

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee **DATE** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013

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**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I**

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2012/13**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to obtain Members approval of the ninth Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for publication on the Council website. Despite the low levels of housing completions, Slough still has a 5, 10 and 15 year supply of housing land. Another key outcome is there is no need to review the planning policies for the foreseeable future.

### **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

1.1 The Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13 be approved for publication on the Council website.
- b) 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.
- c) That the Council monitor the need to review the development plan for Slough through the Annual Monitoring Report.

### **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**

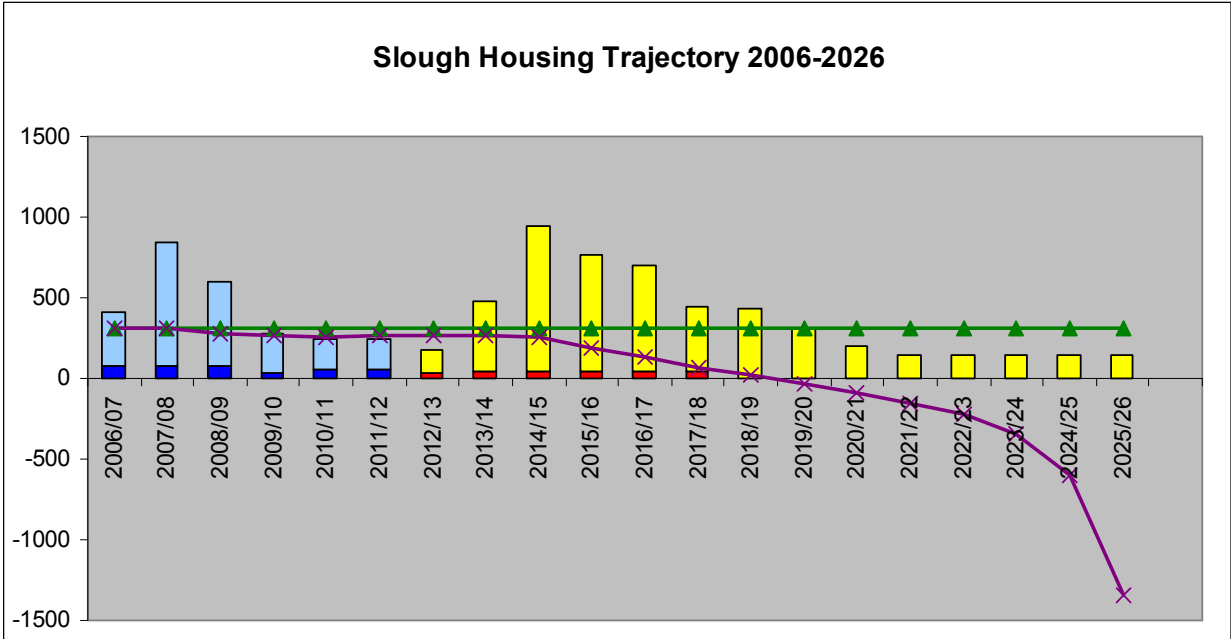
### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2012/13**

- 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. It also highlights the main achievements of 2012/13.
- 4.2 The statistical basis for the report is the financial year from April 2012 to March 2013, but additional information has been included about progress up to August this year. A copy of the AMR 2012/13 can be emailed to members on request.
- 4.3 This is the ninth 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 The Localism Act 2011 has made changes to the planning system and the way monitoring is carried out. 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 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;
  - Implementation of Site Allocations



- 4.6 The AMR is divided into core subject areas such as housing, employment and retail, number of appeals, for which monitoring data is available. Objectives for each topic area are identified, and appropriate policies linked to these are set out.
- 4.7 The key results from this year’s Monitoring Report can be summarised as follows:


Housing

- 4.8 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 only 182 net additional dwellings were completed in Slough in 2012/13 compared to 249 the previous year. This is the lowest level of housing completions since 2006. This was mainly 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.
- 4.9 It is predicted that there will be over 450 completions in the current year as a result of the large housing sites in the pipe line, such as Middlegreen, Castlevue and Railway Terrace. The new permitted development rights for change of use from offices to residential will see an increase in housing brought forward which will have a positive impact on housing supply.
- 4.10 Even with last year’s shortfall, completions over the first 5 years of the plan period have still averaged 400 a year which is significantly above the required average of 315 per annum. Due to past housing completions have been high we have an average annual requirement of 263 per year to 2026.
- 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 48% of the gross housing completions in 2012/13 were on previously developed land (PDL) which is below the 60% target. This is a result of housing completions on the Greenfield site at Cippenham Phase 4. Previous years we have exceeded the 60% target. This figure tends to fluctuate annually as it is dependent on which sites come forward. There are a number of other 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 that overall Slough will still meet the 60% target.
- 4.13 The monitoring shows that the percentage of flats built in Slough in 2012/13 was 6%. 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 only 6 new build dwellings were affordable in 2012/13. This reflects the number and nature of completions in the year. It is expected that the number of affordable houses will be back over 100 next year.

Employment

- 4.15 The monitoring shows that there was a net loss of 2086 square metres of employment floor space in 2012/13. This shows the lack of activity in the commercial sector.
- 4.16 There has been 35,515 square metres of employment floorspace completed on the Slough Trading Estate in 2012/13.

Retail, Leisure and offices

- 4.17 There was a total net loss of 3669 square metres of retail, leisure and office floor space during 2012/13. Over the last couple years there has been low completions for retail and leisure floorspace which is the result of the economic downturn. The majority of the loss of office floorspace is due to the change of use to residential under the new permitted development rights. This trend is likely to continue and we will see a loss of office space over the next few years. There has been no new development of offices and no schemes are currently in the pipeline.

