

Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Spatial Strategy

November 2020

Local Plan for Slough (2016 -2036)

Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Spatial Strategy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Slough Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan for Slough (2016 – 2036). A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is required 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, including through the consideration of reasonable alternatives.
- 1.2 The first part of this process was the production of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in November 2016. This was followed by a Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation Document which was the subject of public consultation in January 2017. In February 2018, an Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy was produced which was not subject to public consultation as the preferred spatial strategy was not consulted on. This SA updates that interim to present the SA of the proposed Spatial Strategy being consulted on in November 2020. It is published for consultation alongside the proposed spatial strategy at www.slough.citizenspace.com
- 1.3 The SA Scoping Report produced a Sustainability Appraisal Framework specifically 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 The 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 in 2017. 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 An Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy was carried out in February 2018. That considered two alternatives to the emerging preferred Spatial Strategy, 14 plan objectives, and each of the 5 elements of the spatial strategy, against the Slough specific environmental, social and economic objectives in the SA framework.
- 1.7 Since February 2018, the Local Plan Spatial Strategy has been modified to take account of a number of changes in circumstances such as the fact that the Development Consent Order process for expansion of Heathrow airport is no longer going ahead. This has resulted in a revised Spatial Strategy being produced for public consultation in November 2020. This has been informed on an ongoing basis by carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal of the initial three plan alternatives with an additional and now proposed Spatial Strategy (Alternative d).

1.8 The results of this process are set out in this report. It should be noted that the Spatial Strategy is only seeking to set out the broad scale and pattern of future development in Slough. It does not make any site allocations or include any policies. Whilst this has embed the sustainable development principles of the NPPF and meet the duties of the relevant Town and Country Planning Acts and Regulations, it is too early to identify what mitigation measures may be needed to reduce potential adverse effects. The final version of the Local Plan will contain policies and site allocations and this will be the subject of further Sustainability Appraisals.

1.9 This report should be read alongside the SA Scoping Report (2017). That is not open for consultation at this point, but contains the evidence behind the SA Framework used in this Assessment.

2 Habitat Regulations

2.1 A Habitat Regulations Assessment is also required as part of the process of producing a Local Plan. A Screening opinion was produced in January 2017 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. This means that the full plan will need to consider and suggest mitigation for any impacts that might occur to the qualifying characteristics as a result of the development permitted by the Plan.

2.3 The preparation of the proposed Spatial Strategy has taken into account the need

to protect the Burnham Beeches SAC by measures to limit the number of visits to Burnham Beeches by future residents. The Strategy seeks to limit large scale development in the part of Slough within a particular distance of Burnham Beeches. It also suggests proposals to retain and enhance open spaces to provide informal recreation space with more natural habitat for local residents.

2.4 Future detailed policies will be produced in order to deliver the necessary mitigation within the Borough. The Council has also been working with Bucks and Natural England on the approach to the Beeches.

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
	Output	Consultation on a Scoping Report
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
	Output	A Draft Sustainability Report
STAGE D: Consulting on the DPD and SA Report		
D1		Public participation on the draft DPD and SA report
	Output	Consulting on the Draft Sustainability Report
D2 (i)		Appraising significant changes
D2 (ii)		Appraising significant changes resulting from representations
D3		Making decisions and providing information

	Output	A Sustainability Report
STAGE E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD		
E1		Finalising aims and methods for monitoring
E2		Responding to adverse effects
	Output	Information in the Annual Monitoring Report

4 The Scoping Report (Stage A)

- 4.1 The Council commissioned Lepus Consulting to produce a draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in November 2016 which was consulted upon as part of the Issues and Options consultation exercise. No fundamental issues with the consultation on the Scoping Report were raised.
- 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 elements of the consultation documents that will be developed into the Plan.
- 4.3 The full Scoping Report document is available at 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). The most pressing need was that for housing, as this has become an increasing priority for Government.
- 4.5 The Scoping report and the SA Framework are still relevant and have

been used to assess the Local Plan proposed Spatial Strategy. They will be considered for revision when the full Local Plan produced.

5 Sustainability appraisal (Stages B to E)

- 5.1 The SA (incorporating SEA) 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, and is formally limited to the geographical scope of the plan. 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 A Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out and consulted on as required alongside the preparation of each stage of the Local Plan 2016-2036.

