

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee **DATE** 5 September 2012

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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR DECISION**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/12

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to obtain Members approval of the eighth Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for publication on to the Council website. The key outcome is that Slough still has a 5, 10 and 15 year supply of housing land.

Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

1.1 The Committee is requested to resolve:

- That the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 be approved for publication on to the Council website.
- That the Council should continue to produce and publish future monitoring reports that are focused upon important local issues as well as meeting statutory requirements.

2 Community Strategy Priorities

2.1 The Local Development Framework is an important spatial element of the Community Strategy and will help to contribute to the following emerging priorities:

- **A Cleaner, Greener place to Live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

3 Other Implications

(a) Risk Management

There are no specific issues directly arising from this report

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

It is considered that there are unlikely to be any significant implications in relation to the Human Rights Act.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

The Annual Monitoring Report is a factual document and not a Policy document therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not necessary.

(d) Workforce

There are no workforce issues arising from this report.

4 Supporting Information

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2011/12

- 4.1 The Annual Monitoring Report is a crucial part of the 'feedback loop' in the policy making process. It reports the progress of planning policies, key Development Plan Documents and development trends in Slough.
- 4.2 The statistical basis for the report is the financial year from April 2011 to March 2012, but additional information has been included about progress up to August this year. A copy of the AMR 2011/12 can be emailed to members on request.
- 4.3 This is the eighth report that we have produced and it provides the opportunity to review how well we are progressing with the Local Development Framework (LDF). The report assesses the effectiveness of existing policies and outlines the progress made in the implementation of the LDF.
- 4.4 Localism Act 2011 has made changes to the planning system and the way monitoring is carried out. This does not change the overall duty for Council's to carry out monitoring. Section 93 of the Localism Act 2011 takes away the duty to prepare an AMR and replaces it with a duty to prepare reports. The new regulations (Town and Country Planning 2012) states that there is still a statutory duty to produce monitoring report for local people but they won't have to be submitted to the Secretary of State. The local authority has more flexibility to decide what goes into the report. However it needs to be made available at council offices and on the website.
- 4.5 Members were consulted on the way monitoring should be carried out in the future at the Planning Committee on 28th March 2012. As a result it was decided to monitor the indicators which would be most useful to Members and what was likely to be of most interest to the public. It was resolved at Committee that the Council would publish an annual monitoring report in September, which would provide more up to date information instead of waiting till December.
- 4.6 The main content of the document is as follows:
 - Introduction to the Borough, including key contextual characteristics, issues and challenges facing the area;
 - Progress in the preparation of local development documents against the timetable in the Local Development Scheme;
 - Extent to which saved policies from the Local Plan for Slough and Core Strategy 2006-2026 are being implemented;
 - Indicators on housing, employment, retail number of appeals
 - The identification of any trends and changes from the previous AMR;
 - A housing trajectory which demonstrates to what extent the housing allocation is likely to be met;

- Extent to which the SPZ is achieving its purpose;

4.7 The AMR is divided into core subject areas such as housing, employment and retail, for which monitoring data is available. Objectives for each topic area are identified, and appropriate policies linked to these are set out.

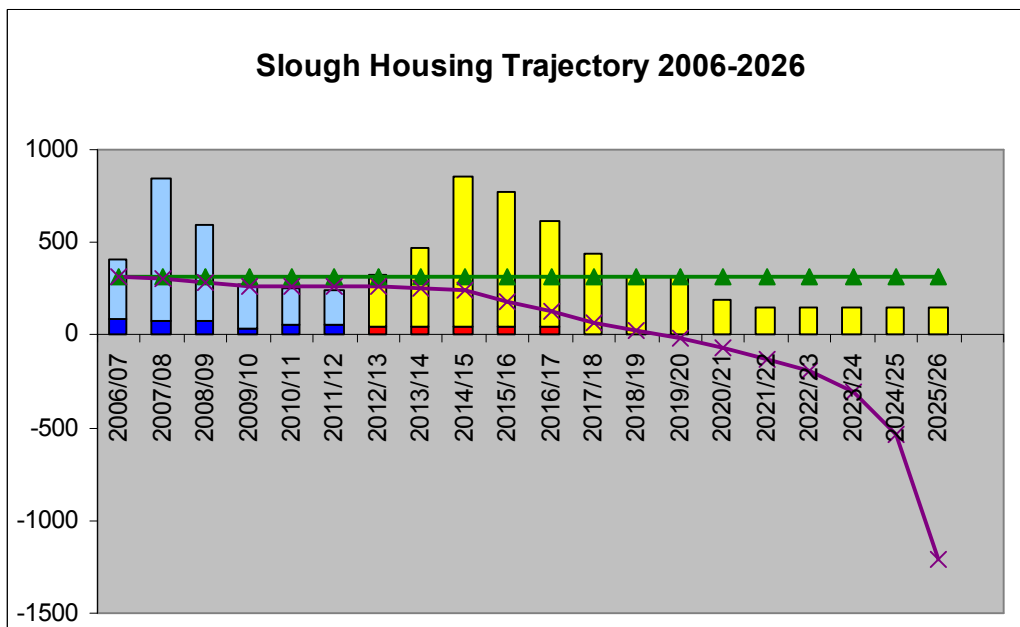
4.8 The key results from this year's Monitoring Report can be summarised as follows:

