

# Review of the Local Plan for Slough

Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy - RLP 25 - February 2018

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# Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy

February 2018

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# Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Slough Borough Council is preparing a Review of the Local Plan for Slough. The first part of this process was the production of an Issues and Options Document which was the subject of public consultation in January 2017.
- 1.2 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has to be carried out during the preparation of a plan in order to promote sustainable development. The process assesses the extent to which the emerging plan addresses sustainability issues by highlighting the potential significant social economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan and through the consideration of reasonable alternatives.
- 1.3 The SA Scoping Report produced a specific Sustainability Appraisal Framework for Slough (see Table 2). This identified that the priority for the SA would be to guide the Local Plan by considering the relative alternatives for meeting Slough's needs within the Borough, outside the Borough (either adjoining or further away) or not meeting the need in full (2.4.2).
- 1.4 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the draft "Objectives" and "Spatial Options" in the Issues and Options document was consulted on at the same time as the Issues and Options Document. This concluded that overall there was generally good compatibility between the Local Plan Objectives and the Sustainability Objectives. The Local Plan Objectives that have the most uncertainty or potential conflict with some of the Sustainability Objectives were those that are proposing or seeking to accommodate growth.
- 1.5 Most of the Spatial Options were compatible with the Sustainability Objectives. The one exception being the "do nothing" option which the report considered could have a significantly adverse effect upon SA Objectives 1 (Transport and accessibility), 4 (Economy), 7 (Housing) and 9 (Use of resources).
- 1.6 The Issues and Options consultation recognized that most Spatial Options will be needed to deliver the Local Plan Objectives. As a result the Sustainability Appraisal concluded that, "while the consultation document contains a number of options in most cases they do not

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represent alternatives” (para. 5.2.3) and it would be difficult for Slough to meet its housing and employment needs in full.

- 1.7 The Issues and Options SA assessment has helped inform the preparation of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy, highlighting the potentially significant effects and helping to find a balance between the social, economic and environmental pressures facing Slough.
- 1.8 This document is a Sustainability Appraisal of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy. It takes the alternatives to the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy and each of the 5 elements of the spatial strategy and examines it against a range of environmental, social and economic objectives (SA framework) as set out in the Final Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report sustainability framework. This highlights the likely effects of each of the 5 elements of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial strategy. It is too early to identify what mitigation measures may be needed to reduce the adverse effects. This will developed further as part of the development of the Preferred Spatial Strategy.
- 1.9 This report should be read alongside the Final SA Scoping Report, which summarises the Key sustainability Issues for Slough and the SA of the Issues and Options.

## **2. Habitat Regulations**

- 2.1 A Habitat Regulations Screening opinion was produced alongside the Issues and Options document.
- 2.2 The screening report 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 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) cannot be effectively ruled out.
- 2.3 As part of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy there is ongoing liaison between The City of London (who own the site); South Bucks District Council (where the site is located) and Natural England. That group will allow more accurate assessment of the potential for significant negative effects on Burnham Beeches SAC as Slough’s Local Plan progresses.

## **3. The Sustainability Appraisal Process**

- 3.1 A Sustainability Appraisal is a systematic process that has to be carried out during the preparation of a plan in order to promote sustainable development. It sets out a framework

for assessing the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve the identified environmental, economic and social objectives.

- 3.2 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to carry out a sustainability appraisal of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so “with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”.
- 3.3 Planning authorities are required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Local Development Documents in accordance with the requirements of a European Directive (2001/42/EC). Sustainability Appraisal fully incorporates the European SEA requirements, but expands it to also take account of social and economic matters. Thus, the requirements of the SEA Directive also apply to the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 3.4 The guidance emphasises that a Sustainability Appraisal is an iterative process which identifies and reports on the likely significant effects of the plan and the extent to which its implementation will achieve the social, environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. The intention is that SA is fully integrated into the plan making process from the earliest stages, both informing and being informed by it.
- 3.5 Sustainability Appraisal should inform the evaluation of options and provide a key means to demonstrate the appropriateness of the Local Plan given reasonable alternatives.
- 3.6 The guidance also sets out a requirement for the preparation of a series of reports which are set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal Preparation Process**

STAGE A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope		
A1		Identifying other relevant plans, programmes, and sustainability objectives
A2		Collecting baseline information
A3		Identify key sustainability issues and problems
A4		Developing the SA Framework
A5		Consulting on the scope of the SA
	<b>Output</b>	<b>Consultation on a Scoping Report</b>

STAGE B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects		
B1		Testing the DPD objectives against the SA Framework
B2		Developing the DPD options
B3		Predicting the effects of the DPD
B4		Evaluating the effects of the DPD
B6		Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPD
STAGE C: Preparing the SA Report		
C1		Preparing the SA Report
	<b>Output</b>	<b>A Draft Sustainability Report</b>
STAGE D: Consulting on the DPD and SA Report		
D1		Public participation on the draft DPD and SA report
	<b>Output</b>	<b>Consulting on the Draft Sustainability Report</b>
D2 (i)		Appraising significant changes
D2 (ii)		Appraising significant changes resulting from representations
D3		Making decisions and providing information
	<b>Output</b>	<b>A Sustainability Report</b>
STAGE E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD		
E1		Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
E2		Responding to adverse effects
	<b>Output</b>	<b>Information in the Annual Monitoring Report</b>

## 4. The Scoping Report (Stage A)

4.1 The Council commissioned Lepus Consulting to produce a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report that was consulted on as part of the Issues and Options consultation. No fundamental issues with the consultation on the Scoping Report were raised.