Table 2 Summary of the SA framework Objectives and Scoping Findings

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/perceived 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 and 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. -Consideration of the Councils Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.	Greenhouse gas emissions by source; Greenhouse gas emissions trends; Effects of climate change; Climate change adaptation; Flooding.
4 Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient	Economic factors (SEA- Material	Land use constraints to physical expansion to provide additional needs for business and jobs for residential communities.	Economic Development Need Economic performance;

	SA Objective	Reference information	Sustainability issue	What is included in the sustainability theme?
	economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.	Assets) Chapter 7 Key issues box .1	Changes resulting from the pause to expansion plans for 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	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 parks and play spaces	Health indicators; Healthcare inequalities; Sport, fitness and activity levels. Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity (including open space and green infrastructure).
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	Housing (SEA – Population, material assets)	High housing need (OAHN) within the Housing Market Area. Land use constraints to physical expansion to provide additional housing and affordable housing	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality and

	SA Objective	Reference information	Sustainability issue	What is included in the sustainability theme?
	the local population	Chapter 10 Key issues box 10.1	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	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 Key issues box 11.1	Need to protect locally valued (but not nationally protected) landscapes and townscapes, including versus purposes of the Green Belt Structural change from the DCO proposals for expansion at Heathrow 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	Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character; Tranquillity.
9	Efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	Material assets (SEA – Material assets, natural resources)	Capacity of utilities to meet demand for water, sewerage, electricity, waste disposal 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 arising 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	Risk to quality of local watercourses from storm events. Impacts of contaminated land on development -see Material assets re water and sewerage demand	Air pollution sources; Air quality hotspots; Air quality management. Soils;

SA Objective	Reference information	Sustainability issue	What is included in the sustainability theme?
	(noise) (SEA – water, soil, air)	Poor air quality – spatial extent and quantum of exceedances (levels of NOx adding to base levels created by M4 and Heathrow related traffic) Noise pollution from transport and disturbance from higher density development	Watercourses; Water resources; Water quality; Contaminated land.

6 Testing the Issues and Options Plan objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (Stage B1)

- 6.1 This part of the Appraisal consists 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 involves 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 could not be predicted because of uncertainty or lack of information.
- 6.2 The first iteration of Stage B of the Sustainability appraisal process was carried out by LEPUS in January 2017 as part of the Issues and Options consultation.
- 6.3 The Issues and Options Consultation Document established 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 table 3 below. The compatibility of each

option with the SA objectives is summarised in the matrix alongside them.

- 6.4 The Assessment showed 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 Assessed Housing Need and employment land requirements to meet its economic potential, recognizing that both of these will put pressure on the environment particularly as a result of transport pressures, climate change, health and pollution.
- 6.5 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).
- 6.6 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”.
- 6.7 The Issues and Options consultation considered most options will be needed in order 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” and it would be difficult for Slough to meet its housing and employment needs in full.

- Objective F: removed reference to growth at Heathrow
- Objective G: reworded to reflect Transport Vision.
- Objective M: reworded and added in reference to energy use.

7 Testing the Plan objectives in the Proposed Spatial Strategy (October 2020) against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework (Stage B1)

7.1 The Local Plan Objectives have been slightly modified since the Issues and Options consultation and the production of the emerging preferred spatial strategy. The main changes to the Local Plan Objectives in the proposed Spatial Strategy are:

- Objective A: updated housing needs number to 893
- Objective C: updated to reflect Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework
- Objective D: updated to reflect the Inclusive Growth strategy

7.2 Table 3 below shows the changes to the Local Plan objectives. Overall the assessment of the SA objectives against the new modified Local Plan objectives remains unchanged due to no significant changes only revised wording. There is a slight decrease in the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs as a result of the use of the Government’s standard methodology but this minor.

7.3 However the most significant change is to Local Plan Objective F as a result of the expansion of Heathrow airport no longer going ahead. There is now a neutral impact on SA Objective 4 (Economy) instead of a positive impact due to fact that the expansion of Heathrow airport will no longer deliver benefits to residents and businesses across the Borough. Table 3 Stage B1 Testing the new Local Plan Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Table 3 Testing the Plan objectives in the Proposed Spatial Strategy (October 2020) against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework: modifications shown as tracked changes

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 927 893 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	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	?	+	+

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
appropriate mix, type and tenure for Slough’s population that are designed and built to a high quality and environmentally sound standard.										
C. .To deliver 21 st century Town Centre delivering major office development, revitalised shopping and leisure facilities, a strengthened cultural offer and a range of new homes 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 <u>inclusive growth, attracts investment and retains its role as a</u> remains 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 and the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and growth at Heathrow deliver benefits for residents and businesses across the Borough. ..	+	0	+/-	0	?	0	0	0	0	?/-
G. Make <u>public transport the most domiant mode of travel, ensure walking, cycling are attractive options by</u> To encourage sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport, reducing e the need to travel <u>by making, make</u> 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	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	0	+

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
<i>of all residents and reduce deprivation through providing opportunities for our residents to live positive, healthy, active and independent lives</i>										
<i>I. To provide for community infrastructure and facilities in appropriate and accessible locations that supports a viable and vibrant network of services.</i>	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+	?
<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 <u>sustainable</u> 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 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and adapt ing and mitigign the effectsof <u>climate change , reducing energy use, addressing flood riskcarbon emissions and, energy use and pollution.and minimise its effects through protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity and water environment, and addressing flood risk, carbon emissions and pollution.</u></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

8 Predicting and evaluating the effects of the Spatial Options using the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives (B2-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. This has used the SA Objectives which were developed as part of the Issues and Options process.
- 8.2 The twelve Spatial Options are summarised Table 4 below. An assessment of compatibility of each Spatial Option with the SA objectives was carried out by LEPUS as part of the Issues and Options consultation. The results can be seen in the matrix in Table 8 in Appendix 1.
- 8.3 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).

