

Review of the Local Plan for Slough

Issues and Options
Consultation Document

16 January - 27 February 2017

Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - RLP11 - January 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. Planning helps define the places where people live, work and play. Everyone should have the chance to be involved in the planning process.
- 1.1.2. This draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Slough Borough Council aims to consult Slough's communities during the period of producing a new Local Plan. This includes Duty to Cooperate partners, residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders who will be affected by the policies set out in the Local Plan. The SCI seeks to ensure active and meaningful engagement in the planning process, and confirm that the statutory requirements to consult will be met.
- 1.1.3. This draft SCI will be published for consultation alongside the Issues and Options document for a period of 6 weeks starting on Monday 16th January 2017 after this consultation period, the SCI will be adopted and a final version published.
- 1.1.1. Slough Council first adopted a SCI in 2006 to support the adoption of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs. This is now out of date and this document provides an update to comply with new legislation. This draft SCI will set out:
- Who will be consulted
 - What methods of consultation we will employ
 - When the consultation will take place and what the process will be (the timetable is complicated by the proposed Heathrow expansion)
- 1.1.2. This document will also explain how people who want to get involved in the consultation process may do so. The Local Plan 2013-2036 is a document that will guide development in Slough for the next 20 years. It will set out the key issues facing Slough and policies designed to address them. It is the main document the Council will use to decide planning applications.

2. THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS

2.1. The existing Local Development Plan

- 2.1.1. Slough has an existing planning policy framework which consists of the following documents:
- The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2008)
 - Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2010)
 - Saved policies in the Local Plan for Slough (adopted 2004)

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- Saved policies from the Replacement Berkshire Minerals Plan (2001)
- Saved policies from the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (1998)

2.1.2. All of these will remain in force until they are replaced by the new Local Plan policies.

2.2. Local Development Scheme (December 2016)

2.2.1. The Local Development Scheme sets out our timetable for the production of the new Local Plan and is available online at www.slough.gov.uk/localplan

2.2.2. Key milestones in the LDS :

- January 2017- Issues and Options consultation
- Autumn/Winter 2017- Preferred Options consultation

2.2.3. Further milestones of the plan preparation are unknown due to uncertainty with the Heathrow Expansion.

2.3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

2.3.1. Sustainability Appraisal is a parallel requirement of the Local Plan process. The requirements are set out in the Council's Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

2.3.2. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report sets out the baseline information for Slough and identifies the key sustainability issues the borough is facing. Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency were consulted on the draft Scoping Report in December 2016.

2.3.3. The SA framework produced in the Screening Report will be used to carry out a sustainability appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation. This and the results of the consultation on them will be used to develop and evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives; consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising potential benefits.

2.3.4. To meet the council's statutory requirements this information will be presented in a Sustainability Appraisal Report that will be published for consultation with the 'Publication' version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19).

2.3.5. Following the Examination in Public a post adoption Report will be published. That will set out how the Council will monitor the significant effects of the Local Plan and respond to adverse effects.

2.4. Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 2.4.1. As set out in the SA Scoping Report the Council has also commissioned a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening (HRA) from Lepus Consulting. This assessed whether the development proposed in the Issues and Options Consultation would significantly affect a Natura 2000 site. These are sites designated by the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC (1979) and EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EC (1992) which cover Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.
- 2.4.12. The assessment considered eight SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites within 15km of Slough's border. The screening concluded that, based on the information currently available in the Issues and Options Consultation, a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of Burnham Beeches SAC cannot be effectively ruled out. An assessment of the development sites proposed in the full Local Plan will therefore be needed to assess and address this.
- 2.4.13. More information is available in the HRA Screening Report published for consultation with the general and specific consultation bodies in January 2017.

3. SLOUGH'S COMMUNITIES

- 3.1.1. Slough has a uniquely diverse community. Our consultation strategy will have to aim to include a cross section of the community in relation to a wide range of factors. These include social and economic status, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital status, religion and gender.
- 3.1.2. Slough has a population of around 148,000 people. It is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse places in the country – the 2011 Census indicated that 40% of the population was classified Asian or Asian British and 36% White British. Over 150 languages have been recorded as being spoken in Slough's schools.
- 3.1.3. Slough has the highest proportion of people who profess a faith anywhere in England. It has the highest percentage of Sikh residents in the UK and the highest percentage of Muslim and Hindu residents in the South East outside of London.
- 3.1.4. The borough also has a significantly younger population compared to other south east local authorities with around 28% being under twenty.
- 3.1.5. Around 39,000 people commute into Slough on a regular basis, while a similar number commute out. The results in a very mobile population and a significant number of the people affected by the policies set out in the Local Plan will not be residents but people who commute into the borough for work.