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- 4.2 This resulted in the creation of a Slough focussed Sustainability Appraisal Framework that contains 10 Sustainability Appraisal Objectives which are reproduced in the second column of Table 2 below. These have been used to date to assess the Plan presented in Table 2.
- 4.3 The full document is available at [www.slough.gov.uk/LocalPlan](http://www.slough.gov.uk/LocalPlan).
- 4.4 The Scoping Report identified that the key sustainability issue for the SA was to guide the Local Plan by considering the relative alternatives for meeting Slough's needs within the Borough, outside the Borough (either adjoining or further away) or not meeting the need in full (2.4.2).
- 4.5 Elements of Stage A will be revisited and updated if necessary (e.g. stage A1) as the Plan progresses to ensure the SA framework continues to be useful.

## **5. Sustainability appraisal (Stages B to E)**

- 5.1 The SA (incorporating SEA)<sup>1</sup> requires a comparison to be carried out of the options open to plan-makers for delivering the plan's objectives. Specifically the SEA Directive states that the report should consider "reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan" and it should give "an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with".
- 5.2 It should be noted that the results of the SA can only give a considered view of the relative sustainability of alternative proposals. It still remains the role of the plan maker to determine which proposals are taken forward, taking account of all relevant factors including the results of the SA.
- 5.3 The next stages of the SA will be carried out and consulted on as required alongside the preparation of the Local Plan 2016-2026.



**Table 2: Slough Local Plan SA Framework**

	SA Objective	Reference information	Sustainability issue	What is included in the sustainability theme?
1	Transport and accessibility: Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	Chapter 3 - Accessibility and transportation  (SEA – Population)  Key issues box 3.1	Growing road traffic, congestion and dependence on private car use.  Cultural and practical/percieved obstacles to walking and cycling, particularly for short journeys  New rail connections – Western rail access to Heathrow Airport (WrltH) & Crossrail  Finite capacity of junctions on road network  Options for SMART technologies  New road works delivering increased capacity	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
2	Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	Biodiversity and geodiversity.  (SEA - Biodiversity, Flora, fauna)  Chapter 5 Key issues box 5.1	Declining quality and quantity of ecological sites important for local an regional biodiversity, and their connectivity.  Legal duties to protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations; Landscape features; Geological features.
3	Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	Climate change – adaptation and mitigation  (SEA-Climatic factors)  Chapter 6 Key issues box 6.1	Reducing contribution: Delivering energy efficiency Carbon Emissions - need to reduce Carbon emissions - compatible with the Council's carbon management plan  Adapting to: Considering Heat Islands effect  Flooding - localised, short term incidents from surface water; and fluvial flooding.	Greenhouse gas emissions by source; Greenhouse gas emissions trends; Effects of climate change; Climate change adaptation; Flooding.

			-Consideration of the Councils Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.	
4	Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	Economic factors  (SEA- Material Assets)  Chapter 7 Key issues box .1	Land use constraints to physical expansion to provide additional needs for business and jobs for residential communities.  Changes resulting from Heathrow.  Role of the town centre, Langley and others.  Viability of intensification on brown field land – e.g. contaminated land remediation/ demolition  High levels of ‘footloose’ B8 identified in the EDNA  Disparity between resident skills and incomes compared to local jobs available  Shortage of education facilities	Economic Development Need Economic performance; Business start-ups; Employment and earnings; Skills, education and unemployment; Sites and premises.
5	Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	Health and wellbeing  Climate Change  (SEA – Human Health)  Chapter 8 Key issues box 8.1	Poverty, deprivation, social exclusion, and overcrowding  Shortage of open space in the Borough, Potential shortage of health facilities.  Fast growing mixed ethnic population and overcrowding.  Risk of flooding from all sources - see climate change  Pollution – see below Need to protect and enhance the borough’s cultural heritage – both that that is nationally important but also locally important Need to ensure adequate	Health indicators; Healthcare inequalities; Sport, fitness and activity levels. Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity (including open space and green infrastructure).

			parks and play spaces	
6	Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.	Historic environment  (SEA – Cultural heritage)  Chapter 9 Key issues box 9.1	Need to protect and enhance the borough's cultural heritage assets– both that that is nationally important but also locally important	Historic development of the town; Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.
7	Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	Housing  (SEA – Population, material assets)  Chapter 10  Key issues box 10.1	High housing need (OAHN) within the Housing Market Area.  Land use constraints to physical expansion to provide additional housing and affordable housing  Relative affordability of property in Slough within the Housing Market Area and London  Quality of existing stock.  High occupancy rates, driven by choice and need.  Viability impacts on quality of new stock.  Availability of high quality housing to meet the aspirations of Slough residents	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality and vacancy rates; Homelessness.  Population size and migration; Population density; Age structure;
8	Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	Landscape and townscape  Protect and enhance natural resources  (SEA – Landscape) Chapter 11	Need to protect locally valued (but not nationally protected) landscapes and townscapes, including versus purposes of the Green Belt  Structural change from Heathrow	Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character; Tranquility.