- 8.4 In summary, there was generally good compatibility between the SA objectives and the Local Plan Spatial Options. However, the assessment highlighted some significant negative effects on SA Objective 4 (Economy) since the implementation of some of the Local Plan Spatial Options would involve the loss of existing employment areas. Significant adverse impacts were identified on Objective 10 (Pollution) as a result of the expansion of the centre of and possible significant adverse effects were identified for SA Objective 3 (Climate change).
- 8.5 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 was agreed at that point that the Local Plan Objectives and Vision should be carried forward unaltered.

Table 4 Local Plan 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J1 – Northern expansion into South Bucks (Garden Suburb) • J2 – Southern expansion into Windsor & Maidenhead (small sites)
K. Build in other areas outside of Slough

9 Predicting and evaluating the effects of the alternative Spatial Strategies (Stages B3 and B4)

9.1 The next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process considers how the Spatial Strategy options have been developed and tested against the SA framework to identify any positive or negative impacts against the social, economic and environmental objectives.

9.2 The most significant conclusion from the consultation on the Issues and Options Document was that there is no reasonable spatial option, or combination of options that would allow Slough to meet all of its identified housing and employment land needs within its boundaries without risking significantly compromising the objectives of sustainable development as a whole.

9.3 The Sustainability Appraisal “do nothing” baseline alternative is also not considered reasonable because of the Council’s aspirations to deliver the Vision for Slough in 2036, and the statutory requirements for Local Plans.

9.4 As a result, most of the options identified

in the Issues and Options Document were taken forward in the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy but a few options were not for the reasons identified below.

9.5 **Option J2** (southern expansion of Slough into Windsor & Maidenhead) was 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.

9.6 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.

9.7 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 led to three Spatial “Alternatives” being identified. These were:

- Spatial Alternative (a) (i) Meeting more housing needs within the Borough through intensification of Spatial Option A (expand the centre of Slough), and carrying forward Spatial Options F (intensify the suburbs) and G (releasing Existing Business Areas for housing)
- Spatial Alternative (a) (ii) Planning for a shortfall in the Borough through Option K (meeting employment land and housing needs elsewhere outside of Slough).
- Spatial Alternative (a) (iii) 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) but promoting Spatial Option J1 (meeting housing needs adjoining the Borough in a northern expansion).

9.8 The scoring system and response is set out in tables in Table 9 in Appendix 1, with explanatory text below.

10 Spatial Alternative (a): meeting needs in full

- 10.1 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; (ii) intensifying the suburbs and (iii) redeveloping Existing Business Areas for housing
- 10.2 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.

(a) (i) Increasing the quantum of housing development in the town centre

10.3 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.

10.4 The assessment of this option (Appendix 1 Table 9) 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.

(a) (ii) Intensifying the suburbs (Spatial Option F)

10.5 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 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).

- 10.6 The assessment 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.

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

- 10.7 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).
- 10.8 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

- 10.9 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, in order to meet housing needs in full, will have significant adverse impacts on the Borough as a

whole, and the NPPF Objectives of delivering sustainable development. Additional evidence for protecting the suburbs has been published. The need to protect employment land to provide jobs remains the same.

- 10.10 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.
- 10.11 This led to the formation of further options to deliver the five social, economic and environmental elements of the plan and its 14 objectives.

11 Spatial Alternatives (b) and (c): planning for a shortfall in housing

- 11.1 Alternatives (b) and (c) involve planning for a shortfall of housing and employment in the Borough but building outside of the Borough.
- 11.2 Alternative (b), which was Spatial Option K, involves building in unspecified areas outside of Slough which could be some distance away. Research on the options for this are being developed through the Wider Area Growth Study.
- 11.3 Alternative (c), which was Spatial Option J,1 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.
- 11.4 The Sustainability Appraisal of Spatial Alternative (b) identified that it 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.

11.5 The assessment Alternative (c) considers the relative merits of a northern expansion of Slough (Spatial Option J1) compared to meeting the needs for development elsewhere. The SA process does not allow for the relative assessment of bringing forward development outside a plan area compared to within it. However when the Northern expansion of Slough was assessed in the SA accompanying the Issues and Options 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).

11.6 Although the Slough SA cannot formally advise on this, applying the SA framework the proposed Spatial Strategy considers 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).

11.7 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.

12 The “emerging” preferred Spatial Strategy (Alternative c)

12.1 As explained above the “emerging” Spatial Strategy carried forward Alternative (c) , which took account of the Local Plan Vision and Objectives and included Spatial Options A; B; C; D; E; H; I; and J1 in the following five elements for the “emerging” 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”;

12.2 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. The results of this are outlined below.