3.1.6. There are more than 80,000 jobs in Slough which contribute around £7 billion to the national economy. Slough has been transformed over time from a primarily industrial town to a more knowledge based economy.

3.1.7. These facts have implications for our consultation strategy:

- **Language barriers for written communication:** The council will provide translations of consultation documents upon request.
- **Slough's diverse cultural mix:** Consultation methods will have to take into account cultural differences and protocols. Respecting these differences is important for engaging a broad range of communities.
- **The effectiveness of different methods of consultation for reaching different groups:** We will need a mix of methods to reach a wider community. For example, different consultation methods may be effective at engaging young and elderly residents.
- **The importance of including our economic partners:** Key economic stakeholders and landowners will need to be consulted. If we are to build a local economy that works for Slough's residents, we will have to work in partnership with key economic partners within the borough.
- **Whether consultation should aim to include commuters:** One objective of the Local Plan will be to upskill local communities to take greater advantage of local job opportunities. However, commuters will be significantly impacted by the policies in the Local Plan so we will need to consider them as well.

4. WHO WE WILL CONSULT

4.1.1. You can request to be added or removed from our consultation database by:

- Email at: planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk
- Write to: Planning Policy, St Martin's Place, 51 Bath Road, SL1 3UF.

4.1.2. You can also find more information about our progress by visiting Slough Borough Council's website at: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>

4.1.3. In the preparation of local plans, there are regulations that place a statutory duty on the council to consult certain 'general' and 'specific' consultation bodies.

4.1.4. General consultation bodies means:

- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area,

4.1.5. And bodies which represent the interests of:

- Different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area,
- Different religious groups in the local planning authority's area,
- Disabled persons in the local planning authority's area,
- Persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area.

4.1.6. There is no definitive list of general bodies with whom the council must consult but a summary is provided in Appendix 1. Specific bodies are those that we are required to consult, which are prescribed by regulations and listed in appendix 1.

4.1.7. These statutory requirements apply only to the consultation stages concerning the draft Local Plan,

4.2. The Duty to Cooperate

4.2.1. The Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on councils to meet the Duty to Cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to strategic policies to deliver: The issues of Strategic importance for Slough are considered to be

- Housing, including Gypsies and travellers
- Transport issues of cross-border significance (including Heathrow)
- Economic Development including retail and other employment generating activities and land uses
- Biodiversity, the historic and natural environment, natural resources and climate change
- Minerals and Waste provision
- Infrastructure provision, including Social and Health such healthcare, education, open space and recreation/ leisure; and
- Telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater.
- Flooding

4.2.2. The 'duty to co-operate' bodies that the Council will engage with are listed in Appendix 2.

4.2.3. The Duty imposed on local planning authorities requires the Council to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis both with regard to the evidence base and plan formulation. The extent of engagement required by local authorities will vary depending on the nature of the

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issues being addressed ranging from consulting on a single issue through to the development of a joint evidence or Development Document.

4.2.4. To date the process has involved meetings, workshops and other engagement with officers and members as required and considered appropriate by engaged parties. It has involved the aspiration to produce Memorandums of Understanding that set out an agreed position on issues. This will continue as the Local Plan progresses, with the degree and method of engagement being proportionate to the subject matter and the duty to cooperate partners involved.

4.2.5. Evidence of the process and outcomes from the Duty to Cooperate is the first thing that the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) will look at during the examination of the Local Plans. Failure to meet the Duty to Cooperate will result in a plan being found 'unsound'.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIODS

5.1. Local Plan

5.1.1. The planning system is an important part of shaping the environment we live in and consultation allows space for views and opinions of residents, groups and businesses to be expressed. We intend therefore to consult at 3 key stages of the production of the new Local Plan (set out in the table 1). No matter how many times we consult it will be difficult to find solutions that will satisfy everyone, but we will listen and take seriously all views and suggestions that are put forward during consultation, and where the process allows report on these and the responses to them.

