

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE** 12th October 2020

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Pavitar Mann, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulation.

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

APPROVAL OF SLOUGH LOCAL PLAN PROPOSED SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval of the proposed Spatial Strategy of the Slough Local Plan for public consultation in November and December.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That the Slough Local Plan Proposed Spatial Strategy Consultation Document in Appendix A be agreed.
- b) That a six week public consultation exercise should be held beginning in November 2020 be agreed.
- c) That delegated powers be given to the Council's Planning Policy Lead Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Regulation, to make minor changes to the Consultation Document and proposed public consultation exercise.

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 Five Year Plan outcomes:

- **Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.** The Proposed Spatial Strategy will seek to protect and enhance the local environment and provide new housing and employment opportunities.
- **Outcomes 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.** The Proposed Spatial Strategy seeks 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 Proposed Spatial Strategy will promote areas for employment growth in Slough.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

The costs of preparing the Spatial Strategy and carrying out the consultation exercise will be met from the Local Plan budget. There are no other financial implications.

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That the Cabinet approves the recommendation.	Failure to agree the proposed Spatial Strategy for consultation 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

- 4.1 Under Section 13 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council must keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development.
- 4.2 These matters include the principal physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area, the principal purposes for which land is used in the area, the size, composition and distribution of the population of the area, the communications, transport system and traffic of the area, any other considerations which may be expected to affect those matters and such

other matters as may be prescribed or as the Secretary of State (in a particular case) may direct. The matters also include any changes which the Council think may occur in relation to any other matter and the effect any such changes are likely to have on the development of the Council's area or on the planning of such development. The Council must also keep under review and examine the above matters in relation to any neighbouring area to the extent that those matters may be expected to affect the Council's area and must consult with the local planning authority of the neighbouring area in connection with such matters.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("PSED") requires SBC to have due regard to: (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; and (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. 'Protected characteristics' are: gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

There are no equalities issues anticipated with this report.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 All Councils have a duty to produce a Local Plan for their area. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a positive vision and a framework for assessing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities. It also provides the opportunity for local people to help shape their surroundings.
- 5.2 The Government has set a target for all Local Planning Authorities to have one adopted by the end of 2023.
- 5.3 We have been working on our local Plan for some time. This began with the Issues and Options consultation in 2017 and was followed by agreeing an "emerging" Preferred Spatial Strategy. We were unable to progress the Local Plan through the next formal stages because of the uncertainty as to what was happening with Heathrow. It is now very unlikely that any proposal for the third runway will come forward in the short term and so we can now proceed with our plan on the basis that any new proposals for Heathrow can be dealt with in a review.
- 5.4 We are proposing to carry out public consultation on the proposed Spatial Strategy in November and December 2020 with the intention of preparing and

submitting the full Local Plan by the end of 2022.

- 5.5 The Spatial Strategy is just the first, but important, part of the Local Plan. It provides the vision and sets out what the pattern, scale and nature of development will be in Slough.
- 5.6 Environmental issues, including the need to deal with climate change, have been embedded in the choices made in the Spatial Strategy as to “what goes where” in the most sustainable way
- 5.7 The Spatial Strategy doesn’t make any site allocations at this stage. It also doesn’t contain any new policies. These will be developed once we have established what new infrastructure and mitigation will be needed to deliver the plan. They will also be informed by the new strategies that are being developed which will be brought to Cabinet in the next six months. These include the Strategic Infrastructure Plan, Local transport Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan.
- 5.8 Consulting the public, neighbouring authorities and relevant agencies about our proposals at this stage will help us make sure that we are able to produce a sound Local Plan. Publicising our vision and proposals for Slough should also help to stimulate development as part of the Council’s Covid19 recovery plan.

Key Facts

- 5.9 There are a number of interesting facts about Slough which highlight what some of the main planning issues are. Most of the statistics below come from the Centre for Cities “think tank” which compares data for the 62 largest towns and cities in the UK.
 - Slough is one of the smallest Councils and most densely built up areas in the country. There is shortage of land for new development.
 - Slough has one of the youngest populations in the country with high proportions of children and families who will need new homes in the future.
 - Slough has some of the highest levels of overcrowding with each person having on average 27.2 m² of space compared to an average of 36.5m² in other towns and cities.
 - Slough is one of the most diverse places in Britain. It is estimated that 150 different languages are spoken in its schools.
 - Slough has less greenery than other areas with only 80% of the tree cover of London. This and other environmental issues contribute to the poor image of the town.
 - Slough is an economic powerhouse. It is the most productive place in the country but it is not as prosperous as it should be.