Housing

4.9 The key point to emerge from the latest monitoring is that the level of house building in Slough remains low. The monitoring report shows that 246 net additional dwellings were completed in Slough in 2011/12. Although this was slightly higher than projected figure of 229 net additional dwellings, this is lower than the 249 dwellings built in the previous year and less than half the rate in previous years. This was due to the impact of the downturn in the economy and the general decline in house building rather than a lack in supply of sites.

4.10 Whilst it is not predicted that the number of completions will pick up in the current year, there are some large housing sites in the pipe line. Even with last year's shortfall, completions over the first 5 years of the plan period have still averaged 437 a year which is significantly above the required average of 315 per annum.

4.11 Despite the impact of the 'credit crunch' and the downturn in the economic climate the Housing Trajectory (see below) still shows that Slough has a five, ten and fifteen year supply of housing land required by National Planning Policy Framework. The Trajectory also shows that Slough is projected to meet its housing allocation of 6,300 before 2026 without any reliance upon windfalls or any other sites coming forward through the planning process.



Key:

Expected net completions on medium and large sites



Past net completions on small sites (less than 10 units)



PLAN- Requirement – Annualised (315 per annum)



MANAGE- Residual annual average

- 4.12 66% of the gross housing completions in 2011/12 were on previously developed sites a (PDL) site which exceeds the 60% target. This figure tends to fluctuate annually as it is dependent on which sites come forward. There are a number of Greenfield sites being developed and there are others in that are expected to come forward in the short term. This will affect the figure for completions on PDL in future years but it is anticipated Slough will still meet the 60% target.
- 4.13 The monitoring shows that the percentage of flats built in Slough in 2011/12 was 33%. This is a significant decrease from the peak of 92% in 2007/08 when there were a high number of flatted developments in the town centre. This reflects the lack of demand for flats in the town centre and the effectiveness the policy in the Core Strategy that seeks to ensure that outside of the town centre new residential development will predominantly consist of family housing.
- 4.14 The housing department has recorded that 56 new build dwellings were affordable. A number of new build affordable housing completions are on former small garage sites.

Census 2011

- 4.15 As Members may be aware the first release of the Census 2011 results were published last month. The total population in Slough at 2011 is 140,200 compared to 119,000 in 2001. The number of households is 50,800 which equates to a household size of 2.8 which is significantly high in comparison to the result of the 2001 census where the household size was 2.36.

Employment

- 4.16 The monitoring shows that there was a net gain of 897 square metres of employment floor space in 2011/12. This shows the lack of activity in the commercial sector.

Retail, Leisure and offices

- 4.17 There was a total net gain of 2782 square metres of retail, leisure and office floor space during 2011/12.

Retail vacancies

- 4.18 Retail vacancy survey was undertaken in February 2012 and the total retail vacancy rate for Slough Town Centre was 8%. The vacancy rate has improved as in 2009 it was 12%. Slough Town Centre vacancy rate is lower than the the UK average retail vacancy which was 14% in 2011.

Percentage of vacant offices

- 4.19 The Thames Valley Office Market Report (2012) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton shows that Slough office take up in 2011 totalled 116,000 sqft, a reduction of over 51% compared to last year. Despite this, Slough is maintaining its gradual recovery. Slough vacant office space has remained stable standing at 954,500 sqft. This represents a vacancy rate of 24.7%.

Number of existing community facilities lost

- 4.20 One development involved the loss of a community facility. The planning permission at Christchurch Hall, Wexham Road was for construction of 9 x 3B houses. The construction involved the demolition of the Church Hall used in conjunction with St Paul's Church. The hall has not been used for many years and is in a state of disrepair and it has been accepted by the Council in the previous application that it is not viable to either continue using or refurbish the existing building.

Amount in hectares of public open space lost to built development

- 4.21 One development involved the loss of public open space. The planning permission at land adj and rear of 14 upper lees Road was for construction of 7 x 3B houses. The construction involved demolition of the garages and building on part of the playground. It was called in to go to committee by a Councillor. This section of public amenity space is used by local people and its loss was considered to conflict with policy OSC4 of the Local Plan for Slough (2004). However the revised scheme retained the majority of the open space and the development provided significant investments and improvements to the open space.

