

LATEST VERSION

Sent to Committee Services 21/07

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Planning Committee
Date:	29 th July 2026
Subject:	Notification of commencement of Scoping Matters consultation and the New Local Plan Process
Chief Officer:	Dan Ray; Chief Planner
Contact Officer:	Pippa Hopkins, Planning Policy Manager
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	NO
Appendices:	Note web pages 1. https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/new-local-plan-slough 2. https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/new-local-plan-slough/6 Note report to CISC in March 2026 https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=87493 Note a report will go to Full Council on 29th July https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=168&MId=9130

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to make Planning Committee Members aware that progression of a new Local Plan for Slough is now underway. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is progressing under the new Local Plan regulations and has commenced a New Local Plan Scoping Consultation (which launched 13th July and closes on 24th August 2026).

1.2 The Local Plan forms part of the statutory development plan once adopted. It therefore has primacy in decision-making, subject to policy weight and national policy considerations. The Plan needs to be up to date to have most weight, and as Slough's is more than 5 years old it is considered out of date. This means although it has status, the influence (or 'weight') it has in decisions and at Appeals is reduced, and the NPPF has greater influence.

1.3 This report summarises that Slough is now consulting on the Scoping matters and an Engagement Strategy for the new Plan until the 24th of August. This is to

comply with national planning reforms and the introduction of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026 (Regulation 20) as the council has transitioned to a new plan-making system.

1.4 This consultation is also an opportunity to raise awareness and consult on views on our intention to carry over and update work done to date under the previous or 'Legacy' planning system. This includes a Call for Sites, and Conservation Area Character Appraisals, other corporate strategies such as the Slough Vision 2040, and the Preferred Spatial Strategy and work completed under the previous Local Plan regulations.

2. Recommendation(s)

The Committee shall:

1. Note the contents of this report and that the consultation remains open until 24th August on the Scoping matters for the new Plan, Draft Engagement Strategy, Draft Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Methodology, Call for Sites and Conservation Area Character Appraisals.



3. Report

Introductory paragraph

3.1 Slough Borough Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the administrative area for the Borough of Slough. Once adopted the new Local Plan will replace the Slough Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD. A report was presented to the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC) in March 2026. That included an update on the legal framework for producing the new plan and noted the plan's progress. A report will be presented to Full Council on the 29th of July to explain next steps including a recommendation to establish an all Party Working Group with key stakeholders for the Local Plan. This will provide Members the opportunity to contribute and influence the direction of the Local Plan. This is a non-decision-making group with Full Council being the decision maker in relation to procedural decisions, consultation and Adoption.

3.2 It is important to note that the plan must be kept under review, and the Council has a duty to update/produce a new plan regularly. Failure to maintain an up-to-date plan also exposes the authority to an increased risk of costs awards at appeal.

3.3 The Policy team are now inviting comments on the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan for the borough. The purpose of the consultation is to comply with Regulation 20 of the 2026 Town and Country Planning Regulations. Under this stage the local authority invites residents, businesses, and stakeholders to help identify the key issues, opportunities and priorities the new Local Plan should address, and how they would like to be engaged. We have combined the consultation to seek views on several supporting documents and evidence-gathering exercises.

4. Background

Preparing for a new Local Plan

4.1 Under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, the preparation of a Local Plan begins with a number of early stages.

4.2 These allows for early engagement and help to shape the content and direction of the Local Plan ahead of the first Gateway assessment (Gateway 1). The first part was publishing the [Notice of Intention to commence Local Plan preparation](#) in accordance with Regulation 19. This also included the [timetable for the Local Plan](#) sets out the key stages and anticipated timescales for preparing the Local Plan 2026-2046.

4.3 This consultation is known as the Scoping consultation. That offers suggestions on what we could include in the Local Plan and how we will approach future Local Plan engagement.

4.4 The following consultation documents are available; comments can be made on any or all the following:

- [Scoping Document and Draft Engagement Strategy](#) – the Scoping Document identifies the key planning issues, opportunities and priorities for the new Local Plan, while the Draft Engagement Strategy sets out how the council proposes to engage with residents, businesses and stakeholders throughout the plan-making process.
- [Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals](#) – This is a review of the current conservation Areas in Slough to support Development Management decisions to protect and enhance them and inform the Local Plan policy to do the same.
- [Draft HELAA Methodology](#) – The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment methodology explains how potential development sites will be identified and assessed for inclusion in the new Plan to deliver the spatial strategy, including delivery of new homes and employment, and protection of open spaces.
- [Call for Sites 2026](#) – This is an exercise that asks for views from land owners and others about specific areas or sites in Slough that we invite submissions of land that may have development potential or other future uses.