- Slough is one of the best connected places in the country by road rail and air.
- Slough has a failing shopping centre and the lowest number of leisure and cultural attractions compared to any other town.
- Slough has some serious environmental problems which affect the health and well being of its residents. Many of these are related to high levels of traffic congestion.

5.10 All of these factors help to shape the proposed Spatial Strategy for Slough.

Housing Needs

5.11 Local Plans are required is to make sufficient provision for housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development.

5.12 The Government puts particular emphasis upon meeting housing needs and has produced a “standard” methodology for calculating what they are in each. This shows that there is an overall need for 17,860 new houses in Slough from 2016 to 2036. Taking account of completions over the first four years of the plan period, there is a need for 15,460 additional homes over the remaining 16 years at an average of 966 a year.

5.13 The fact that we have such a young growing population, high levels of overcrowding and a shortage of affordable housing means that the Spatial Strategy has to try to meet as much of these needs as it can. It also has to make sure that the new dwellings are of a high quality and provide a range of accommodation which meets the need for family housing.

5.14 In making provision for housing Local Plans have to take account of the principles of sustainable which seeks to balance economic, social and environmental objectives. The way in which the Spatial Strategy has done this, by concentrating development in the Centre of Slough and protecting other areas is explained in detail below.

5.15 The shortage of suitable land for housing means that it will not be possible to meet all of Slough’s all of Slough’s housing needs in the Borough. The proposed Spatial Strategy is likely to result in a shortfall of around 5,000 houses over the plan period and a shortage of family homes. .

5.16 One of the key principles of the Spatial Strategy is that local needs should be met as close as possible to where they arise. There is already a shortfall of housing in southern Buckinghamshire and a need to rebalance the housing market in Slough in order to provide more family housing. In order to address these issues and make up for the overall shortfall, the Spatial Strategy proposes that there should be the “cross border expansion of Slough”. How this

could be achieved through further joint working with neighbouring Authorities is explained in more detail below.

- 5.17 One of the reasons that the proposed Spatial Strategy is unable to meet all of Slough's housing needs is because we also have to meet the needs of the local economy and try to create sufficient jobs within the Borough.

Employment needs

- 5.18 The Local Plan has a target of creating 15,000 new jobs in Slough in the plan period.
- 5.19 The Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) (2016) predicted that in order to meet growth in the various sectors in the local economy an additional 14,680 jobs would be needed in Slough from 2013-2036.
- 5.20 All economic forecasts now have a large degree of uncertainty because of the effects of the Covid19 pandemic. It is too early to be able to carry out any new studies and so the proposed Spatial Strategy has had to be prepared in the absence of reliable forecasts of economic growth.
- 5.21 It is, however, possible to predict how many jobs will be needed to meet the growing population in Slough. The Local Housing Needs assessment (LHNA) (GL Hearn, 2019) sets out the most up to date position on labour supply growth using the standard methodology. This concludes that the growth in the economically active population would require 11,970 additional jobs in Slough over the period of 2019 to 2039. This forecast does not take account of any population growth that may occur as a result of the cross border expansion of Slough.
- 5.22 Consideration will also have to be given for the need to create new jobs to replace those likely to be lost as a result of the Covid19 induced recession.
- 5.23 Taking all of this uncertainty into account, the Spatial Strategy objective is to create 15,000 jobs in Slough. This should not be seen as limiting the opportunity for more employment growth, should that be possible.
- 5.24 Not all of these new jobs will need new floorspace or land but the opportunity for finding this in Slough is limited.
- 5.25 It was assumed that there would be a significant boost to the local economy as a result of the construction and subsequent operation of the proposed third runway at Heathrow. The severe impact upon the aviation industry from the Covid19 pandemic means that it is unlikely that any proposals for the expansion of Heathrow will come forward in the short to medium term. As a result the Spatial Strategy has been prepared on the basis that there will not be

any significant employment growth at the airport.