Development control statistics

- 4.22 The development control statistics monitor the performance of the planning department. This is an indicator that the Council has reported to central government for many years. 893 planning applications were received of which 609 were approved and 183 refused. 684 (77%) planning applications were decided in less than 8 weeks and 107 between 8 and 13 weeks.

Enforcement

- 4.33 Enforcement statistics are also reported to central government. 22 enforcement notices were issued in 2011/12. 2 temporary notices, 7 planning contravention notices and 3 breach of conditions were served in the last year.

Appeal Decisions

- 4.34 The AMR also has to look at whether there are any lessons to be learnt from appeal decisions. There were 46 appeals against the refusal of planning applications in Slough in the 12 months from April 2011. Only 17 appeals (30%) were allowed by the Inspectors which is a comparatively high success rate.

Existing Policies:

- 4.35 For this monitoring period no review of existing policies has been undertaken. In past years we have undertaken this exercise following the adoption of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD. When we start to prepare the consolidated local plan one part of the process will involve deciding which policies are no longer needed because there are no longer relevant or have been superseded as a result of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The final version was published in March 2012 and the Government has replaced a large number of national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes with a single National Planning Policy Framework.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 4.36 The Annual Monitoring Report must contain information on whether the timetable and milestones for the production of development documents specified in the Local Development Scheme are being achieved.
- 4.37 The LDS sets out a project plan and timescales for producing the various documents that collectively will form the Local Development Framework.
- 4.38 In May 2009 the Council produced a third revision of the LDS to cover the period April 2009 to March 2012. The LDS is out of date as it only covers the period up to March 2012. We are looking to review this and publish an updated project timetable on the Council's website, once we know the outcomes of our consultation on our consolidated version of the Local Plan.

Development Plan

- 4.39 The Core Strategy 2006-2026 was adopted in November 2008 and the Site Allocations DPD was adopted in November 2010. These documents alongside the Local Plan Saved Policies (2004) form the development plan for Slough. Therefore Slough has a well established policy framework for the future. Only around half of local authorities nationally have adopted Core Strategies and few have adopted DPDs for detailed policies or allocations.
- 4.40 The sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD are being successfully implemented. Regeneration projects such as the Heart of Slough, Britwell are underway and the SEGRO master plan has been approved.

"Consolidated" version of the Slough Local Plan

- 4.41 Members will recall that it has been agreed not to review the existing plans at this stage but re-publish them in a "Consolidated" version. Comments would then be invited as to what extent the in the Core Strategy, Site Allocations Document and 'saved' Local Plan policies and Berkshire Minerals Plan 'saved' policies continue to comply with the new National Planning Policy Framework. This will not be published for public consultation but for people to comment upon the extent to which they think there is any conflict between the local and national policies.

Minerals and Waste Planning

- 4.42 The previous 2010/11 Slough LDF Annual Monitoring Report did contain a new section on minerals and waste planning. Following the closure of the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit, minerals and waste planning are now directly undertaken by Slough BC. It is necessary to perform these functions in the context of new and emerging Government guidance.
- 4.43 However the results of the 2010 Annual Aggregates Survey were not available at the time of publication. These figures are provided by the SEEAWP but delayed from lack of funding from CLG.
- 4.44 There are arrangements being put in place to deliver the 2011 annual aggregates survey for Berkshire. This will be included in the Technical Report when published. Data about new planning permissions and municipal waste will also be included in this report. It will also update progress being made on Minerals and Waste Planning in adjoining areas outside of Berkshire.

5 The Single Data List Requirements

- 5.1 The Single data list contains all the data that local councils have to submit to central government on an annual basis. This contains not only planning data requirements. The main reason for creating the Single data list is to make it easier for local authorities to know what is required to be monitored. This list will be updated on an annual basis. Therefore additional indicators will be added in future years.
- 5.2 Towards the end of this year we will produce an additional technical report which will include all the other indicators that we are required to monitor by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It will also contain indicators which are important to monitor the effectiveness of our planning policy framework. This will be for information purposes and be published on the council's website.

6 Conclusion

Members' approval is being sought for the Annual Monitoring Report which is summarised above so that it can be published on the Council's website to meet statutory requirements.

7 Background Papers

- '1' Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2004/2005
- '2' - Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2005/2006
- '3' - Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2006/2007
- '4' -Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008
- '5 ' -Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2008/2009
- '6' Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2009/2010
- '7' Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012
- '8' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Employment Uses at March 2012
- '9' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Residential Uses at March 2012
- '10' - Localism Act (2011)