks District Council and Spelthorne Borough Council. Neither made any objections just general comments of support and suggested minor amendments. These will be taken into account in reviewing the SA Scoping Report.
- 5.215 At present no response has been received from the Environment Agency. We may seek confirmation that they have no comments before publishing the Final Scoping Report.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Scoping Assessment for the Issues and Options Document

- 5.216 The Sustainability Appraisal report and the Habitat Regulations Assessment Scoping Report was published alongside the Issues and Option document in January 2017.
- 5.217 We received 11 comments from organisations including Natural England, Windsor and Maidenhead, Bucks, Bracknell Forest and South Bucks and Chiltern Councils and the City of London for Burnham Beeches SAC and Stoke Common. These were mainly general comments on minor errors and requests for further detail and to continue engagement under the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.218 Natural England fully supported the conclusion of the HRA Screening that all of the EU sites can be screened out other than Burnham Beeches SAC. They also agreed that air pollution and recreational disturbance are the two key issues which need further consideration; and recommended a joint approach to address them.
- 5.219 These responses will be taken into consideration in the next iteration of the Sustainability Appraisal report. Joint working arrangements have since been established for assessing and addressing implications from development on Burnham Beeches.

6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report shows that we successfully completed the consultation exercise for the Local Plan Issues and Options.
- 6.2 The response rate from organisations and statutory consultees was very good and provides a basis for developing the next stage of the Local Plan.
- 6.3 There were, however, only around 500 responses from the general public, very few of whom came from Slough. As a result, although this provides useful information, the consultation response cannot be relied upon as a conclusive proof of public opinion.
- 6.4 The majority of responses (470) were from people objecting to the proposed Northern Expansion of Slough. This demonstrates the strength of opposition to this proposal from organisations and residents in South Bucks.
- 6.5 No significant new proposals for development were put forward in the consultation which means that it could be concluded that there are no reasonable options which could accommodate all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough boundary.
- 6.6 The results of consultation will have to be taken into account in developing the Preferred Options for the Local Plan.
- 6.7 Consideration will also have to be given as to how we can increase the level of engagement in the preparation of the Local Plan, particularly amongst Slough residents.

6.8 A full response to all objections to the Issues and Options document will be published in a "Report on Public Consultation".

7. **Appendices Attached**

None

8. **Background Papers**

'1' - Review of the Local Plan for Slough Issues and Options Consultation Document January 2017