		Key issues box 11.1	Impact on the Borough from densification  Poverty, deprivation, social exclusion, and overcrowding  Desire to avoid negative social, economic and environmental impacts of high density development :e.g. in unsuitable locations, without sufficient amenity or infrastructure  Capacity of utilities to meet demand for water ,sewerage, electricity, waste disposal	
9	Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	Material assets  (SEA – Material assets, natural resources)	Waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle) and Reducing use of landfill  Sterilised supply of minerals (sand and gravel)  Quality of undeveloped land (Large areas of landfill, low demand and limited supply of versatile agricultural land).	Renewable energy; Waste arisings and recycling rates; Minerals; Previously developed land.
10	Pollution: Reduce air, noise soil and water pollution.	Water and Soil  Climate change mitigation and adaptation (air quality)  Human Health (noise)  (SEA – water, soil, air)	Risk to quality of local watercourses from storm events.  Impacts of contaminated land on development -see Material assets re water and sewerage demand  Poor air quality – spatial extent and quantum of exceedences (levels of NOx adding to base levels created by M4 and Heathrow related traffic)  Noise pollution from transport and disturbance from higher density development	Air pollution sources; Air quality hotspots; Air quality management.  Soils; Watercourses; Water resources; Water quality; Contaminated land.

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5.4 The geographical scope of the Plan is Slough Borough Council's administrative area, but there were Spatial Options in the Issues and Options consultation that refer to sites that are outside the geographical area of the Plan. These have been included in this Sustainability Appraisal as they form part of the alternatives for the Slough Plan. It is important to note that the development of any areas outside of the Borough cannot be delivered through the Slough Local Plan.

## **6. The Sustainability appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation document (Stage B)**

- 6.1 Stage B of the Sustainability appraisal process was carried out in January 2017 when the Issues and Options document and the SA of the Issues and Options consultation document were published.
- 6.2 The Appraisal consisted of testing the Local Plan objectives and the Spatial Options against the SA Framework and predicting and evaluating the “potentially significant” positive or negative effects of these on the plan area and the associated key sustainability issues emerging from SA Stages A1 and A2. It also involved the consideration of alternatives and the evolution of the area without the plan. In some cases the compatibility of the Local Plan with the SA Objectives cannot be predicted because of uncertainty or lack of information.

## **7. Testing the Local Plan objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (Stage B1)**

- 7.1 The Issues and Options Consultation Document contained fourteen “Objectives” for the Local Plan which gives an indication as to how the “Vision” for Slough can be achieved through the Review of the Local Plan. These Local Plan Objectives are listed as A to N in Appendix 1. The compatibility of each option with the SA objectives is summarised in the matrix alongside them.
- 7.2 Table 5 in appendix 1 shows that there is generally a positive compatibility between the Local Plan “Objectives” and the Sustainability “Objectives”, but the challenge was how to balance competing pressures for scarce resources, particularly to deliver the Objectively

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Assessed Housing Need and employment land requirements to meet its economic potential, recognizing that both of these will put pressure on the environment (para. 3.4.1) particularly as a result of transport pressures, climate change, health and pollution (3.4.5).

- 7.3 The four sustainability Objectives which could potentially have a significant conflict with the scale of housing and other development proposed in the Issues and Options are SA Objective 1 (transport), SA Objective 3 (Climate Change), SA Objective 5 (health) and SA Objective 10 (Pollution).
- 7.4 The analysis of the issues facing Slough showed, “it will be very difficult to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need and employment needs because of a shortage of developable land, the problems of traffic congestion and environmental constraints” (para.5.2.3).
- 7.5 The Issues and Options consultation considered most options will be needed to deliver the Local Plan Objectives. As such the SA concluded that, “while the consultation document contains a number of options in most cases they do not represent alternatives” (para. 5.2.3) and it would be difficult for Slough to meet its housing and employment needs in full.

## **8. Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Spatial Options using the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives (elements of Stages B3 and B4)**

- 8.1 The next part of Stage B of the Sustainability Appraisal was to develop, predict and evaluate the effect of the Spatial Options.

## **9. Issues and Options consultation (January 2017)**

- 9.1 The 11 Spatial Options are listed in Table 6. An assessment of compatibility of each option with the SA objectives was carried out as part of the Issues and Options consultation. The results can be seen in the matrix in Appendix 1.
- 9.2 The Issues and Option document did not contain a “do nothing” option. The SA process however requires an assessment of a ‘do nothing’ approach and so this was assessed alongside the Spatial Options in Appendix 1. This shows that this option could have a significantly adverse effect upon SA Objective 1 (Transport), SA Objective 4 (Economy), SA Objective 7 (Housing) and SA Objective 9 (Use of resources).

