

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee **DATE:** 16th October 2014

CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Stimpson
Planning Policy Lead Officer
01753 87 5820

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR DECISION

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2013/14

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to obtain Members approval of the tenth Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for publication on the Council website. This shows that for the first time in a number of years there has been an increase in the number of houses built in Slough with 369 net completions in 2013/14. The high number of outstanding commitments, including conversions from offices to flats, means that Slough still has a 5, 10 and 15 year supply of housing land. There has been very little activity in the commercial or retail markets.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 The Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 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.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –

The Annual Monitoring Report forms part of the Council's planning framework which is an important element of Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy and will help to contribute to the following emerging priorities:

- Economy and Skills
- Regeneration and Environment
- Housing

Economy and skills and regeneration and environment are key priorities for the Council. Slough's Wellbeing Strategy names both of these with the following visions that:

Housing

“By 2028, Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth.”

Economy and Skills

“By 2028, Slough will be an accessible location, competitive on the world stage with a sustainable and varied business sector and strong knowledge economy, supported by a local workforce who have the skills to meet local businesses changing needs”

Regeneration and Environment

“By 2028, Slough will be distinctive from our competitors, harnessing the diversity and creativity of our people and our cultural and physical fabric to create an attractive local environment for our residents and businesses”

Corporate Plan 2013-14

The Annual Monitoring Report contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan by delivering local and national change through supporting economic growth.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
<i>None identified</i>	<i>None identified</i>	<i>None identified</i>

(c) 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.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

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

(e) Workforce

Annual Monitoring Report is part of the current work programme for the Planning Policy Team.

5. Supporting Information

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2013/14

- 5.1 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 2013/14. It’s an important tool for the future in terms of recording meetings with other local authorities for meeting the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate.

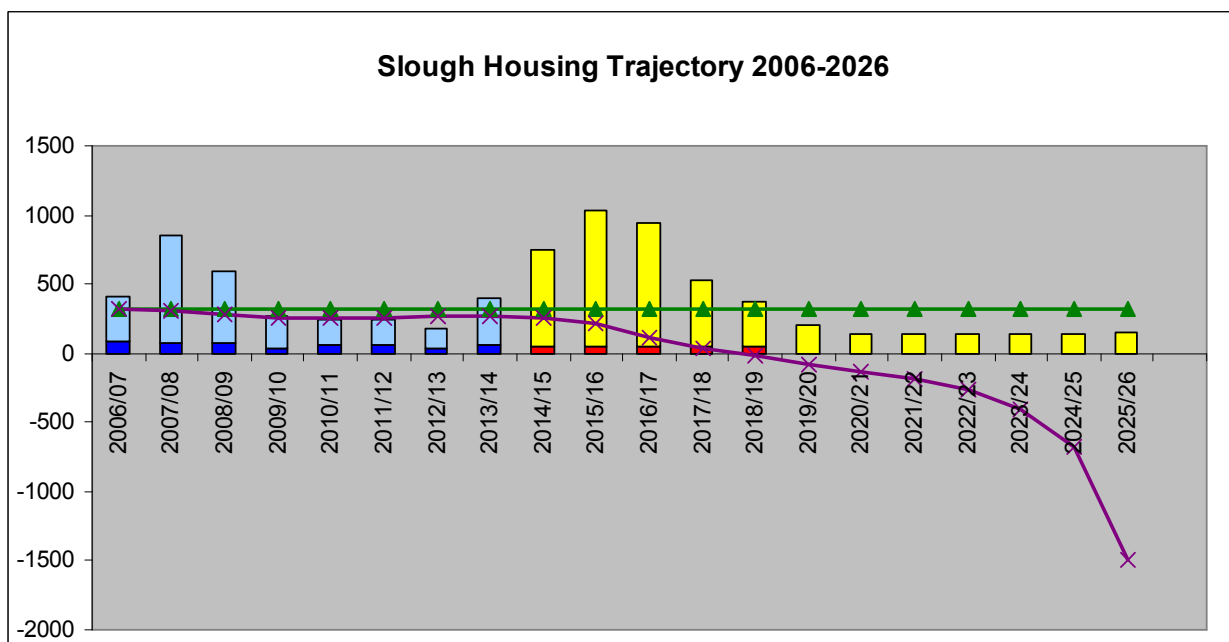
- 5.2 The statistical basis for the report is the financial year from April 2013 to March 2014, but additional information has been included about progress up to August this year. A copy of the AMR 2013/14 will be made available on Slough website along with a copy of the Residential and Employment Commitment documents for 13/14.
- 5.3 This is the tenth 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 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;
 - Duty to cooperate
 - 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
 - Statistics on Development control and enforcement statistics.
 - 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
- 5.6 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.

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

Housing

- 5.7 The key point to emerge from the latest monitoring is that the level of house building in Slough has increased. The monitoring report shows that 396 net additional dwellings were completed in Slough in 2013/14. This is a double the 182 completions in the previous year. The current figure is the highest level of housing completions since 2010 and slightly higher than our annual requirement of 315 per annum. The low level of housing completions in the past few years is 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.
- 5.8 It is predicted that there will be over 700 completions in 14/15 as a result of the large housing sites in the pipe line, such as Slough Central, Middlegreen, and Castlevue. In 2015/16 we are likely to get over 1,000 residential units from a combination of small sites, major sites and the change of use of offices to residential through the prior approval process which have to be completed in a three year period.