- 5.26 The Spatial Strategy does not propose that there will be any major employment development in the Colnbrook and Poyle area or the suburbs. The Strategy protects all Existing Business Areas from the change of use to non employment uses and encourages the regeneration of the Slough Trading Estate and Poyle Trading Estate. All of these areas are already fully developed and so it is not anticipated that there will be any significant increase in jobs in these areas.
- 5.27 As a result the only location with any real potential for employment growth is the Centre of Slough. The Panattoni and National Grid sites could provide around 37,000 m² of warehousing which could help meet some of the demand for distribution facilities. All other opportunities for job creation within the centre are likely to be in offices or the service sector.
- 5.28 One of the main objectives of the Spatial Strategy is therefore to create as much employment as possible in the Centre of Slough. It is therefore proposed to create an expanded Central Business District south of the railway station which could accommodate major office development. Details of this are set out in the Centre of Slough section below. This could generate a significant amount of new jobs but not a very wide range of employment opportunities.
- 5.29 One of the objectives of the Spatial Strategy is to try to make sure that more of the wealth that is generated in Slough stays in Slough. One way of doing this is to make sure that local residents have access to the better paid jobs that will be available in Slough. Another way of achieving this is to encourage more expenditure in Slough.
- 5.30 The concentration of new office development in the Centre of Slough will create the activity and spending power for the “employment led” regeneration of the area. This still relies upon there being the facilities in centre where people can spend their money.

Retail needs

- 5.31 Slough used to be a “Primary Regional Centre” and in 2006 it was ranked as the 57th most important shopping centre in the country. Ten years later this had dropped to 147th and it is now, likely to have fallen even further following the closure of Marks & Spencer and Debenhams.
- 5.32 Surveys have shown that its catchment doesn’t cover the whole of the Borough and so it is acting more like a large District Centre serving local needs.
- 5.33 Although the shopping centre’s decline is partly due to national trends there are also local circumstances. These include its image, a poor built environment, the lack of green spaces and a focal point and the lack of a historic core. There is

also a perception that the centre may not be as clean or safe as it could be.

- 5.34 There is also a lack of an evening economy and cultural and leisure amenities as explained below.
- 5.35 It is clear that retail can no longer deliver town centre regeneration in the same way that it did in the past.
- 5.36 As a result the Spatial Strategy has to plan for a significant reduction in the amount of retail floorspace in the Centre of Slough. This will mainly happen when the Queensmere and Observatory centres are redeveloped.
- 5.37 It is important to ensure that there will be a vibrant quality retail offer which can attract new business, meet the needs of future residents in the centre and continue to serve the existing local community.
- 5.38 Pedestrian counts have shown that around 9,000 people walked along the High Street which showed that, despite the closure of shops, it remains a popular destination. Footfall in Slough has also recovered better than many areas post lock down. One of the aims of the proposed Spatial Strategy is to promote the “rediscovery of the High Street” as the prime retail area. Details of this are set out below.
- 5.39 In contrast to Slough town centre, the Farnham Road and Langley District centres are thriving. An important part of the proposed Spatial Strategy is to support these and the neighbourhood centres in order to allow people to “live locally” if they want to without the need to travel.

Cultural and Leisure Amenities

- 5.40 The Council has provided an excellent range of formal leisure facilities but this has not been matched by the private sector. There is not a proper evening economy in the centre of Slough.
- 5.41 Research by the Centre for Cities found that Slough had the least number of amenities per person of all of the major towns and cities in the country. The main reason for the lack of bars, restaurants and arts facilities was thought to be due to commuting patterns, the concentration of jobs in the Trading Estate away from the centre and the proximity of Slough to other attractions.
- 5.42 The lack of facilities makes the centre of Slough less attractive to inward investment and is one of the reasons that some of the wealth generated in Slough doesn't stay in Slough. As a result the Spatial Strategy supports the provision of new leisure and cultural facilities and the creation of a proper evening economy within the Centre of Slough. This will be delivered through a combination of the Council's Cultural Strategy and Public Realm Strategy which

will create opportunities for activities throughout the centre.