9.3 In summary, there was generally good compatibility between the SA objectives and the Spatial Options; However, the assessment highlighted some significant negative effects on SA Objective 4 (Economy) since the implementation of some of the spatial options will involve the loss of existing employment areas. Significant adverse impacts were identified on the environment in terms of SA Objective 10 (Climate change) and SA Objective 13 (Pollution).

**Table 3: Spatial Options**

A. Expand the centre of Slough (upwards and outwards)
B. Expand the Langley Centre (to include land around the railway station)
C. Create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites west of the Uxbridge Road
D. Regeneration of the selected areas: D1 - Canal basin D2 – New Cippenham Central Strip, Bath Road D3 – Chalvey regeneration
E. Estate Renewal
F. Intensification of the suburbs
G. Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
H. Release land from the Green Belt for housing (edge of Slough)
I. Release land from the Green Belt for employment (Heathrow related development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
J. Expansion of Slough J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb) J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
K. Build in other areas outside of Slough

## **10 Stage B: Sustainability Appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy including consideration of alternatives**

10.1 Following on from the publication of the Issues and Options report and the consideration of the results of public consultation, the Council is intending to produce a Preferred Spatial Strategy.

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- 10.2 The next stage of part B of the Sustainability process is to look at how the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy has been developed and test this against the SA framework to identify any positive or negative impacts against the social, economic and environmental objectives.
- 10.3 The most significant conclusion from the consultation on the Issues and Options Document was that there are no reasonable spatial options, or combination of options that would allow Slough to meet all of its identified housing and employment land needs within its boundaries.
- 10.4 As a result most of the options identified in the Issues and Options Document are proposed to be taken forward in the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy but a few options are not due to reasons identified below.
- 10.5 The Sustainability Appraisal process also requires a ‘do nothing’ approach and the consideration of ‘reasonable alternatives’.
- 10.6 It should be noted that, taking account of the results of the consultation on the Issues and Options, the Sustainability Appraisal and further policy consideration, it has been agreed that the Local Plan Objectives and Vision should be carried forward unaltered.
- 10.7 The “do nothing” approach is not considered reasonable because of the Council’s aspirations to deliver the Vision for Slough in 2036, and the statutory requirements for Local Plans.
- 10.8 It is considered that the Sustainability Appraisal sufficiently supported the policy decision to carry forward Spatial Options B (expand Langley Centre), C (Akzo Nobel & National Grid), D (Canal Basin, Cippenham Central Strip, Chalvey regeneration), E (Estate Renewal) and H (release Green Belt for housing) in all alternatives.
- 10.9 Option J2 (southern expansion of Slough into Windsor & Maidenhead) was also considered not to form a significant element of the emerging strategy due to the small quantum of housing that could be delivered on the sites and the need for the testing of this option by Windsor and Maidenhead who would be responsible for delivering it.
- 10.10 Some of the responses to the Issues and Options consultation stated that Plan should look again at meeting its housing needs in full within the Borough through revisiting the capacity of the town centre, suburbs and existing business areas to accommodate more housing Options A, F and G respectively). The SA also identified that these options scored well against the SA objective to provide sufficient housing.
- 10.11 As a result, given Objective A of the Local Plan is to meet its housing needs in full as close to where they arise as possible, further testing has led to the view that at present there are three “Alternatives”. These are:



- Meeting more housing needs within the Borough through intensification of Spatial Option A (expand the centre of Slough), and carrying forward F (intensify the suburbs) and G (releasing Existing Business Areas for housing)
- Planning for a shortfall in the Borough through Option K (meeting employment land and housing needs elsewhere outside of Slough).
- Planning for a shortfall in housing in the Borough through not carrying forward Spatial Options F (intensify the suburbs) and G (releasing Existing Business Areas for housing) and Option J1 (meeting housing needs adjoining the Borough in a northern expansion).

### *Alternative (a)*

- 10.12 Alternative (a) would involve meeting housing needs within the Borough through a combination of (i) increasing the quantum of housing development in the town centre above that identified in Issues and Options – (Option A); (ii) intensifying the suburbs and (iii) redeveloping Existing Business Areas for housing
- 10.13 As part of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy it was decided not to carry this forward because of the combination of the negative impacts of this Alternative on the SA Objectives, and the negative effect it would have on the Spatial Options to deliver the Local Plan objectives as a whole. This is explained below.

