

**DRAFT subject to Cabinet Approval
Slough Borough Council
Local Development Scheme (LDS)
February 2025**

[read only]

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Overview

- 1.1 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the programme for preparing and adopting Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for a local planning area. Local planning authorities (LPA) are required to maintain and publish on their websites an up to date LDS.
- 1.2 This Local Development Scheme sets out Slough Borough Council's draft timetable. The Local Development Scheme will be available on the Council website and be updated following a report to Cabinet.
- 1.3 The LDS proposes, subject to approval at Cabinet and funding, that the DPD for Slough Borough Council (SBC) will be in the form of a Local Plan with Strategic Policies, site allocations and a Proposals Map, with publication of the Plan in February 2026 and submission to the Secretary of State for examination in December 2026.

2 Government reforms to the Plan making process

- 2.1 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (October 2023) introduced a new system for the preparation of Local Plans. The Secondary legislation required has yet to be published. The consultation document on the LURA1 (para. 40) reiterated proposals for Local Plans that they will need to be adopted within 30 months.
- 2.2 These are part of changes to Planning that the current government will implement to deliver their 15.million homes target. They are expected to include the LURA proposals for publication of National Development Management Policies; a Planning and Infrastructure Bill; further guidance on the application of Grey Belt and updates to the Compulsory Purchase Order procedures.
- 2.3 The MHCLG consultation outcome on proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system (Chapter 12, para. 2²) advised that LPAs without an up-to-date plan should not stop work on a plan with the intention of preparing a plan under the new system but rather should continue to progress their plans to adoption under the existing system³ without delay. To do so, plans should be submitted for examination no later than December 2026. The Government considers this allows time to progress positive plans that will stand up to scrutiny at examination.
- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024. The transitional arrangements mean for the purpose of preparing local plans, Slough's Local Plan will be prepared under the Dec 2024 NPPF.

3 Slough Local Development Scheme

- 3.1 SBC have considered the Plan making requirements in the Plan Making Regulations 2012, LURA and NPPF, and advice from the Planning Inspectorate Advisory meeting held on 28th January 2025. As a result SBC have decided to continue to progress under the current development plans system. The LDS will be updated in the future if needed.
- 3.2 The LDS should state:
- the local development documents that will be produced;
 - the subject matter and geographical area to which each document is to relate;
 - which documents are to have 'development plan' status;
 - which documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
 - any matter or area where there is, or is likely to be, a joint committee;
 - the timetable for the preparation and revision of the documents
- 3.3 A DPD for Slough Borough Council will be produced in the form of a Local Plan. The Local Plan will contain a Vision, Spatial Strategy, Strategic Policies, site allocations and a Proposals Map. The Plan will cover the geographical area of Slough Borough Council shown outlined in red in figure 1 below.
- 3.4 No documents are to be prepared jointly at this stage, and there is no intention at present to have a formal joint committee. The plan will cover at least 15 years from the anticipated date of adoption as required by national policy and is expected to cover a 20 year period from 1st April 2025.

¹ [Levelling up and regeneration bill consultation on implementation of plan making reforms, chapter 2: The new 30 month plan timeframe \(GOV.UK site\)](#)

² [Proposed reforms to the national planning policy framework and other changes to the planning system, chapter 12 – The future of planning policy and plan making \(GOV.UK site\)](#)

³ [Plan making guidance from \(GOV.UK site\)](#)

3.5 Slough proposes the timetable set out in figure 2 below.

Figure 1 Geographical area for Slough local plan



Figure 2 Key Milestones for the preparation and revision of the documents.

Description of milestone	Time when expected
Evidence gathering including review of existing evidence	Ongoing
Update to the Statement of Community Involvement	April 2025
Call for Sites	May 2025
Update to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report	From April 2025
Publication/ Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 19)	February 2026
Submission (Regulation 22)	December 2026
Examination (Regulation 24)	To be confirmed by Inspectorate
Consultation on modifications	If necessary
Receipt of Inspector’s Report (Regulation 25)	To be confirmed by Inspectorate
Adoption (Regulation 26)	To be confirmed

4 Background

- 4.1 The Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 was adopted in December 2008. The Site Allocations and Proposals Map were adopted in 2010 and there are saved policies from the Local Plan 2004. These documents will remain the statutory Development Plan until the new Local Plan reaches adoption. There are also saved policies from the Adopted Minerals and Waste Plans that will be retained and continue to form part of the Development Plan.
- 4.2 The Slough Local Plan 2025-2045 will replace the Core Strategy 2006-2026 DPD, Site Allocations DPD 2010. We anticipate saved policies from the 2004 Local Plan will be replaced by the National Development Management Policies.
- 4.3 Work on the plan to date is summarised below:
- Intention to Prepare a Local Plan: January 2015.
 - Call for Sites January-March 2016
 - Consultation on the Call for Sites: June 2016
 - Issues and Options Consultation: January 2017
 - Spatial Strategy consultation: November 2020
 - Proposed release of Green Belt Sites for Family Housing consultation: November 2021
- 4.4 The Council was making good progress in producing the new plan but several events impacted progress including uncertainty caused by DCO proposals for the Heathrow 3rd Runway, Covid and a section 114 notice by the Council in June 2021 that lead to a freeze on non-essential expenditure and further recruitment.
- 4.5 An LDS was published in April 2019, and a report to Planning Committee in March 2022 reported results of the consultation on the release of sites for family housing in the Green Belt.
- 4.6 In March 2023 the business case to continue was paused to address budget shortfalls associated with Government intervention, and the consequential inability to meet deadlines set out by previous Government.
- 4.7 The Council remained pro-growth and with resources available progressed with renewal of the Slough Trading Estate SPZ in the interim. The 2024-2034 SPZ was successfully adopted in November 2024. The Council regards the need to restart work on the Local Plan as a key priority. A new deadline for Plans to be submitted for examination by the current Government has made that possible.

5 Risks

- 5.1 The LDS once approved is an intention to progress Plan preparation. Parts of producing a local plan have significant funding implications, including for external work for evidence gathering and an examination in public. Not having this funding paused the plan progressing previously. This LDS sets out an ambitious timetable and progressing the plan to meet this is dependent on funding.
- 5.2 Key parts of the strategy work have been completed, and the proposed next stage (an update to the Statement of Community Involvement and a Call for Sites) can be carried out in house with minimal external consultants. If the business case to complete the plan is delayed this will impact the ability to meet this timetable.
- 5.3 Achieving the timetable in this LDS is also dependent upon the Council having sufficient staff resources, and managing risks such as the new procurement process, availability of suitable consultants to assist preparation of evidence and policy formulation, approval of strategies from external statutory consultees, and adapting to impacts beyond the Council's control such as the change to the plan making system or national infrastructure.

6 Summary

- 6.1 This Local Development Scheme(LDS) meets the requirement to have an up to date LDS set out in Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by part 111 of the Localism Act 2011).
- 6.2 Section 3 sets out the Local Planning Authority's proposals for the Slough Local Plan to achieve Submission in December 2026. Section 4 provides some of the background to date, and section 5 the risks to achieving the adoption of the plan.
- 6.3 The Background section explains why preparation of the Local Plan slowed down and confirms that the Council remains committed to continuing with preparation to achieve submission in December 2026.
- 6.4 Publishing this on the Council's website will also comply with the Deputy Prime Minister's statement in the December 2024 Planning Newsletter that all local planning authorities produce and publish an updated LDS by the 6 March 2025.
- 6.5 This LDS and the need to present it to Cabinet for approval was noted by Slough Borough Council's Planning Committee in February 2025.

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