12.3 Table 11 in Appendix 1 shows the assessment of the "emerging" Spatial Strategy (Alternative (c)). Full details of this were set out in the Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the "emerging" Preferred Spatial Strategy which was produced in February 2018.

13 The Proposed Spatial Strategy (Alternative d) - November 2020

13.1 There have been some changes since the “emerging” preferred spatial Strategy (Alternative c) was produced.

13.2 As a result a new proposed Spatial Strategy has been produced for public consultation which is alternative d.

13.3 The new components of the strategy are:

- **Delivering** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
- **Selecting** other key locations for appropriate *sustainable* development;

- **Enhancing** our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;
- **Protecting** the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;
- **Promoting** the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

13.4 For the purposes of the Sustainability Appraisal, these components can be equated to some of the Spatial Options that were identified at the Issues and Options stage as explained below.

1. **“Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”** is the equivalent of Spatial Option A (expand the centre of Slough), Spatial Option C (create a new residential neighbourhood on the Akzo Nobel and National Grid sites) and Spatial Option D1 (canal basin).
2. **“Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development”** is the equivalent of Spatial Option D2 (new Cippenham Central Strip), Spatial Option D3 (Chalvey regeneration) and Spatial Option H (release land from the Green Belt for housing on the edge of Slough).
3. **“Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets”** is combination of a “do nothing” option along with Spatial Option E (estate renewal).
4. **“Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London”** is a “do nothing” option.
5. **“Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs”** is the

equivalent of Spatial Option K (build in other areas outside of Slough).

13.5 As a result it can be seen that the proposed Spatial Strategy (alternative d) consists of Spatial Options A,C,D1,D2,D3, E, H, K and “do nothing” in some areas.

13.6 The Spatial Options that have not been taken forward are:

- B (expand the Langley Centre)
- F (intensification of the suburbs)
- G (redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing)
- I (release land from the Green Belt for Heathrow related employment development in Colnbrook and Poyle)
- J1 (northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks)
- J2 (southern expansion of Slough into Windsor and Maidenhead)

13.7 The main outcome of the proposed Spatial Strategy (Alternative d) is that nearly all of the growth will take place in the centre of Slough. There may also have to be some release of Green Belt sites on the edge of Slough to meet housing needs. The suburban residential areas will be protected from major development and there will be no loss of public open space. Any unmet housing needs will be met outside of Slough. More details of each component of the spatial strategy are set out below.

Component 1- Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”

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

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

13.10 This component of the spatial strategy has not changed significantly since it was assessed in the SA of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy. Additional information has come forward about the scale of development. It is envisaged that there will be 9,000 homes and 150,000 m² of office development as part of the “employment led” regeneration of the centre. It has also confirmed that there will be a reduction in retail floorspace.

Component 2-Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development

13.11 There is potential for development to take place elsewhere, outside of the Centre of Slough, to help meet local needs. The opportunities are, however, limited.

13.12 The largest and most important part of the Borough, outside of the centre, is Slough Trading Estate. As a result it is identified as a Selected Key Location where continual renewal will take place to meet changing needs. This is likely to be implemented through the preparation of a new Simplified Planning Zone for the Estate. The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough where redevelopment could take place, primarily for airport related

development.

13.13 The regeneration of Chalvey has been underway for some time. It is important that the remaining major housing sites in the area are fully integrated with the neighbourhood.

13.14 There is an opportunity to redevelop the former Trade Sales area on the Bath Road for residential use. This has been identified as a Selected Key Location known as the Cippenham Central.

13.15 Langley and Farnham Road District Shopping Centres will continue to have an important role to play.

13.16 Due to the shortage of land for housing in Slough and the lack of opportunities to provide family and affordable housing, it is proposed to consider releasing some green field/Green Belt land for residential development. Ten possible sites have been identified on the edge of Slough, but they will have to go through a separate consultation process which takes account of the results of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result none of these have been identified as Selected Key Locations for development at this stage.

13.17 The only major change since the “emerging” Spatial Strategy is that Spatial Option B, the expansion of Langley centre, is no longer proposed because the key site at Langley Business Centre now has planning permission for data centres. This will reduce the housing supply but retain the site for employment uses.

Component 3- Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets

13.18 Enhancing the areas where most people live is an important part of the proposed

Spatial Strategy. The recent a “Protecting the Suburbs” report showed why it was not practical, viable, sustainable or desirable to allow any of the family housing to be lost. There is, however, scope for redevelopment on non-garden land such as garage courts and other brownfield sites. There is also scope for Estate Renewal to take place within the suburban areas.

- 13.19 This component also seeks to protect and enhance the open spaces, parks and other assets of community value within the residential areas in order to support healthy and active lifestyles.
- 13.20 At the same time it is proposed that the neighbourhood centres should have an improved range of facilities within them so that people are able to “live locally” if they want to, without the need to travel.
- 13.21 There are no significant changes to this “do nothing” option from the “emerging” Spatial Strategy. More emphasis is placed upon improving the vitality of the neighbourhood centres to encourage people to “live locally” if they want to.

