

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee      **DATE:** 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

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**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR DECISION**

**REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH – HOUSING TRAJECTORY**

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to inform Members about latest position with regards to Slough's projected housing supply and provide an update on the review of the Local Plan.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That the Housing Trajectory for Slough which will be used to determine the five year land supply be noted.
- b) That the possible delay in the time table for the Review of the Local Plan as a result of the Government not making a decision about the proposal for a third runway at Heathrow be noted.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –**

Meeting local housing needs and developing Local Plan policies will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

- *Health*
- *Economy and Skills*
- *Regeneration and Environment*
- *Housing*
- *Safer Communities*

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

One of the key elements of the Five Year Plan is the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. This will contribute to the following Outcomes:

- 1 *Slough will be the premier location in the South East for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay.*
- 2 *There will be more homes in the borough with the quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough.*
- 3 *The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living and cultural opportunities.*

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

The proposed work can be carried out within existing budgets and so there are no financial implications of the proposed action.

##### (b) Risk Management

It is considered that the risks can be managed as follows:

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That we carry out a Review of the Local Plan which will seek to deliver more housing.	Not reviewing the Local Plan would mean that development would either not come forward or would do so in an unplanned and unsustainable way.	Agree the recommendations.

##### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications (*compulsory section to be included in **all** reports*)

There are no Human Rights Act Implications as a result of this report.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equality impact issues.