Table 1: Public Consultation on the emerging Local Plan

Relevant regulation T&CP England Regs 2012	Description	Consultation information
Regulation 18- Preparation of the local plan	Issues and Option	Led by Slough Borough Council Winter 2017
Regulation 18- Preparation of the Local Plan	Preferred Option	Led by Slough Borough Council Autumn 2017
Regulation 19- Publication of Local Plan, Regulation 20- Representations relating to a Local Plan	Publication Plan	Led by Slough Borough Council : dependent on issues outside of the Council's control
Regulation 22- Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State	Submission Plan	Led by the Planning Inspectorate

Regulations 24- Independent examination, Regulation 25- Publication of the recommendations of the Planning Inspectorate	Independent Examination	Led by the Planning Inspectorate
Regulation 26- Adoption of Local Plan	Adoption	Led by Slough Borough Council

- 5.1.2. It should also be noted that as the preparation of the Local Plan is a public process, we will not be able to treat representations as confidential.
- 5.1.3. We will be holding three periods of consultation: we will first consult on the Issues and Options document, then the Preferred Options document and finally the draft Local Plan itself. We will take into account our engagement with Slough communities as we move forward with each stage.
- 5.1.4. The Issues and Options consultation will take place from 16th January to 28th February 2017. The Preferred Options consultation is scheduled to take place some time around September 2017. The timing for the final draft Local Plan consultation is dependant on a number of external factors such as a decision being made on the planned expansion at Heathrow, and progress of Local Plans in neighbouring boroughs (as such the LDS does not establish dates for the these stages).
- 5.1.5. Consultation periods will generally last for 6 weeks, although the Council recognises that this may have to be extended in certain circumstances, such as if the consultation period overlaps with Christmas, Easter or August bank holidays.
- 5.1.6. The Issues and Options document is a discussion document that sets out what we think the key issues facing Slough are and a range of options for addressing them. In the Preferred Options stage we will put forward the council's preferred options taking into account the response to earlier consultations. Finally, we will produce and consult on a full draft Local Plan known as the Publication Version (regulation 19/ 20). Consultations on the Preferred Options and Publication Plan will follow the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012)
- 5.1.7. A submission version of the Plan will be published for consultation, with responses being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. If found sound it will be adopted by the Council, The Government makes changes to legislation from time to time, and this may affect the consultation methods or process.

6. PUBLIC CONSULTATION METHODS

6.1.1. The Council is required to meet its statutory requirements but will in addition utilise other methods to engage with communities and businesses and specialist bodies and interest groups that may be affected by or could make a positive contribution to the Plan.

Statutory Requirements

6.1.2. Statutory requirements are set out in the Regulations, and may change. At present the methods used for Regulations 18 and 19 will be

- sending direct communications to specific and general consultation bodies producing Consultation documents including the Plan, Sustainability Appraisal and supporting evidence that meet the Regulation's requirements
- making consultation documents available in various formats including electronic and paper, online and for inspection in local libraries
- publishing a formal notice in the Local Newspaper advising where the documents are available for inspection and the period of consultation

6.1.3. Statutory requirements at Submission differ from those at earlier stages on the draft plan. At submission stage representations can only relate to whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, the relevant legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is considered to be 'sound'. As such, your representation at this stage should only make reference to these matters. Any representations will be considered by an independent inspector at an 'examination'. Those seeking changes to the document will have to show why the plan is unsound. Guidance will be provided by the Planning Inspectorate when this stage is reached.

6.2. Non- Statutory Requirements

6.2.1. In addition the following methods may be used during consultation periods but it may not be appropriate or viable to use all of them in every consultation. By employing a range of consultation methods we hope to cast a wide enough net over Slough's diverse community. This may not be an exhaustive list and we may expand our knowledge and experience of different consultation techniques over time.

6.2.2. With the advent of social media, people are communicating in different ways and traditional forms of engaging people may reach fewer people. Utilisation of the internet and social media could allow us to reach a potentially greater number of people than in the past, but we will have

to be aware that not everyone will have the means or knowledge to engage through these mediums.

