

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee      **DATE:** 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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**WARD(S):** All

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

## **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the progress that has been made in reviewing the Local Plan in the last year and to outline what the next stages will be, beginning with the public consultation exercise on the “Call for Sites”.

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

The Committee is requested to resolve that the progress on the Review of the Local Plan for Slough be noted.

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

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

Ensuring that local needs are met within Local Plans will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

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

#### **3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Ensuring that development is properly planned around Slough 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 **4. Other Implications**

### (a) Financial

There are no financial implications of the proposed action in this report which can be achieved within existing budgets.

### (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 to guide development and meet the needs of Slough's communities	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

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**

### Introduction

- 5.1 The first phase of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough has involved gathering the evidence that we need to meet the regulations, the NPPF and other Government requirements to be able to make informed decisions about how we should proceed. The key elements of the work that has been carried out so far are summarised below.

### Regulation 18 Consultation

- 5.2 The first formal stage for the review of the plan consisted of the Regulation 18 consultation. This requires Local Authorities to publish a Notice of Intent to Prepare a Local Plan Development Document and to seek comments from 'specified bodies and persons' on the proposed scope and content of the DPD.
- 5.3 The formal notification, also published on the website, stated that the Local Plan would cover the period up to 2036 and would include a spatial strategy, detailed development management policies and site allocations. It stated that this may not include specific policies for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople or specific minerals and waste policies.
- 5.4 Consultation took place over a six weeks period from the 4<sup>th</sup> December to the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. There were 27 responses to the consultation from the statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways Agency, local authorities and some planning consultancies. As a result the consultation was successful in obtaining the responses that are needed at this stage.

- 5.5 The key points to come out of the consultation were that it may be necessary to carry out more work on Gypsy and Travellers and Minerals & Waste than we had envisaged.
- 5.6 Details of all of the responses from consultees will be published on our website. The Council will reference how these responses have been taken into account in the plan making process as part of the Issues and Options work.

#### Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 5.7 One of the main areas of work which we have now completed is the production of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The initial findings of the work were reported to the Committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015. This concluded Slough Borough Council is in a Housing Market Area with Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks and that Slough has an “objectively assessed” housing need of 927 a year. The final version of this report, which was produced by GL Hearn on behalf of all of the Berkshire authorities plus the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), has now been published and made available on the emerging Local Plan pages on the Council’s website.
- 5.8 This report, which contains a large amount of information about housing in Slough, forms a vital part of the evidence base for the Review of the Local Plan.

#### Functional Economic Market Assessment (FEMA)

- 5.9 We have also jointly commissioned a Functional Economic Market Assessment (FEMA) from Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners together with the LEP and the other Berkshire Authorities. The purpose of this is to identify the Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) that operate across Berkshire and the wider area. This has identified that there is a strong economic relationship with Heathrow, west London and parts of Buckinghamshire as well as Berkshire. It has concluded that for planning purposes Slough falls within an Eastern Berkshire FEMA which includes Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks.
- 5.10 The study was the subject of a technical consultation with other adjoining boroughs and stakeholders prior to the publication of the final document in February 2016 which is now available on the emerging Local Plan pages on the Council’s website.

#### Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA)

- 5.11 The same consultants are now carrying out an Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) which will determine what the objectively assessed need for employment land will be. A draft of this report will be the subject of technical consultation in April/May this year. It is anticipated that the outcome will show that there is a high level of need for land for employment development in Slough.

#### Retail Floorspace Needs Assessment

- 5.12 We jointly commissioned a Household Shopping survey with Windsor and Maidenhead in order to establish what shopping patterns are in the area. This confirmed that the catchment area of Slough town centre has reduced. Although it is not a ‘planning’ document, the Council has produced a Centre of Slough Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in September 2015. This suggested that

the regeneration of the centre is unlikely to be retail led. In order to inform further work on the town centre we will be commissioning a Retail Floorspace Needs Assessment which will forecast how much retail floorspace will be needed in the future. The results of this will be reported to Committee in due course.