#### *(i) Increasing the quantum of housing development in the town centre.*

- 10.14 The findings of the Issues and Options SA identify that the potential risks of Spatial Option A (expand the centre of Slough) are that the scale or location of development causes a significant negative impact on the transport network including public transport, or an increase in pollution (para. 3.3.4). The SA considers that the scale of development proposed in Spatial Option A scores well for transport and accessibility, economy and housing, but that resulting pollution could impact on the Air Quality Management Area.
- 10.15 The interim assessment (Table 4) shows that given the development currently being planned for in the town centre it is not sustainable to propose a significantly higher quantum of housing. This is because of the importance of the town centre for delivering a range of services in a sustainable way to serve the Borough as a whole and in order to avoid negative impacts set out in the SA Objectives regarding transport, climate change, economy, health and townscape.

#### *(ii) Intensifying the suburbs (Spatial Option F):*

- 10.16 The Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options scored this option negatively in terms of sustainable transport due to the suburbs having poor public transport accessibility. This

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would mean higher dependence on private car use which raises significant negative sustainability issues of increased traffic congestion. It also showed that there could be a significant adverse impact on the townscape (SA objective 8).

10.17 The Interim assessment (Table 4) shows that the decision in Alternative c) not to allow any further intensification of the suburbs, as part of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy, will have a positive effect upon land use and transport, as confirmed in the Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) study. It will also have a positive effect upon biodiversity (SA Objective 2) as confirmed by an analysis of the Tree Cover Map. The decision in Alternative c) not to allow any further intensification of the suburbs will have a negative impact upon SA Objective 7 which is to provide more housing.

### (iii) Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing (Spatial Option G)

10.18 The assessment of Option G (Redevelopment existing business areas for housing) in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options identified there was a conflict between the need to provide land for housing (SA objective 7) and the need to protect existing employment land (SA objective 14).

10.19 The Interim assessment (Table 4) shows that the decision in Alternative c) not to release any more employment land for housing as part of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy will have a positive effect upon retaining employment but a negative impact upon SA Objective 7 which is to provide more housing.

### Conclusion

10.20 The review of the Sustainability Appraisal has highlighted that the combination of the options in Alternative (a), which is to increase the quantum of development within the Borough will have significant adverse impacts. As a result it is not considered that there is a reasonable option or combination of option that will enable Slough to meet all its housing and employment needs in full.

### *Alternatives b) and c)*

10.21 Alternatives b) and c) involve planning for a shortfall of housing and employment in the Borough but building outside of the Borough.

10.22 Alternative b), which was Spatial Option K, involves building in unspecified areas outside of Slough which could be some distance away.

10.23 Alternative c), which was Spatial Option J1 involves meeting housing needs adjoining the Borough in a northern expansion of Slough, and carrying forward all options except Spatial Options F, G and J2.

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- 10.24 The Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options showed that Spatial Option K (which is Alternative b) could have a significant negative impact on SA Objective 1 (transport), SA Objective 5 (housing) and SA Objective 7 (health) depending where the development was located.
- 10.25 Alternative c) considers the relative merits of a northern expansion (Spatial Option J1) over meeting the needs for development elsewhere. When the Northern expansion of Slough was previously assessed it was found that there could be a significant adverse effect upon SA Objective 3 (climate change), SA objective 6 (cultural heritage) and SA Objective 8 (landscape).
- 10.26 The narrowing of the area of search for the Northern Expansion in the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy into a less sensitive area could reduce the negative impacts upon SA objective 6 (cultural heritage) and SA Objective 8 (landscape).
- 10.27 Overall the option to promote a northern expansion of Slough is considered to be preferable to the option of building elsewhere for delivering the Local Plan Objectives A and B regarding the delivery of housing and for meeting SA Objectives 1 (transport and accessibility), 5 (Health) and 7 (Housing).
- 10.28 The Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options has already assessed the other options that form part of alternative c) which includes options A-E and H,I. This assessment can be seen in appendix 1.
- 10.29 The Alternatives, including the three elements of Alternative a), have been assessed against the SA Framework in the matrix which is set out in Table 4.

Alternative a):

- (i) Increasing the quantum of housing development in the town centre.
- (ii) Intensifying the suburbs (Spatial Option F):
- (iii) Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing (Spatial Option G)

Alternative b) involves building in unspecified areas outside of Slough (Spatial Option K)

Alternative c), which involves meeting housing needs adjoining the Borough in a northern expansion of Slough (Spatial Option J1), and carrying forward all options except Spatial Options F, G and J2.

### Key for the matrix tables

Predicted effect	Description	Symbol used
Positive impact	The option supports the achievement of the SA Objective and has a positive effect	+
Neutral	This option does not have an effect on the achievement of the SA objective	0
Negative impact	This option conflicts with the achievement of the SA objective and has a negative effect	-
Uncertain	It is unclear whether there is the potential for a negative or positive effect on the SA objective	?
Positive/Negative impact	Some elements of this option support the achievement of the SA objective while other elements conflict with the SA objective.	+/-