Component 4-Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London

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

because of environmental issues including noise from the nearby Heathrow

- 13.25 In the absence of any demonstrable need for airport related development it is considered that the most appropriate approach is restrain development in order to protect the Green Belt, Colne Valley Park and Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London. This will also effectively safeguard land from being developed which could be needed for the expansion of the airport in the future.
- 13.26 This component of the proposed Spatial Strategy is a significant change from the “emerging” one. It means that Spatial Option I (release land from the Green Belt for Heathrow related employment development in Colnbrook and Poyle) is no longer being proposed and is replaced by a “do nothing” one. This will significantly reduce economic growth but there will no longer be any significant harm to the environment.

Component 5 -Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs

- 13.27 One of the principles of the Spatial Strategy is that unmet needs should be met as close as possible to where they arise. It has not been possible to find sites to accommodate all of Slough’s housing needs within the Borough which means that there is a 5,000 shortfall. There is already a shortfall of housing in southern Buckinghamshire. There is also a need to rebalance the housing market in Slough in order to provide more family housing. It is for these reasons that the Cross Border Expansion of Slough is being promoted as a component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 13.28 The Council has previously identified the northern extension of Slough, in the form of a “Garden Suburb”, as the best way of meeting un met needs which is Spatial

Option J1 (northern expansion of Slough into South Bucks). This is, however, outside of the control of the Local Plan. The solution as to how to best meet unmet housing needs in the area will be influenced by the Wider Area Growth Study which has been jointly commissioned along with Windsor & Maidenhead and Buckinghamshire. Part 1 of this study has identified a narrow area of search for meeting Slough's needs south of the M40 motorway. The exact location for where development could take place is currently being assessed in Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result in order to avoid prejudicing the outcome of the study the proposed Spatial Strategy is just promoting the "cross border" expansion of Slough as the way of meeting unmet housing needs. This is the equivalent of Spatial Option K (build in other areas outside of Slough) rather than Spatial Option J1 (northern expansion of Slough)

13.29 It is not considered that this makes any significant difference to the Sustainability Appraisal.

13.30 The five components which make up the proposed Spatial Strategy (Alternative d) have been tested against the SA framework to see whether there are possible significant positive effects. The results of this are set out in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Assessment of the 5 components of the proposed 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 sustainable development	<i>Enhancing</i> our distinct Suburbs , vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;	<i>Protecting</i> the "Strategic Gap" between Slough and Greater London;	<i>Promoting</i> the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.	
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.	+/-	?	+	?	?/-	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
2. Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	0	-	+	?/+	?	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;
3. Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.	?	?	?	?/+	?	Climate change adaptation; Flooding.
4. Economy: 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.
5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0/+	?	+	0	0	Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity

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 sustainable development	<i>Enhancing</i> our distinct Suburbs , vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;	<i>Protecting</i> the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;	<i>Promoting</i> the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.	
6. Cultural heritage: 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.
7. Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	+	+	-	-	+	Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality Homelessness.
8. Landscape: 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;
9. Use of resources: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	+	?/-	?/-	0	?/-	Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.
10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+	0	?	Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land

13.31 The main conclusions from the assessment of each of the 5 components of the proposed Spatial Strategy are as follows:

Component 1- Delivering major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”

13.32 The scale of new house building proposed in the centre means that this element of the proposed Spatial Strategy scores positively for SA objective 7 (housing). The scale of new offices proposed means that it also scores positively for SA Objective 4 (economy). Intensively redeveloping brownfield sites means that it scores well for SA Objective 9 (use of resources).

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

Component 2- Selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development

13.34 This component of the proposed Spatial Strategy includes a combination of very different Spatial Options. On the one hand it proposes the redevelopment of exiting brownfield sites on the other hand it proposes the development of greenfield

Green Belt sites for housing. As a result it is difficult to assess this component as a whole against the SA Objectives.

13.35 It is no longer proposed to develop the centre of Langley for residential but the proposed housing in Cippenham, Chalvey and on Green Belt land on the edge of Slough means that the component scores positively against SA Objective 7 (housing).

13.36 The proposed housing on greenfield Green Belt sites is in conflict with SA objective 8 (landscape), SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 6 (cultural Heritage). This could also conflict with SA Objective 9 (use of resources)

13.37 Although this component of the proposed Spatial Strategy promotes the regeneration of existing business areas, it has not been possible to identify any new land for employment and there will be some loss. As a result it scores negatively against SA Objective 4 (economy)

Component 3- Enhancing our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets

13.38 Preventing major development in the less accessible parts of the Borough and encouraging residents to use local facilities means that the enhancing the suburbs component of the proposed Spatial Strategy scores positively against SA objective 1 (transport). 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).