### Housing Supply

- 5.13 A critical factor emerging from the work that we have carried out so far is that there is an apparent shortage of land within Slough to accommodate all of its future needs. This will be a major issue for the Review of the Local Plan to address but in the meantime there are a number of steps that we have taken and can take to begin to address this emerging problem.
- 5.14 Firstly we have sought to increase the supply of housing in Slough in the short term to ensure that we do not build up a backlog of housing need in the future. This has involved increasing our housing target to 550 a year. It is considered that this can be achieved within the context of our existing Core Strategy policies taking advantage of the current upturn in the housing market in Slough.
- 5.15 The latest position with regards to our Housing Trajectory was reported to Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> January which showed that we have a 5 year supply of housing land when calculated on this revised basis. Monitoring is currently taking place to count the number of house completions in 2015/16 and a revised Housing Trajectory will be reported to Committee as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 5.16 This work will feed into the Housing Capacity Study which we are in the process of completing. This will show how much housing we are likely to build in longer term over the plan based upon current policies and our current understanding of the likely supply of sites.

### Green Belt Study

- 5.17 One of the options that we will have to consider in the Review of the Local Plan is the need to release more Green Belt land for development. As a result it is proposed to carry out a Green Belt Study which would help to assess the role that individual sites have in meeting the aims of the Green Belt. In addition the study would also look at the extent to which different forms of development would harm the Green Belt. The proposed methodology for the study will be the subject of consultation before the review is carried out.

### Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.18 All plans have to be the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal which assesses the potentially significant social, economic and environmental impacts that may arise as a consequence of the policies and proposals proposed in the Development Plan. That will set out indicators, objectives and mitigation measures to inform the development of the Preferred Options. We will shortly commission work on a Scoping Report which will be the first stage in this process and determine the base line against which future options for development can be assessed.

### Duty to Co-operate

- 5.19 Another important area of work has been to try to ensure that adjoining authorities such as Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks are planning to meet housing

needs in their area so that they do not increase the pressure upon Slough. Members will recall that it was resolved at the Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> February that representations should be made that the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan should consider having a northern expansion of Slough in the form of a “garden suburb” in order to meet the housing needs arising in the area. Additional technical representations were also made by Officers in accordance with the Committee resolution.

- 5.20 It is anticipated that Windsor and Maidenhead will be producing a Preferred Option for their Local Plan later in the year and it will be important that we meet our obligations under the Duty to Cooperate and engage fully in the consultation process. The Council is also participating where necessary on the progress of Local Plans in adjoining areas as part of its Duty to Cooperate.

#### Other Liaison Work

- 5.21 The proposal for a third runway at Heathrow could also have a significant impact upon the Review of the Local Plan. As a result Officers have been engaged in discussions with Heathrow Airport Limited and have been taking an active part in the work of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group which is chaired by Hounslow. One of the aims of this group is to develop a shared vision for the future of Heathrow which could form a framework for Local Plan work.

#### Call for Sites

- 5.22 The next important stage in the Review of the Local Plan will be the public consultation on Call for Sites which is due to begin in June. We have had a good response from landowners, developers, organisations and members of the public and will be putting all of their suggested sites out for public consultation. We will also be taking the opportunity to consult on some major infrastructure proposals that could come forward as well as sites that the Council may want to promote.
- 5.23 It should be noted that all of the sites will be put forward without any comment or assessment which means that the inclusion of a site in the consultation exercise does not imply that it has any status or support from the Council.
- 5.24 In order to provide context and help inform the consultation process a short summary of the results of the technical work that has been produced so far will be provided and people will be directed to look at the evidence base on the Council's website.

#### Local Plan Timetable

- 5.25 It is still unclear what the exact timetable will be for the Review of the Local Plan for Slough. The Government's latest position is that all authorities should have submitted their Local Plans by April 2017. Some exceptions may, however, be allowed where there are factors outside of the Council's control. As previously highlighted the uncertainty caused by the proposal for a third runway at Heathrow may constitute such an exception and we will be taking legal advice about this once the position is a bit clearer. The Council worked with the Planning Advisory Service on this matter and they concluded the Council seek Legal Advice on the matter to confirm.

5.26 Subject to all of the technical work outlined above being completed it is envisaged that we could undertake an “Issues and Options” consultation by the end of the year. How quickly we could then take this forward into a Preferred Option will depend upon the outcome of the consultation and progress that is made with Heathrow and whether the proposed northern expansion of Slough has been included in the Chiltern/South Bucks Local Plan.

## **6 Conclusion**

6.1 The report demonstrates the progress that has been made in the Review of the Local Plan and highlights the next stages which includes the forthcoming consultation on the proposals that have been put forward in the “Call for Sites” exercise.

## **7 Background Papers**

‘1’- FEMA

‘2’- SHMA