**Table 4: Sustainability Appraisal of Alternatives a) and b) and c)**

SA Objectives	Alternatives					Sustainability Theme
	a(i)	a(ii)	a(iii)	b)	c)	
<b>1. Transport and accessibility:</b> Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	<b>+/-</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+</b>	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
<b>2. Biodiversity and geodiversity:</b> Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	<b>0</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>?/-</b>	<b>?/-</b>	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;
<b>3. Climate change:</b> Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?/-</b>	Climate change adaptation; Flooding.
<b>4. Economy:</b> Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	<b>+</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>+</b>	Economic Development Need; Economic performance; Sites and premises.
<b>5. Health:</b> Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	<b>0</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+/?</b>	Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity
<b>6. Cultural heritage:</b> Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	<b>0</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?/-</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>?</b>	Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.
<b>7. Housing:</b> Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures. House prices and affordability; Housing

good quality housing for the local population						quality Homelessness.
<b>8. Landscape:</b> Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	?	+	-	?/-	?	Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character;
<b>9. Use of resources:</b> Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.
<b>10. Pollution:</b> Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	?/-	0	?/-	?/-	?/-	Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land

## The “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy (Alternative C)

- 10.30 The “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy has been development by taking account of the results of Sustainability Assessment of the Issues and Options and the assessment of Alternatives which is set out above.
- 10.31 The Local Plan approach of focusing development mainly on previously developed land within the existing urban area is considered to deliver the most sustainable option for growth. There will be some release of greenfield Green Belt sites in order to deliver a balance of social, economic and environmental development. The “emerging” Strategy also includes the promotion of the northern expansion of Slough and accommodating the proposed third runway at Heathrow both of which would involve developing greenfield Green Belt land.
- 10.32 As explained above the “emerging” Spatial Strategy is therefore to carry forward alternative C, this includes the Local Plan Vision and Objectives and develop Spatial Options A; B; C; D; E; H; I; and J1 which form the following five elements for the Local Plan:
- 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”;

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10.33 The SA framework was then used to test the possible significant negative and positive effects of the five elements of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy. These are outlined below and will be used to inform the next stage of the process.

**Table 5: Assessment of the 5 elements of the spatial strategy against the SA objectives**

SA objective	Spatial Strategy					Key issues
	<i>Delivering</i> major comprehensive redevelopment within the "Centre of Slough";	<i>Selecting</i> other key locations for appropriate development;	<i>Protecting</i> the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs	<i>Accommodating</i> the proposed third runway at Heathrow;	<i>Promoting</i> the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a "Garden Suburb";	
<b>1. Transport and accessibility:</b> Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.	+/-	+	+	?	?/+	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
<b>2. Biodiversity and geodiversity:</b> Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	0	-	+	?/-	?/-	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;
<b>3. Climate change:</b> Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	?	?	?	?/-	?/-	Climate change adaptation; Flooding.
<b>4. Economy:</b> Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	+	-	?	+	0	Economic Development Need Economic performance; Sites and premises.
<b>5. Health:</b> Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0/+	?	+	?	+	Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity
<b>6. Cultural heritage:</b> Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?/+	-	+	-	?/-	Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.

SA objective	Spatial Strategy					Key issues
	<i><b>Delivering</b></i> major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;	<i><b>Selecting</b></i> other key locations for appropriate development;	<i><b>Protecting</b></i> the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs	<i><b>Accommodating</b></i> the proposed third runway at Heathrow;	<i><b>Promoting</b></i> the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a “Garden Suburb”;	
<b>7. Housing:</b> Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	+	+	-	0	+	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality Homelessness.
<b>8. Landscape:</b> Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	-	+	+	-	?/-	Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character;
<b>9. Use of resources:</b> Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	+	+	?/-	+	?	Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.
<b>10. Pollution:</b> Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+/?	-	?	Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land

10.34 A summary of the assessment is given here

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

10.35 This element of the strategy scores positively for SA objective 7 (housing). There could be a significant adverse impact on the SA objective 8 (townscape) due to concentration of many tall buildings and sites being developed within a compact area. It could have significant positive or adverse impacts on SA objective 1 (transport). Locating major development in the most accessible locations will reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of travel. However the scale of development could cause significant increase in traffic congestion and air pollution due to the increased trip generation from new residential,



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offices, retail and leisure uses. This could have a negative impact upon SA Objective 10 (pollution).

#### **Selecting other key locations for appropriate development**

- 10.36 This includes developing housing in Langley, Cippenham and Chalvey as well as within existing housing estates and on Green Belt land. This was previously included in Options B, D2, D3 and E in the Issues and Options document.
- 10.37 Developing the New Cippenham Central Strip and expanding the Langley Centre, to include land around the railway station, score positively against SA Objective 7 (housing). Both score negatively against SA Objective 4 (economy) due to the loss of employment land.
- 10.38 Chalvey regeneration and estate renewal score well against SA objective 7 (housing).
- 10.39 Housing development on greenbelt land is in conflict with SA objective 8 (landscape) due to the loss of green open space. This may have an impact on SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 6 (cultural Heritage). However it will have a positive impact in meeting SA Objective 7 (housing).

#### **Protecting the built and natural environment of Slough including the suburbs**

- 10.40 Protection of the suburbs scores positively against SA objective 1 (transport) because it will prevent development taking place in the less accessible areas. It will also score positively against SA Objective 8 (landscape) because it will prevent the loss of trees and green areas. Protection of the built and natural environment also scores positively against a range of objectives including SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 6 (cultural heritage). Preventing development scores negatively against SA Objective 7 (housing).

