

## SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee **DATE** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020  
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**WARD(S):** All

### PART I FOR DECISION

#### LOCAL PLAN PREFERRED SPATIAL STRATEGY TIMETABLE

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Member about the proposed time table for preparing, approving and consulting on the Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Slough Local Plan.

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

The Committee is requested to resolve that the proposed timetable for the Local Plan Spatial Strategy consultation, which is set out in paragraph 5.15, be agreed.

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

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

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

- *Economy and Skills*
- *Regeneration and Environment*
- *Housing*

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

The proposed Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan will have impact upon the following Five Year outcomes:

- **Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to protect and enhance the local environment.
- **Outcomes 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will seek to ensure that we have a balanced housing market that can meet the range of housing needs in Slough.
- **Outcome 5: Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investments to provide opportunities for our residents.** The Preferred Spatial Strategy will promote areas for employment growth in Slough.

#### 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 approves the recommendation.	Failure to agree the proposed timetable for the Preferred Spatial Strategy will affect the Council's ability to bring forward the Local Plan and plan for development in the most sustainable way.	Agree the recommendations.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

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

#### 5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 All Councils have a duty to produce a Local Plan which set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development in their area. Plans have to make sufficient provision to meet housing and employment needs. At the same time they have to provide for conservation of the natural, built and historic environment and propose measures to address climate change.
- 5.2 The Government has set a deadline for all Local Planning Authorities to have an adopted up to date Local Plan by the end of 2023.
- 5.3 We have been working on our local Plan for some time beginning with the Issues and Options consultation in 2017 and following this up by agreeing an "emerging" Preferred Spatial Strategy. We were unable to progress this through the next formal stages because of the uncertainty as to what was happening with the proposed third runway at Heathrow. We were advised that it would be impractical to hold our Local Plan examination until the Secretary of State made a decision about the third runway.
- 5.4 It is now very unlikely that any proposal for a third runway at Heathrow will come forward in the short to medium term. This is partly because the Airports National Policy Statement which underpinned it, has been cancelled by the Courts. At the same time the Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact upon both Heathrow Airport and the airlines which use it. As a result we are now able to bring the Local Plan forward on the basis that the expansion of the airport will not be taking place but will have the opportunity to deal with any proposals that do come forward in a subsequent review of the Local Plan. This gives us the opportunity to promote and guide the growth that is needed in Slough in the most sustainable way through the Local Plan.
- 5.5 The first stage of this process is to agree what the Preferred Spatial Strategy for

Slough should be. The “spatial Strategy” can be described as the part of the Local Plan which identifies what the scale and pattern of development should be in the plan area. It also involves identifying the sort of strategic policies that will be needed to deliver the Strategy. More detailed Development Management policies will be produced in due course.

5.6 An “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy was agreed in 2018. The five elements of this were:

- **Delivering** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
- **Selecting** other key locations for appropriate development;
- **Protecting** the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs;
- **Accommodating** the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigating the impact;
- **Promoting** the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a “Garden Suburb”.

5.7 It is envisaged that the “preferred” Spatial Strategy, which we are intending to put out for public consultation at the end of the year, will be based upon these elements. The only exception being that we will have to produce a new strategy for the Colnbrook and Poyle area now that there is no longer the need to accommodate the proposed third runway at Heathrow.

5.8 We have made progress with many of these topics. The Centre of Slough Interim Planning Framework was agreed in July 2019. In order to develop this further we have now commissioned a Regeneration Framework for the Centre of Slough. A progress report on this was considered by Cabinet on 15th June and it is envisaged that when it is completed the relevant elements of this Study will be fed into the Spatial Strategy.

5.9 We will be updating proposals for other areas in the Borough such as Cippenham, Chalvey and Langley. We will also be consulting upon which of the Greenfield/Green Belt sites identified at the Issues and Options stage should be developed for housing.

5.10 A report on protecting the residential areas of the suburbs which contain family housing is included as a separate agenda item. This will form part of the strategy for the suburbs alongside proposals for enhancing and where appropriate developing the other parts of the suburban areas such as the neighbourhood centres.

5.11 We have now jointly commissioned, along with RBWM and Buckinghamshire, the final part of the Wider Area Growth Study. This will firstly identify the extent and nature of Slough’s unmet housing need and then recommend how this, and other unmet needs can best be accommodated. The northern expansion of Slough in the form of a Garden Suburb remains our preferred option but we will have to wait and see what the independent consultants conclude.

5.12 The Preferred Spatial Strategy will have to take account of all of the available evidence that has been produced and it will have to be shown to be viable and deliverable. Part of this will involve identifying what infrastructure is required.

5.13 It will also have to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which amongst other things will have to look at alternative options. We will also be identifying what

strategic policies will need to be put in place to implement the strategy and mitigate any adverse impacts.

- 5.14 The final responsibility for approving the Preferred Spatial Strategy lies with Cabinet. It is, however, proposed to develop the strategy through a series of reports to this Committee and a report to Scrutiny Committee before seeking Cabinet approval in October. There would then be a six week formal public consultation period in November and December.
- 5.15 The proposed timetable is set out below. It should be noted that this is dependent upon a number of other things being in place. This includes the Regeneration Framework and Wider Area Growth Study referred to above. It also relies upon sufficient progress being made on the Strategic Transport Investment Strategy which isn't due to be reported to Cabinet until November.

<b>Proposed Time Table for Spatial Strategy.</b>	
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Report to Planning Committee .
August	Special Planning Committee or Member Workshop?
9 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Report to Planning Committee
10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
12 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Approval by Cabinet
2 <sup>nd</sup> November to 11 <sup>th</sup> December	Six week consultation Exercise

- 5.16 The preparation of the Spatial Strategy is also being hampered by current working practices as a result of Covid 19. It is envisaged that a “virtual” public consultation exercise will have to be carried out. If further Member input is needed it may be necessary to have a Special Planning Committee or a wider Member Workshop in August. It should be noted that if there is any slippage in the time table the six week consultation period will have to be delayed until the new year in order to avoid Christmas.

## **6 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposed time table for the preparation of the Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Local Plan is intended to allow us to go out to public consultation on the important strategic planning issues that are facing Slough and help to promote sustainable development in the Borough..