Environmental Constraints

- 5.43 Slough is a densely developed area with a lack of greenery. It has 20% less trees per hectare than London. It has some high quality parks but an overall shortage of open space.
- 5.44 Slough does not have any nationally significant environmental sites but development could have an impact upon the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation. As a result a mitigation package is being agreed with Natural England which would involve the enhancement of Upton Court park. There is also a general need to improve the biodiversity and nature conservation value of the environmental assets that we have in the Borough..
- 5.45 Parts of the Borough are liable to flood and the Colnbrook and Poyle area is exposed to excessive aircraft noise. Some areas suffer from land contamination.
- 5.46 Slough suffers from poor air quality. There are currently 5 Air Quality Management Areas which have been declared due to breaches of the national standard. These are clustered along the A4 in the centre of Slough and around the M4/A4 in the Brands Hill area
- 5.47 Industrial processes and having the highest concentration of data centres in Europe will make it hard to meet our climate change targets.

Other Constraints

- 5.48 The biggest constraint to development in Slough is the shortage of land for development. Slough also suffers from traffic congestion.
- 5.49 Traffic modelling has shown that there is not enough highway capacity to cater for all of the additional trips that would be generated by the proposed development in the Spatial Strategy. Depending upon when building takes place, the roads in the Centre of Slough could be at capacity in the peak periods as soon as 2026. As a result the Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan will have to set out the Council's plans for making public transport the dominant mode of transport for travel to and from the centre.
- 5.50 All Local Plans also have to show that their proposals are viable and deliverable. There is evidence that the housing market in Slough does not always work properly and very few planning applications come forward with policy compliant levels of affordable housing and the necessary infrastructure contributions.

- 5.51 The Spatial Strategy has used the work carried out for the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework which took account of landowner's intentions and tested the viability of key sites. This showed that the scale of development proposed should be viable and deliverable.
- 5.52 The scale and pattern of development proposed in the Spatial Strategy also has to take account of the need to promote healthy, inclusive and safe communities. The need to maintain social cohesion is one of the factors that has influenced the policy of enhancing the suburban areas where most residents live.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.53 One of the ways in which we have tried to make sure that we have found the right balance between environmental, economic and social objectives is to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed Spatial Strategy.
- 5.54 This has flagged up a number of issues that have to be taken into account and consideration given to whether there are any reasonable alternatives to the proposed Strategy.
- 5.55 One of the key issues is that the Strategy fails to provide sufficient housing to meet local needs and there will consequently be a shortage of affordable housing.
- 5.56 There is uncertainty about whether the proposed economic and employment growth will take place. The fact that the expansion of Heathrow is no longer being planned for means that the impact upon the environment will be reduced.
- 5.57 There will inevitably be an environmental impact as a result of the scale of growth that is proposed. Proposals for mitigation of these impacts have not been fully developed but will be produced in the next stage of the Local Plan process.
- 5.58 The proposed distribution of development within the Spatial Strategy compares well with other reasonable alternatives. The policies and site allocations that will be contained in the Local Plan will be assessed in future Sustainability Appraisals

Vision and Guiding Principles

- 5.59 The Spatial Strategy has a Vision, a set of Objectives and some guiding principles. These are:

- We should aim to meet as many of our needs as possible in Slough, or as close as possible to where the needs arise.
- Development should be located in the most accessible locations, which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- We should promote inclusive growth with more of the wealth generated in Slough staying in Slough.

5.60 The overall aim is to make Slough a place where people want to “*work rest play and stay*”

Components of the Strategy

5.61 We have divided Slough into distinct geographical areas and produced a strategy for each of these components. These can be summarised as:

- ***Delivering*** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
- ***Selecting*** other key locations for appropriate *sustainable* development;
- ***Enhancing*** *our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets*;
- ***Protecting*** the “*Strategic Gap*” between Slough and Greater London;
- ***Promoting*** the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

5.62 The main outcome of this strategy is that nearly all of the growth will take place in the centre of Slough. There will continue to be on going redevelopment in places like the Trading Estate and support will be given to our existing District and Neighbourhood centres.

5.63 There may have to be some release of Green Belt sites on the edge of Slough to meet housing needs. The suburban residential areas will be protected from major development and there will be no loss of public open space.

5.64 Any unmet housing needs will be met in a major expansion of Slough outside of its borders. More details of each component are set out below.

Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”:

5.65 The overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy is that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.