#### **Accommodating the proposed third runway at Heathrow and mitigating the impact**

- 10.41 Although the Council is supportive of the expansion of Heathrow, any decision about this will be made by the Secretary of State following the submission of an application by Heathrow Airports Limited under the Development Consent Order process. This means that the proposed third runway will be the subject of a full Sustainability Appraisal in due course when more information is available.
- 10.42 At present positive impacts include job opportunities for Slough Local residents and inward investment in accordance with SA objective 4 (economy). There could be significant negative impacts upon SA Objective 2 (biodiversity), SA Objective 3 (climate change), SA Objective 5 (health), SA Objective 6 (cultural heritage), SA Objective 8 (landscape and
- Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the Emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy – February 2018

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townscape) and SA Objective 10 (pollution). Given the scale of potential harm the proposed development will have to demonstrate that it is in the national interest.

### **Promoting the northern expansion of slough in the form of a garden suburb**

- 10.43 The proposal dependent of the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a garden suburb is outside of the Borough, which can only be brought forward through the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan.
- 10.44 It is considered to be the most sustainable option of meeting Slough unmet housing needs as close to where they arise which means that it scores positively against the SA Objective 7 (housing). This will ensure we have a balanced housing market by providing a mix of high density housing in the town centre and a range of housing including family units in the northern expansion. This will help to balance out the affordability issues within the area.
- 10.45 As explained above, when compared to the option of building further away, the northern expansion also scores positively against SA Objectives 1 (transport and accessibility) and SA Objective 5 (Health) because it reduces the need to travel and is better for community well being.
- 10.46 There would be a negative impact upon SA Objective 2 (biodiversity), SA Objective 3 (climate change) and SA Objective 8 (landscape) because of the loss of greenfield land. Depending upon the sensitivity of the area that is developed, there could also be a negative impact SA objective 6 (cultural heritage).

## **11 Cumulative impact**

- 11.1 The cumulative impact of all this development in Slough needs to be taken into account. This element of the strategy has been assessed against the SA objectives. The majority of the proposed development will take place in the centre of Slough. The cumulative impact of the scale of development in this location has been assessed in Table 5 above and explained in paragraph 10.6 above. This shows that the cumulative impact of all the development will have a significant negative effect on pollution (objective 5) due to increased traffic congestion.
- 11.2 The other elements of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy such as promotion of the Northern Expansion of Slough and accommodating the expansion of Heathrow Airport are largely outside of the control of the Council and the cumulative effects of these cannot be assessed at this stage.

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## 12 Mitigating Adverse Effects and Maximising Beneficial Effects

- 12.1 The SA process includes the consideration of whether there need to be measures to mitigate any adverse effects. It is the role of the Local Plan to do this in its own right as set out in the NPPF.
- 12.2 The extent and effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures can be assessed in more detail in the next iteration of the Sustainability Appraisal.

## 13 Monitoring Significant Effects

- 13.1 It is too early to propose monitoring measures at this Issues and Options stage in the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. When a full draft of the Plan is produced part of this will include proposals for monitoring the policies and proposals. There will also be a final version of the Sustainability Appraisal which will set out a framework for monitoring the significant effects of the plan.

## 14 Conclusion

### Emerging preferred spatial strategy

- 14.1 The emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough can be summarised as one of:
- 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
  - Promoting the northern expansion of slough in the form of a garden suburb
- 14.2 The results showed that these 5 key elements generally scored positively against the SA objectives in particular in providing housing. Significant negative effects identified included impact on landscape and pollution.
- 14.3 The cumulative impact of concentrating development in the centre of slough may have significant negative environmental impacts. This will need to be mitigated where possible through policies as we progress the emerging Local Plan.

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- 14.4 The key sites which will be required to implement the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy have not been assessed individually. This is more appropriately done at a later stage when more information is available about their combined effect.
- 14.5 The Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Spatial Strategy has looked at reasonable alternatives. This included the option to meet the housing needs in Slough Borough boundary or meet the needs elsewhere.
- 14.6 The SA Scoping report of the Issues and Options Document assessed the 'do nothing' which scored negatively against the SA objectives for Transport and accessibility, Economy, Housing and Use of resources. This alternative was not taken forward in the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy as this would not enable Slough to meet the identified Local Plan objectives.
- 14.7 The main conclusion that can be drawn from the testing the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy through the Sustainability Appraisal is that the 5 elements of the “emerging” Spatial Strategy are the most sustainable for seeking to meet housing and employment needs. The adverse effects identified will be addressed in the next version of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 14.8 This Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy will now be subject to technical consultation primarily with Duty to Cooperate Partners.