6.2.3. These methods are:

- **Letters and emails:** We will send letters or emails to everyone on our consultation database keeping people informed about when and where consultations on the Local Plan are taking place.
- **Website:** There is a large amount of information about the Local Plan available on our website, and we will publish details about our consultation events throughout. We will publish digital versions of documents as they are finalised. Online consultation form will be available to submit comments to the consultations. We also publish summaries of our reports to Slough Borough Council's planning committee and other important information. You can find Slough Borough Council's Local Plan website section at: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/localplan>
- **Exhibitions:** We will set up exhibitions in The Curve and libraries around Slough. These will include information about how to contact us for the consultation as well as the discussion papers – the Issues and Options paper, Preferred Options paper or draft Local Plan. There will also be summaries and leaflets.
- **Summaries and Leaflets:** Not everyone will have time to read the full (often over 100 pages) consultation documents or have the planning knowledge to fully understand the issues set out in them. Where possible we will provide summaries and leaflets to allow people access to the fundamental issues addressed in these documents. These will be made available on the Council website, and at The Curve and other community buildings.
- **Meetings:** We will hold and, where feasible and not compromising the regulations, attend group and special interest meetings. Council officers involved in producing the new Local Plan will answer questions, take comments and explain the issues facing Slough and our plans for addressing them. The timing and location of these meetings will be made available to people in our consultation database as well as through other methods of communication
- **Local Radio :** We may speak on Local radio stations
- **Social Media:** When resources allow we will ask questions and create a forum for discussion on the Local Plan through the Council's social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Although we will not be able to respond to individual messages on these platforms, we will take into account the issues and concerns raised by people as part of our consultation

- **Contacting particular groups/less visible members of the community:** There are some people in the community who may experience barriers to participation or have an especially strong interest in certain aspects of the developing Local Plan. These may include people with disabilities, particular ethnic groups, the LGBT community, young people, gypsies and many more.

6.2.4. We may need to take a proactive approach to engage some of these groups, and also provide methods of consultation accessible to a broad range of people. We also encourage people to give us contact details for relevant groups so they can be added to our consultation database by emailing at: planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk

7. REPORTING BACK

7.1.1. Consultees will be encouraged to respond to the consultations using online forms that will be available on www.slough.gov.uk/LocalPlan. Forms will also be available electronically to download and via email to www.planningpolicy@slough.gov.uk

7.1.2. A consultation statement will be produced after each stage of the Local Plan preparation (in accordance with the regulations) which will be made available on the website. That will set out details of how the consultation was undertaken such as who was invited and the methods used, and how the responses to the consultation influenced the process.

7.1.3. When reporting responses we will not publish personal details such as postal and email addresses. However comments submitted must include a name and address as comments cannot be anonymous.

8. APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SPECIFIC CONSULTATION BODIES

8.1.1. In preparing the Local Plan, the Council needs to engage with the following bodies listed in Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Please note not all are relevant for Slough:

- The Coal Authority,
- The Environment Agency,
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage),
- the Marine Management Organisation,
- Natural England,
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (company number 2904587),

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- the Highways Agency,
- A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area,
- Any person—
- To whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
- Who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the local planning authority's area,
- If it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area—
- A Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006 or continued in existence by virtue of that section;
- (ii) A person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989;
- a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
- a sewerage undertaker; and
- a water undertaker;
- The Homes and Communities Agency.

9. APPENDIX 2: DUTY TO COOPERATE PARTNERS

9.1.1. The following are considered Duty to Cooperate partners, they are listed alphabetically.

- Berks Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust
- Berkshire Archaeology
- Berkshire Local Nature Partnership
- Bracknell Forest Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Crossrail
- Environment Agency
- First Great Western
- (Gas) Transco

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- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- (Healthcare) Wexham Hospital
- (Healthcare) Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG
- Heathrow Airport Limited
- Highways England
- Hillingdon- London Borough
- Historic England
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Parish Councils within Slough Borough
- Reading Borough Council
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead
- Runnymede Borough Council
- South Bucks District Council
- South West Trains
- Spelthorne District Council
- Sport England
- Surrey County Council
- (Telecommunications) Scottish and Southern Electricity
- Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
- Transport for London (TfL)
- (Water supply) Affinity Water
- (Water supply) Thames Water
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

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