- 5.9 Since June 2013 we have received more than 30 prior approvals for change of use from offices to residential which would generate more than 500 residential units. Whilst this has had a positive impact upon housing supply the prior approval schemes do not have to provide affordable housing. The current technical consultation on planning proposes to extend permitted development rights for change of use from other uses to residential.
- 5.10 As a result we have lost office floorspace in the town centre. However there still a lot of vacant office space which is discussed under the employment section below. We do not see this as having impact on employment floor space because there are still sites available for office development.
- 5.11 Even with last few years shortfall, completions over the first 8 years of the plan period have still averaged around 390 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 261 per year.
- 5.12 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 this includes the 20% buffer. 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. It is important to bear in mind however that even if the Council can ensure there is an adequate supply of housing land, economic viability considerations and market conditions influence actual delivery figures.



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)
- X MANAGE- Residual annual average

- 5.13 92% of the gross housing completions in 2013/14 were on previously developed land (PDL) which is above 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.
- 5.14 The monitoring shows that the percentage of flats built in Slough in 2013/14 was 54%. This is an increase from last year figure of 9%. This trend is mainly a result of increase in flatted developments as a result of the change of use from offices to residential. This is still 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 effectiveness of 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.
- 5.15 The housing department has recorded that 63 new build dwellings were affordable in 2013/14. This is an increase from only 6 in the previous year.

Employment

- 5.16 The monitoring shows that there was a net gain of 1,948 square metres of employment floor space in 2013/14 as a result of the implementation of planning permissions. This shows the lack of activity in the commercial sector. There are, however, a number of large developments which are currently under construction on Slough Trading Estate.

Retail, Leisure and offices

- 5.17 There was a small total net gain of 1,643 square metres of retail, leisure and office floor space during 2013/14.
- 5.18 Over the last couple of years there has been low completions for retail and leisure floorspace which is the result of the economic downturn. However in 13/14 there has been 4,456 square metres of A1 retail this is a result of mezzanine floors in the retail parks. This was off set by 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 there are very few schemes currently in the pipeline.

Percentage of vacant offices

- 5.19 The Thames Valley Office Market Report (2014) produced by Lambert Smith Hampton shows that availability of offices in Slough fell below 1m sqft for the first time since 2010. The main reason for the decline has been the movement of vacant office buildings to alternative uses. Approximately 180,000 sqft of office accommodation has been sold to alternative uses over the past 18 months, with the majority going to residential.
- 5.20 Take up of the space in Slough remained slow during 2013 but an upturn in 2014. Prime example is the 34,800 sqft letting to Arvato Bertelsmann at Phoneix, Farnham Road

Retail vacancies

- 5.21 Retail vacancy survey was undertaken in February 2014. 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 8%. This is the same as last year retail vacancy rate. Overall the results of the survey show that all of the centres are relatively healthy. Vacancy rates continue to be below the national average of approximately 12-13%. This does not necessarily reflect the quality of the retail offer.

Retail Centres	Total Number of units	Vacant Units	Retail Vacancy rate
Slough High Street	197.5	25	12%
Queensmere centre	75.5	5	7%
Observatory Centre	38	2	5%
Village Centre	17	7	4%

- 5.22 Retail Vacancy survey was undertaken at the Farnham Road District Centre. This showed a low vacancy rate of 4%. This is a very healthy centre. There is a good mix of uses and many are independent and cater for specific ethnic groups.

Number of existing community facilities lost

- 5.23 There was no loss of community facilities as a result of built development in 2013/14.

Amount in hectares of public open space lost to built development

- 5.24 There was no loss of public open space as a result of built development in 2013/14.

Appeal Decisions

- 5.25 The AMR also has to look at whether there are any lessons to be learnt from appeal decisions. There were 30 appeals against the refusal of planning applications in Slough in the 12 months from April 2013. Only 8 appeals (26%) were allowed by the Inspectors which is a comparatively high success rate. Most of the appeals allowed related to design, character of the area and the amenity which is subjective. There is no need to review any policies as a result of appeal decisions.

Development Plan

- 5.26 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.
- 5.27 Members will recall that we carried out a self assessment of the compatibility of the Core Strategy and saved policies in the Local Plan with the NPPF. This concluded that the plans continued to be fit for purpose subject to the addition of a presumption in favour of sustainable development in a new Composite version of the plans.
- 5.28 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. Many of the sites allocated in the Site Allocation DPD are coming forward for development. For example Britwell regeneration is underway. The application for new retail and residential development at the Queensmere shopping centre has also been submitted.

Simplified Planning Zone

- 5.29 Members should note that Cabinet on the 14th July approved the new Simplified Planning Zone scheme for adoption. It will come into effect on the 12th November for a further 10 years.

Minerals and Waste Planning

- 5.30 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.
- 5.31 Arrangements have been put in place to complete the first annual Local Aggregates Assessment for Berkshire for 2013, a new requirement by Central Government. This has been completed and is available on Slough website to download.
- 5.32 The Berkshire Authorities have developed 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.
- 5.33 Slough decided to incorporate the majority of the Saved Minerals Local Plan policies into the approved July 2013 Composite Slough Local Plan. However the Waste Local Plan policies have not been subject to the same process because they are not covered by the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Members' approval is being sought for the Annual Monitoring Report 2013/14 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
- '8' Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2012/2013
- '9' Slough Annual Monitoring Report 2013/2014
- '10' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Employment Uses at March 2014
- '11' -Slough Borough Planning Commitments for Residential Uses at March 2014
- '12' - Localism Act (2011)