Component 4- Protecting the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London

- 13.39 There has been significant change with this component compared to the “emerging” Spatial Strategy because the expansion of Heathrow airport is no longer going ahead. As a result there is no longer a need to accommodate the proposed third run away and mitigating the impact. This means that the proposed Spatial Strategy can now continue to protecting the Strategic Gap, Green Belt and Colne Valley Park. This means there are no longer any significant negative environmental impacts. Heathrow expansion would have provided direct and indirect employment opportunities and would help to meet Slough need for 15,000 jobs. As a result the fact that the third runway is not going ahead and it is no longer proposed to have any airport related development in the area means that there will no longer be a significant beneficial impact on the economy.
- 13.40 Protecting the Colnbrook and Poyle area from development because of its importance in providing a Strategy Gap between Slough and London, protecting the Green Belt and contributing to the Colne Valley Park is essentially a “do nothing” option. It has positive impacts in protecting cultural heritage (SA Objective 6) and protecting the landscape (SA Objective 8). It could have a positive impact upon SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 3 (climate change).
- 13.41 Preventing development means that it scores negatively against SA Objective 4 (economy) and SA Objective 7 (housing).

Component 5- Promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs

- 13.42 This component has changed since the

“emerging” Spatial Strategy has changed. The Council is no longer promoting the northern expansion of Slough in the form of a garden suburb. Instead this component of the proposed Spatial Strategy focuses on promoting the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.

- 13.43 It is important to note that this is outside of the control of the Slough Local Plan area and any proposed development could only be delivered by the relevant Local Planning Authority in its development plan. Exactly how this could be delivered will have to be decided through further joint working once the results of the Wider Area Growth have been agreed.
- 13.44 It should also be noted that technically this is also outside the scope of this Sustainability Appraisal which can only set Objectives for what should happen within the Plan area. Any proposal for development in another Plan area should in theory to be judged against the Sustainability Appraisal Framework for that area. This will only work, however, if the relevant SA takes account of the requirement to meet unmet needs from Slough.
- 13.45 As a result it is still considered helpful to consider the proposed cross border expansion component alongside the others in this Sustainability Appraisal.
- 13.46 The relative merits of Spatial Option J1 (Northern Expansion of Slough) and Spatial Option K (Build in other areas outside of Slough) have already been assessed as part of the consideration of Alternatives a and b as explained in Section 11 above. The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that 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).

- 13.47 The impact of promoting the cross border expansion of Slough is largely unknown because it is not known how or where this would take place. It is positive for SA Objective 7 (housing) but could potentially have a significant negative impact upon SA Objective 1 (transport and accessibility), 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).

14 Cumulative impact of the Proposed Spatial Strategy

- 14.1 The cumulative impact of all the components within the Proposed Spatial Strategy needs to be assessed against the SA objectives. In doing so it is important to note that the majority of the proposed development will take place in the centre of Slough and so the impacts of this needs to be given the greatest weight. As explained above, the proposal to promote the cross border expansion of Slough to meet Slough's unmet housing needs is technically outside of the scope of this Sustainability Appraisal and so cannot be included in the cumulative impact.
- 14.2 Although it is proposed to build 9,000 houses in the centre of Slough, the overall shortfall of around 5,000 dwellings in the Plan area means that the Proposed Spatial Strategy will have a significant negative impact upon SA Objective 7 (Housing). The provision for major office

development in the centre of Slough will have a significant positive impact upon SA 4 (Economy). This is, however, balanced by the lack of any new employment development in the rest of the Borough which could have a significant negative impact.

- 14.3 The proposed scale of housing and employment development in the Spatial Strategy still means that there could be a significant impact upon SA Objective 2 (biodiversity), SA Objective 6 (cultural heritage) and SA Objective 8 (landscape).
- 14.4 It is not considered that there are any other cumulative impacts from other plans or proposals that need to be considered in this Sustainability Appraisal.

15 Mitigating Adverse Effects and Maximising Beneficial Effects

- 15.1 The SA process includes the consideration of whether there need to be measures to mitigate any adverse effects.
- 15.2 The Proposed Spatial Strategy does not include any policies. These will be developed as part of the next stage of the Local Plan. These will also take account of the various Environmental, Transport and other strategies that are being prepared by the Council. As a result mitigation for the adverse effects of the Spatial Strategy identified in this Sustainability Appraisal and proposals for maximising the beneficial effects will be developed at a later stage.
- 15.3 The extent and effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures can also be assessed in more detail in the next stage of the Sustainability Appraisal.

16 Monitoring Significant Effects

16.1 It is too early to propose monitoring measures. 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. These are likely to align with the annual monitoring of the Local Plan itself.

17 Sustainability Appraisal Conclusion

17.1 This document sets out the Sustainability Appraisal process that has been used to influence the evolution of the proposed Spatial Strategy for the Slough Local Plan. This document will be publicly consulted on for six weeks alongside the proposed spatial strategy in November 2020.