5.66 One of the other core principles is to make the most effective use of land by

using that which has been previously developed. The centre of Slough contains a lot of these brownfield sites which should be capable of being regenerated without a significant environmental impact. The Centre of Slough is also the area with the most demand for new development and so should be the area most likely to be able to deliver this. As a result concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is at the heart of the Spatial Strategy.

- 5.67 The Strategy takes into account the work that has been carried out to produce the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework.
- 5.68 The Spatial Strategy promotes a “workplace led” form of regeneration for the Centre of Slough. This is based upon having an expanded Central Business District south of the railway station. Major office development in this location could provide the step change in activity that is needed to support the rest of the Centre of Slough.
- 5.69 Up to 90,000 m² of new office or workspace floorspace could be built in the expanded Central Business District which includes part of the North West Quadrant. 50,000 m² of offices could be provided as part of the redevelopment of the Queensmere centre. This could be increased to up to 200,000 m² if the owners can come forward with a viable and deliverable scheme as part of their “Slough Central” scheme. One of the key proposals of the Spatial Strategy is the need to link the centre together by the creation of a new pedestrian link from the railway station to the High Street via Brunel Way.
- 5.70 Whilst it is not envisaged that the Tesco store will change in the plan period, the outdated Queensmere and Observatory shopping centres provide the biggest opportunity for mixed use comprehensive regeneration in the Centre of Slough.
- 5.71 There will be a significant loss of retail floorspace but the overall objective is to transform the area into an attractive, vibrant, well connected place that can provide for some of the important shopping, leisure, cultural and business needs. It also has the opportunity to meet some of Slough’s housing needs.
- 5.72 The new development will be set within a high standard of public realm and provide the new pedestrian link from the station to the High Street. This could also be the location for a new civic square. A minimum amount of car parking should be provided to meet the needs of shopper and visitors in as convenient location as possible.
- 5.73 The proposed redevelopment of the Queensmere and Observatory centres will complement one of the main aims of the Spatial Strategy which is to “rediscover the High Street” and revitalise it as the prime shopping area.
- 5.74 In addition to creating a new evening economy, the opportunity will be taken to provide new cultural facilities through out the centre. This will be delivered

through a combination of the Council's Cultural Strategy, Public Realm Strategy and proposals for "meanwhile" uses. These will bring forward proposals ranging from the re use of the former Adelphi cinema to the creation of new outdoor spaces..

- 5.75 The Centre of Slough will provide the bulk of housing that will be built in the Borough. The largest sites are Horlicks, North West Quadrant, Queensmere and Observatory and Akzo Nobel. There is also the opportunity to create attractive new developments at Stoke Wharf and Upton Hospital which will increase the range of housing that is available.
- 5.76 The Regeneration Framework identified where 7,400 new dwellings could go on selected sites. Overall it is envisaged that around 9,000 houses will be built in the Centre of Slough over the Local Plan period.
- 5.77 One of the aims of the Spatial Strategy is to ensure that all of these new housing developments are linked and integrated with the centre so that full use is made of facilities on offer.
- 5.78 The Strategy also identifies places, such as the stable residential areas where major development will not take place.

Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;

- 5.79 There is potential for development to take place elsewhere, outside of the Centre of Slough, to help meet local needs. The opportunities are, however, limited.
- 5.80 The largest and most important part of the Borough, outside of the centre, is Slough Trading Estate .As a result it is identified as a Selected Key Location where continual renewal will take place to meet changing needs. This is likely to be implemented through the preparation of a new Simplified Planning Zone for the Estate.
- 5.81 The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough where redevelopment could take place, primarily for airport related development.
- 5.82 The regeneration of Chalvey has been underway for some time. It is important that the remaining major housing sites in the area are fully integrated with the neighbourhood.
- 5.83 There is an opportunity to redevelop the former Trade Sales area on the Bath Road for residential use. This has been identified as a Selected Key Location known as the Cippenham Central Strip.
- 5.84 Langley and Farnham Road District Shopping Centres will continue to have an

important role to play.

- 5.85 Due to the shortage of land for housing in Slough and the lack of opportunities to provide family and affordable housing, it is proposed to consider releasing some green field/Green Belt land for residential development. Ten possible sites have been identified on the edge of Slough, but they will have to go through a separate consultation process which takes account of the results of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result none of these have been identified as Selected Key Locations for development at this stage.
- 5.86 Overall it can be seen that there are selective opportunities for major development outside the Centre of Slough, but these are not likely to produce much of a net increase in commercial floorspace or a significant number of new residential units.

Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;

- 5.87 Local Plans are required to promote healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Enhancing the areas where most people live is an important part of the Spatial Strategy. We recently produced a “Protecting the Suburbs” which showed why it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost. There is, however, scope for redevelopment on non garden land such as garage courts and other brownfield sites.
- 5.88 It is also important that we protect and enhance the open spaces, parks and other assets of community value within the residential areas in order to support healthy and active lifestyles.
- 5.89 At the same time we want to our neighbourhood centres to be vibrant and have an improved range of facilities within them so that people are able to “live locally” if they want to, without the need to travel. This will enable residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives. This will be partly implemented through the Council’s hubs strategy.

Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;

- 5.90 In the “emerging” Spatial Strategy the proposals for the Colnbrook and Poyle area was to “accommodate the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigate the impacts”
- 5.91 For the purposes of the Local Plan it is now assumed that proposals for the third runway will not come forward in the short to medium term which means that if they do, they can be dealt with by a review of the plan.
- 5.92 It is not considered that the Colnbrook and Poyle area is suitable for housing

because of environmental issues including noise from the nearby Heathrow

- 5.93 In the absence of any demonstrable need for airport related development it is considered that the most appropriate approach is to revert back to restraining development in order to protect the Green Belt, Colne Valley Park and Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London. This will also effectively safeguard land from being developed which could be needed for the expansion of the airport in the future.
- 5.94 Proposals for the improvement of the area have been included within this component of the Spatial Strategy.

Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs;

- 5.95 One of the principles of the Spatial Strategy is that unmet needs should be met as close as possible to where they arise. It has not been possible to find sites to accommodate all of Slough's housing needs within the Borough which means that there is a 5,000 shortfall. There is already a shortfall of housing in southern Buckinghamshire. There is also a need to rebalance the housing market in Slough in order to provide more family housing. It is for these reasons that the Cross Border Expansion of Slough is being promoted as a component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 5.96 The Council has previously identified the northern extension of Slough, in the form of a "Garden Suburb", as the best way of meeting unmet need. This remains the preferred option. However, this is just one of many that are currently being assessed in Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result the Spatial Strategy is just promoting the "cross border" expansion of Slough as the way of meeting unmet housing needs.
- 5.97 This is outside of the scope of the Slough Local Plan and so exactly how this could be delivered will have to be decided once the results of the Wider Area Growth Study have been agreed and further joint working has taken place.

Next Steps

- 5.98 There will then be a six week public consultation period from 2nd November to 14th December. It will not be possible to hold exhibitions or public meetings. As a result a whole range of consultation techniques will be used. This will include sending a leaflet to all household, a Facebook campaign and the placing of publicity material on the Council's website. There will be some specific questions for people to answer as well as providing general comments. All of the formal statutory consultation process will also take place.
- 5.99 It is proposed to have a specific consultation on the proposed Green Belt

releases in Slough in the summer of next year. The final version of the Local Plan, which will be based upon the Spatial Strategy, will then be published for consultation in 2022.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed Spatial Strategy is an important part of the Local Plan which promotes a positive vision for Slough and seeks to determine how much development goes where in the most sustainable way. In doing so it has to make some important decisions, particularly about how much housing can be accommodated in the Borough.
- 6.2 The six week consultation exercise, which will start in November, will give the public the chance to help shape the future of Slough.
- 6.3 The preparation of the final version of the Local Plan will be informed by the transport, housing, public realm, environmental and other strategies that will be completed in the next six months.

7 Comments from other Committees

- 7.1 The Planning Committee has considered reports on the Spatial Strategy at its meetings on 24th June, 29th July, 26th August and 9th September 2020 which were noted.
- 7.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report at its meeting on 10th September 2020 when it was resolved that:
 - (a) The proposed content of the Local Plan Spatial Strategy be noted.
 - (b) The Committee requested that the Transport Strategy be integrated into the Spatial Strategy as part of the implementation process, and for the request to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

8 Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Slough Local Plan Spatial Strategy Consultation Document.

9 Background Documents

- Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework (August 2020);
- Agenda items on the Spatial Strategy to the Planning Committee on 24th June, 29th July, 26th August and 9th September 2020.