## Appendix 1: Extracts from the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options document (January 2017)

Predicted effect	Description	Symbol used
Positive impact	The option supports the achievement of the SA Objective and has a positive effect	+
Neutral	This option does not have an effect on the achievement of the SA objective	0
Negative impact	This option conflicts with the achievement of the SA objective and has a negative effect	-
Uncertain	It is unclear whether there is the potential for a negative or positive effect on the SA objective	?
Positive/Negative impact	Some elements of this option support the achievement of the SA objective while other elements conflict with the SA objective.	+/-

### The Sustainability Appraisal objectives

1. **Transport and accessibility:** Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.
2. **Biodiversity and geodiversity:** Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.
3. **Climate change:** Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.
4. **Economy:** Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.
5. **Health:** Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.
6. **Cultural heritage:** Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance.
7. **Housing:** Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population
8. **Landscape:** Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.
9. **Use of resources:** Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth
10. **Pollution:** Reduce air, noise soil and water pollution.

Stage B1 Testing the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework

Local Plan Objective	SA Objective	1-Transport	2-Biodiversity	3-Climate Change	4-Economy	5-Health	6-Cultural Heritage	7- Housing	8-Landscape	9-Use of resources	10-Pollution
A. To meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) of 927 dwellings per annum within the Borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises within a balanced housing market		+/-	?	?	?	+/-	0	+	?	?	?
B. To provide new homes of an appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough's population that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard.		0	0	+	0	+	0	+	?	+	+
C. To support innovation, growth and regeneration and ensure the Town Centre is the focus for high density housing and major retail, leisure, office and cultural development		+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	+	?/-
D. To ensure Slough's economy creates wealth and retains its role as a competitive economic powerhouse by retaining its multinational HQs, having a diverse resilient economic base, and including opportunities for business start-ups and Smart technology.		?	0	?	+	0	0	0	0	?	0
E. To create 15,000 jobs supported by a competitive local workforce who have the skills to meet businesses' changing needs.		+/-	0	0	+	?	0	0	0	?	?/-
F. To ensure Crossrail, the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and growth at Heathrow deliver benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough.		+	0	+/-	+	?	0	0	0	0	?/-
G. To encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, reduce the need to travel, make non-car modes the best choice for short journeys and tackle traffic congestion.		+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	0	+
H. To improve the health and well-being of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives		0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+
I. To provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.		+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	?

<b>Local Plan Objective</b>	<b>SA Objective</b>	1-Transport	2-Biodiversity	3-Climate Change	4-Economy	5-Health	6-Cultural Heritage	7- Housing	8-Landscape	9-Use of resources	10-Pollution
<i>J To make Slough feel like a safe place through minimising the opportunity for crime and antisocial behaviour.</i>		0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	0
<i>K To improve the image and attractiveness of the town through insisting on high quality design for all new buildings and enhancing the public realm. To support the vitality, viability, distinctiveness of local centres and ensure that residential neighbourhoods retain a distinct sense of place</i>		0	0	0	+	0	0	+	+	0	0
<i>L To increase opportunities for leisure and recreation and improve the quality and use of Slough's parks and open green spaces and the links to these and the surrounding countryside including the Colne Valley Regional Park.</i>		0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	0	0
<i>M Protect the environment, and adapt to climate change and minimise its effects through protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity and water environment, and addressing flood risk, carbon emissions and pollution.</i>		0	+	+	?	+	0	0	+	+	+
<i>N To protect maintain and enhance those elements of the built and natural environment of local or historic value</i>		0	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	?	0

Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Spatial Options using the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives

SA objective	Spatial Options													Key Issues
	A: Expand the centre of Slough	B: Expand Langley centre	C: New residential neighbourhood west of the Uxbridge Road	D: Regeneration of three selected areas	E: Estate Renewal	F: Intensification of the suburb	G: Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing	H: Release Green Belt for housing	I: Release Green Belt for employment	J: 1 Area of search South Bucks	J2: Area of search Windsor and Maidenhead	K: build in other areas	Do nothing	
<p><b>1. Transport and accessibility:</b> Improve the efficiency of transport networks by increasing the proportion of travel by sustainable modes and by promoting policies which reduce the need to travel.</p>	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	?	-	?	?	-	-	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
<p><b>2. Biodiversity and geodiversity:</b> Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	?	?	?	?	?	0	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;
<p><b>3. Climate change:</b> Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.</p>	?	?	?	? /-	?	?	?	?/-	?/-	?/-	?/-	?	?	Climate change adaptation; Flooding.
<p><b>4. Economy:</b> Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.</p>	+	-	-	?	0	0	-	0	+	0	0	0	-	Economic Development Need Economic performance; Sites and premises.
<p><b>5. Health:</b> Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity



<b>6. Cultural heritage:</b> Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?	0	0	0	0	?	0	0/-	0	?/-	0	?	0	Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.
<b>7. Housing:</b> Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	-	-	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality Homelessness.
<b>8. Landscape:</b> Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.	?	?	?	?	?	?/-	?	?	?	?/-	?	?	?	Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscap e character;
<b>9. Use of resources:</b> Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+	? / +	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/-	?/-	?/-	?/-	?	-	Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.
<b>10. Pollution:</b> Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+/?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land