17.2 The Spatial Strategy is the first part of the Local Plan which sets out the proposed scale and distribution of development over the Plan period from 2016 to 2036. It sets the premises and principles from which the policies will be formulated, and that will ultimately be used to guide and influence new development in the Borough.

17.3 This iteration of the SA documents part of an ongoing assessment of the preparation of the Local Plan. This began with the production of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in November 2016. This was followed by a Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation Document which was the subject of public consultation in January 2017. This was followed by an Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Preferred Spatial Strategy

which was produced in February 2018 which was not subject to public consultation.

17.4 This Sustainability Appraisal takes account of all of these previous assessments and continues to use the SA Framework established in the Scoping Report and the Spatial Options developed at the Issues and Options stage.

17.5 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal is to assess the extent to which the emerging plan will help to achieve the identified environmental, economic and social objectives. It also requires the proposed Spatial Strategy to be tested against reasonable alternative options for delivering the plan's objectives to ensure these improve on the baseline of the evolution of the area without the plan.

17.6 The challenge of the plan is how to balance competing demands on limited and finite space. In addition it is important to acknowledge the plan largest influence is on new development. The current consultation document this SA accompanies does however embed sustainability appraisal objectives within the vision, objectives and elements, in part due to the statutory requirements of the plan, and the guidance set out in the NPPF.

17.7 The two main elements of the proposed Spatial Strategy which need to be assessed by this Sustainability Appraisal is the scale of the development proposed in Slough, and the way in which it is proposed to be distributed. It should be noted that the Spatial Strategy does not make specific site allocations. It also does not include any policies which will be developed later.

17.8 As a result a detailed appraisal cannot be carried out at this stage and it is not yet clear what level of mitigation can be

provided for any impacts. The high level assessment of the Spatial Strategy set out in this report can, however, be used to inform the decision making process and the public consultation exercise.

- 17.9** The main conclusion in this Sustainability Appraisal with regards the scale of the proposed development proposed in the Spatial Strategy is that there will be a significant shortfall in housing within the Plan.
- 17.10** The proposed Spatial Strategy will be around 5,000 houses short of meeting the SA Objective 7 which is to “Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population”. This is a significant impact which should be addressed if possible.
- 17.11** Previous assessments carried out for the “emerging” Spatial Strategy concluded that there were no reasonable options which could accommodate all of Slough’s housing needs within the Borough. This continues to be the conclusion within this Sustainability Appraisal.
- 17.12** The proposed Spatial Strategy continues to make provision for employment growth in the Borough but here is limited scope for doing this now that the plan is no longer seeking to accommodate the proposed expansion of Heathrow. As a result there is now less certainty that the SA Objective 7 which is to developing a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy objective will be met. The fact that the expansion of the airport will not now be taking place means that there is no longer a negative impact from this upon the SA Objective 2 (biodiversity), SA Objective 3 (climate change) and SA Objective 10 (pollution).
- 17.13** The proposed scale of housing and employment development in the Spatial Strategy still means that there could be a significant impact upon the SA Objective 10 of reducing pollution as a result of increased traffic congestion.
- 17.14** In order to distribute development, the Proposed Spatial Strategy has 5 components. Concentrating development in the centre of Slough scores positively for SA objective 7 (housing), SA Objective 4 (economy) and SA Objective 9 (use of resources). There could be a significant adverse impact on the SA objective 8 (townscape). It could have significant positive or adverse impacts on SA objective 1 (transport) resulting in a negative impact upon SA Objective 10 (pollution).
- 17.15** The selected key locations component of the Proposed Spatial Strategy scores positively against SA Objective 7 (housing) but negatively against SA Objective 4 (economy).
- 17.16** The proposed housing on greenfield Green Belt sites is in conflict with SA objective 8 (landscape), SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 6 (cultural Heritage). This could also conflict with SA Objective 9 (use of resources)
- 17.17** The protection of the suburbs component of the Proposed Spatial Strategy scores negatively against SA Objective 7 (housing). It scores positively against SA objective 1 (transport), Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA Objective 6 (cultural heritage) and SA Objective 8 (landscape).
- 17.18** The protecting the Strategic Gap component of the Proposed Spatial Strategy scores negatively against SA Objective 4 (economy) and SA Objective 7 (housing).
- 17.19** It has positive impacts in protecting cultural heritage (SA Objective 6) and protecting the landscape (SA Objective 8). It could have a positive impact upon SA Objective 2 (biodiversity) and SA

Objective 3 (climate change).

17.20 The promotion of the cross-border expansion of Slough component of the Proposed Spatial Strategy is technically outside of the scope of this Sustainability Appraisal because it is outside of the Plan area. Even if it were to be assessed against the Sustainability Objectives for Slough most of the impacts are unknown because it is not known how or where development would take place. This SA has taken a pragmatic approach however to inform the evolution of the plan to support the duty to cooperate. The detail of the matter is being addressed jointly with the new Buckinghamshire Council, and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in a wider area growth study. Comments on this are particularly welcome.