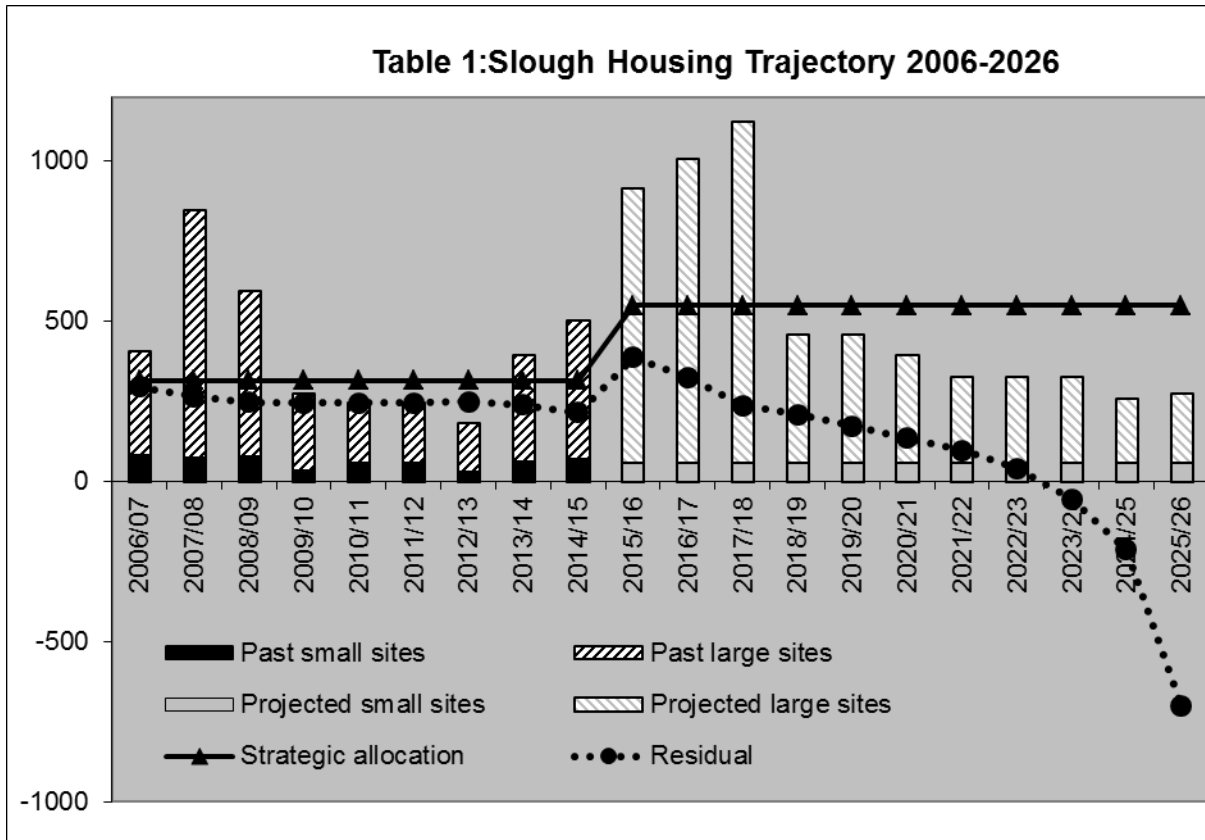
#### 5. **Supporting Information**

##### Housing Trajectory

- 5.1 The results of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Berkshire and South Bucks were reported to the previous Committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November. This showed that that Slough has an “objectively assessed” housing need of 927 a year.
- 5.2 It was noted that the “objectively assessed” need calculation does not take into account whether there are any constraints to meeting this need and so the figure does not automatically become the new housing target for Slough. This will have to be decided through the review of the Local Plan which can take account of all of the relevant factors.
- 5.3 The NPPF requires Councils have sufficient housing commitments to deliver five year’s worth of supply. Not having this makes the Council at risk from Planning by

Appeal. In the short term it was agreed that we should respond to the need for more houses by formally adopting the target of 550 new dwellings per annum in the Council's Five Year Plan. This means the calculation of the 5 Year Land Supply position will now use this instead of the 315 in the Core Strategy.

5.4 In the past nine years we have averaged 412 completions a year with 507 net dwellings being built in 2014/15. The graph in Table 1 below shows that there has been a large fluctuation in building rates depending upon the buoyancy of the housing market with 849 being built at the height of the peak in 2007/08 and only 182 being built at the bottom of the slump in 2012/13.



5.5 Looking forward, Table 1 shows that it is predicted that around 1,000 houses a year could be built over the next three years before completions reduce again. This is the result of a number of factors which include the rapid up turn in the housing market, the continuing supply of greenfield sites in addition to those in the urban area and the conversion of offices to residential through the prior approval process.

5.6 It is estimated that over 400 completions will come forward from the Prior Approval process with many more offices being extended and then converted into offices through the grant of planning permission after first getting Prior Approval. This could result in the loss of a quarter of a million square feet of office floorspace. Because there is a finite supply of suitable offices cannot be considered as a significant element of supply long term.

5.7 Even though future house building rates are likely to fall off as a result of the reduction in suitable land and premises it can be seen from the graph in Figure 1 that there are sufficient identified sites to meet the Council's revised target of 550 dwellings a year. This means that we can continue to show that we have a 5 year supply of housing land when calculated on that basis.

- 5.8 It is acknowledged that Slough's "objectively assessed" housing need is much higher at 927 a year. The ability to deliver this number of units in the short term and recognition by the Government that there should be plan system, gives us the opportunity to be able to determine what our future target should be through the Review of the Local Plan.

#### Timetable for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough

- 5.9 The previous report to the Planning Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> November outlined the technical work that is currently being carried out as the first stage in the review of the Local Plan. It also flagged up the need for the Council to produce a Local Development Scheme which formally sets out the proposed timetable for the review. The report also highlighted the fact that there were two external factors which will have a significant impact upon the timing of the plan which were the review of the South Bucks Local Plan and the proposal for a third runway at Heathrow.
- 5.10 The Government had promised to make a decision about the recommendation from the Airports Commission that a third runway should be built at Heathrow. Unfortunately it has now put off a decision until the summer. This has very significant implications for the review of the Slough Local Plan. Although we can progress with the "issues and options" stage of the plan and even produce a "preferred option" it would not be prudent to hold a public inquiry into the plan until the future of Heathrow has been settled. This is because objectors to a proposed third runway would be likely to use the Local Plan inquiry to rehearse their arguments about the future of Heathrow, which would make the inquiry unnecessarily long, complicated and expensive.
- 5.11 As the matter is beyond the control of the Council we are intending to take advice from PAS (Planning Advisory Service) and if necessary from the Planning Inspectorate about this. The current assumption is that if the Government were to give the go ahead for a third runway in the summer of 2016 planning permission would not be granted until 2019. This would mean that we would not be able to hold the Local Plan Inquiry until 2020.
- 5.12 This does not mean that we should the work that is necessary for us to be able to progress towards the production of an "issues and options" and "preferred option" versions of the plan. This will be important so that we can show that we are addressing our housing needs and provide the necessary evidence to feed into the Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks/Chiltern Local Plans, and that we should not be penalised for delays to the process beyond our control.

#### 6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Housing Trajectory for Slough shows that we have a very high projected supply of housing in the next few years, which enables us to demonstrate that we can achieve a 5 year housing land supply when measured against the higher target of 550 dwellings per annum. The Government's failure to make a decision about the future expansion of Heathrow could result in a delay in the final adoption of the Local Plan for Slough.

#### 7. **Background Papers**