4.5 The consultation documents are available to view and make comments on the [council's consultation portal](#).

Scoping Matters

4.6 . The content of the Scoping Matters is set out to show how Slough can comply with the new planning process, and how work to date will be carried forwards. The form and some of the content of the new plan is prescribed in regulations,

but the Council can say how it will apply them for Slough. This includes a set of up to 10 objectives, a vision, a set of policies and a spatial plan to show how the vision will be implemented and where the policies apply.

- 4.7 One of the most important issues will be how the Council will provide for the homes it needs – the Government provides each authority area with a numerical requirement, and it is the Council's responsibility to demonstrate how it will provide for this need. This is an opportunity to identify deliverable sites for family homes and regeneration opportunities as well identifying key areas of economic growth and environmental policies to sustainably grow the Borough within a clear vision and Planning framework.
- 4.8 The Government is also making progress with expansion at Heathrow and is consulting at present on an updated policy statement that sets out the rules to guide the specialist planning application known as a Development Consent Order for the extended runway. The Local Plan will need to be mindful of this in its Plan preparation.
- 4.9 Alongside this the Government is planning for a change to the National Planning Policy Framework that will give it primacy rather than Local Plans and in due course the Slough Local Plan will also work within the sub regional Spatial Development Strategy.
- 4.10 While much of the policy work and evidence completed under the previous planning regulations is still of value for the new Local Plan, the Governments new style plans mean the vision and objectives will be refreshed. There is also a lot of work being done across the Council that the new Plan can support through policies and maps to help implement it.
- 4.11 The Plan and evidence are being designed at present to accommodate these changes, so we can progress.
- 4.12 We encourage members to respond to the consultation and invite the public and stakeholders to also engage and contribute.

Engagement Strategy

- 4.13 Engagement and awareness of the Plan are important for many reasons. For example, so residents have the opportunity to understand how the Government is implementing its manifesto for new homes, and so the plan content is as accurate and appropriate as it can be, and it is able to deliver the spatial strategy.
- 4.14 The policy team have complied with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to publicise this consultation, however the new Regulations replace the SCI with an engagement strategy. This means after this consultation the SCI will be replaced by the draft Engagement Strategy. That will go beyond the SCI measures and comply with the Government's ambitions for plans to become more digital and engagement methods to be more inclusive.

- 4.15 For example, in this consultation, the format of the [scoping consultation](#) was designed to be more accessible to residents. This means it used the Corporate branding and a landscape layout and scrolling format rather than the traditional portrait word style multi paged documents. It also tries to use the first three pages to explain the plan in a non-technical format, and to keep the overall document short and accessible to read or see the elements that may be of interest.
- 4.16 One of the main purposes of the Scoping document is to ensure the statutory bodies and other key stakeholders that need to be involved in the Plan are aware of it, so they can notify us of their spatial and investment plans that may impact it, and vice versa. The Government sets out who these are, and it includes utility providers and neighbouring Local Planning Authorities. The documents relating to this in the consultation have retained the traditional A4 document layout to be more user friendly for the specialist use they need and enable them to engage on the plan.
- 4.17 We could continue to produce a non-technical summary of matters as we move through the process if it meant that more people were aware of the Plan, and if they needed to comment on it. We would welcome Members views on the engagement strategy.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Slough Borough Council is getting ready to formally commence the Slough Local Plan under the new Regulations. A report was put to CISC in March 2026 that summarised the work to date and work involved, and a report will be presented to Full Council in July.
- 5.2 The Planning Policy team are now consulting key stakeholders and the public to help identify the key issues, opportunities and priorities that the new Local Plan should address and how to carry out engagement with them as the Plan progresses. This is known as the **New Local Plan Scoping Consultation** and is open from **Monday 13 July 2026 to Monday 24 August 2026 (11.59pm)** <https://www.slough.gov.uk/planning-policy/new-local-plan-slough/2>
- 5.3 This is the second of two milestones that have been completed as part of the work underway to confirm to the Government that Slough can produce its plan within the 30-month timetable. The first milestone was Notice of Intention to commence Local Plan preparation made on 30th June 2026 (compliance with Regulation 19). The next milestone will be on the 30th of October. That will be the conclusion of a self-review of readiness to commence Plan making, known as Gateway 1.
- 5.4 Further progress reports shall return to Planning Committee at appropriate times.