17.21 The conclusions in previous Sustainability Appraisals that there are no better Spatial Options or combination of options such as increasing the quantum of housing development in the town centre, intensifying the suburbs or redeveloping Existing Business Areas for housing remain the same.

17.22 As a result it is considered that the approach taken in the proposed Spatial Strategy is the most sustainable option. It clearly supports sustainable development through establishing objectives and elements that set out how the needs of the residential and business communities in the Borough can be mediated against the need to support future employment, social, housing and environment needs. The revision of the approach in response to the pause on expansion at Heathrow is also supported. Notably the continued protection of the Green Belt, and Slough's unique Strategic Gap, but also to protect the suburbs and the existing business areas. These support the current communities living and working across

the Borough to accommodate development at a scale and rate that gives the best opportunity for sustainable communities, and thus reduce knock on impacts on crime or fear of crime for example. Policies and proposals will, however, have to be developed to mitigate some of the identified negative impacts.

17.23 A further detailed Sustainability Appraisal will have to be carried out of the Local Plan for Slough and any site allocations contained within it.

Appendix 1 – Sustainability Appraisal assessment tables

Table 6 Scoring Matrix for SA Appraisal

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 7 The Sustainability Appraisal objectives and the associated key issues for the Slough Local Plan

SA objective	Key Issues
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.	Transportation infrastructure; Traffic flows; Walking and cycling; Accessibility.
2. Biodiversity and geodiversity: Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity and geodiversity.	Habitats; Species; Nature conservation designations;

SA objective	Key Issues
<p>3. Climate change: Minimise the borough's contribution to climate change, and consider methods to adapt to climate change.</p>	<p>Climate change adaptation; Flooding.</p>
<p>4. Economy: Develop a dynamic, diverse and resilient economy that excels in innovation with higher value, lower impact activities.</p>	<p>Economic Development Need Economic performance; Sites and premises.</p>
<p>5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.</p>	<p>Healthcare inequalities; Indices of Multiple Deprivation; Crime; Recreation and amenity</p>
<p>6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance</p>	<p>Designated and non-designated sites and areas; Setting of cultural heritage assets; Historic landscape character assessment; Archaeological assets.</p>
<p>7. Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population</p>	<p>Housing need : numbers, types, tenures House prices and affordability; Housing quality Homelessness.</p>
<p>8. Landscape: Protect, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening distinctiveness and its special qualities.</p>	<p>Landscape designations; Visual amenity; Landscape/townscape character;</p>
<p>9. Use of resources: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth</p>	<p>Renewable energy; Minerals; Previously developed land.</p>
<p>10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.</p>	<p>Air pollution sources; Air quality management. Water quality; Contaminated land</p>

Table 8 Appraisal of the Local Plan Issues and Options Spatial Options

SA objective	Spatial Options												
	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 (eg housing, open space, employment)
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.	0	0	0	0	0	?	0	?	?	?	?	?	0
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.	+	-	-	?	0	0	-	0	+	0	0	0	-
5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?

SA objective	Spatial Options												
	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 (eg housing, open space, employment)
6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?	0	0	0	0	?	0	0/-	0	?/-	0	?	0
7. Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	-	-
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: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/-	?/-	?/-	?/-	?	-
10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+/?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Table 9 Appraisal of the Local Plan Spatial Alternative (a)

SA objective	Spatial Options		
	A: Expand the centre of Slough	F: Intensification of the suburb	G: Redevelop Existing Business Areas for housing
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.	0	?	0
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.	+	0	-
5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0	0	0
6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?	?	0
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: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+
10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	?

Table 10 Appraisal of the Local Plan Spatial Alternative (b)

Alternative b), which was Spatial Option K, involves building in unspecified areas outside of Slough which could be some distance away.	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	K: build in other areas
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.	0	0	0	0	?
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.	+	-	-	?	0
5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0	0	0	0	?
6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?	0	0	0	?
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: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?
10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+/?	?	?

Table 11 Appraisal of the "emerging" Spatial Strategy :Alternative (c)

SA objective	Spatial Options								
	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	H:Release Green Belt for housing	I:Release Green Belt for employment	J:1 Area of search South Bucks	K: build in other areas
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.									
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.	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	?	?
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.	+	-	-	?	0	0	+	0	0
5. Health: Safeguard and improve community health, safety and well-being.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?
6. Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of archaeological, historical and cultural heritage importance	?	0	0	0	0	0/-	0	?/-	?
7. Housing: Provide sufficient affordable, environmentally sound and good quality housing for the local population	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-
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: Promote the efficient use of land to support housing and employment and population growth	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/+	?/-	?/-	?/-	?
10. Pollution: Reduce air, Noise, soil and water pollution.	-	?	+/?	?	?	?	?	?	?

Sustainability Appraisal of the Proposed Spatial Strategy