### Percentage of vacant offices

- 4.18 The Thames Valley Office Market Report (2013) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton shows that Slough office take up in 2012 totalled 93,700 sqft. This falls below the 10 year average for the town for the second year. Despite this, Slough is maintaining its gradual recovery. Slough vacant office space has remained stable standing at 1.2m sqft. This represents a vacancy rate of 31.4%. Although the poorer quality stock is currently being targeted for change of use which would reduce the overall figure. An example is Westminster House was sold for conversion to residential.

### Retail vacancies

- 4.19 Retail vacancy survey was undertaken in February 2013. This included Slough High Street, Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres, Village Shopping Centre. The breakdown of the retail vacancy rates can be seen in the table below. The total vacancy rate for Slough Town Centre was 7%. This is an improvement on last year retail vacancy which was 8%. Overall the results of the survey show that all of the centres are relatively healthy.

<b>Retail Centres</b>	<b>Total Number of units</b>	<b>Vacant Units</b>	<b>Retail Vacancy rate</b>
Slough High Street	198.5	27	7%
Queensmere centre	40	4	10%
Observatory Centre	76	7	9%
Village Centre	17	7	4%

### Number of existing community facilities lost

- 4.20 There was no loss of community facilities as a result of built development in 2012/13.

### Amount in hectares of public open space lost to built development

- 4.21 There was no loss of public open space as a result of built development in 2012/13.

### 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. 758 planning applications were determined of which 547 were approved and 124 refused. 477 (63%) planning applications were decided in less than 8 weeks and 151 between 8 and 13 weeks.

### Enforcement

- 4.23 Enforcement statistics are also reported to central government. 16 enforcement notices were issued in 2012/13. 3 temporary notices, 10 planning contravention notices and 0 breach of conditions were served in the last year.

### Appeal Decisions

- 4.24 The AMR also has to look at whether there are any lessons to be learnt from appeal decisions. There were 40 appeals against the refusal of planning applications in Slough in the 12 months from April 2012. Only 13 appeals (33%) were allowed by the Inspectors which is a comparatively high success rate. Most of the appeals allowed related to design which is subjective. There is no need to review any policies as a result of appeal decisions.

### Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 4.25 The LDS sets out a project plan and timescales for producing the various documents that collectively form the Local Development Framework.
- 4.26 Members may recall that at the previous planning committee it was resolved that the Local Development Scheme be withdrawn. An updated LDS will be produced in the near future and published on the website.
- 4.27 The AMR still contains a section on the Local Development Scheme and provided an update on planning policy work we are doing.

### Development Plan

- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 The sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD are being successfully implemented. Regeneration projects such as the Heart of Slough and Britwell are underway and the SEGRO master plan has been approved.

### "Composite" Local Plan for Slough

- 4.30 Members may note that at the 29 July 2013 planning committee there approved the publication of the Composite Local Plan for Slough. A "Self Assessment" of Slough planning policies in terms of their compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was carried out. The outcome is that Slough planning policies are considered to be in general conformity with the NPPF and only a few minor clarifications were required as to how the policies will be interpreted. The overall result of this exercise is to confirm that there is no need to review the Local Plan for Slough at present.
- 4.31 The changes included the insertion of the statement of intent with a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the insertion of an explanatory box as to how the sequential test in Core Policy 6 (Retail, Leisure and Community facilities) will be interpreted. Also Policy 10 (Outside Preferred Areas) of the Replacement Minerals Plan for Berkshire will no longer be used for development control purposes in Slough.

### Simplified Planning Zone

- 4.32 Members may recall at the planning committee meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 it was agreed to renew the Simplified Planning Zone for Slough Trading Estate. This is currently underway and we have been working with SEGRO to finalise the document. It is envisaged that the Deposit Draft will be approved before the end of the year for public consultation.

#### Minerals and Waste Planning

- 4.33 The previous 2012 Annual Monitoring Report set out the interim organisational arrangements following the 2011 closure of the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit and the 2013 abolition of the South-East Plan.
- 4.34 At that time of reporting to Committee, the results of the 2010 Aggregates monitoring for Berkshire were not available but the Berkshire statistics were later published by the South-East Aggregates Working Party. Since then, the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities jointly undertook the 2011 Aggregates Monitoring Survey for Berkshire, the results being published earlier this year. Arrangements have been put in place to complete the first annual Local Aggregates Assessment for Berkshire for 2013, a new requirement by Central Government. The Berkshire Authorities are developing a Memorandum of Understanding between themselves as well as the South-East Waste Planning Advisory Group, responding to new Duties to Cooperate requirements, including evidence collection.
- 4.35 Slough decided to incorporate the majority of the Saved Minerals Local Plan policies into the approved July 2013 Composite Slough Local Plan. It has however been necessary to await confirmation about new Government guidance for waste planning due later this year before deciding how to proceed.
- 4.36 It should be noted that West Berkshire District Council is separately producing its own Minerals and Waste Local Plan. Other Berkshire authorities have not yet confirmed their intentions.
- 4.37 Data about new planning permissions and municipal waste are included in the report.

### **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.
- 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 alongside the Residential and Employment Commitments documents 2012/13.

### **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 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 and provide information to Members and the local community.

## **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  
Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2012/2013
- '8' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Employment Uses at March 2013
- '9' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Residential Uses at March 2013
- '10' - Localism Act (2011)