

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 27th June 2016
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WARD(S): All
PORTFOLIO: Housing & Urban Renewal - Councillor Ajaib

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH

1 Purpose of Report

To inform the Cabinet about the progress that has been made so far in reviewing the Local Plan and the proposed next stages.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the report be noted.

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

The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) is the document that details the priorities agreed for Slough with partner organisations. The SJWS has been developed using a comprehensive evidence base that includes the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The review of the Local Plan is directly linked to the following priorities in the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy:

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

It will also contribute to Improving the image of the town.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The Review of the Local Plan 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 Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	No risks identified	
Property	No risks identified	
Human Rights	No risks identified	
Health and Safety	No risks identified	
Employment Issues	No risks identified	
Equalities Issues	No risks identified	
Community Support – There will be a need for a formal public consultation exercise.	A public consultation strategy will be developed.	
Communications	No risks identified	
Community Safety	No risks identified	
Financial	No risks identified	
Timetable for delivery – The review of the Local Plan is dependent upon a number of external factors which could delay the time table.	Contingency plans for a delay to the timetable can be put in place.	
Project Capacity – The review of the plan will require additional resources.	A Project Plan for the Review of the Local plan has been produced and a budget secured.	
Other		

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need to complete an EIA at this stage of the plan preparation process.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 In April 2015 it was agreed that work should start work on producing a new Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy (2008), Site Allocations Plan (2010) and the “saved” parts of the Local Plan for Slough (2004). The intention is that will set out the Planning Policy framework to 2036.
- 5.2 The first phase of the work has involved working jointly with other authorities and the LEP to gather the evidence that we need to produce a new plan. We have also been active in commenting on the plans being produced by neighbouring authorities as part of our responsibilities under the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.3 A “Call for Sites” exercise was carried out at the beginning of the year which invited proposals that may accommodate future development or infrastructure needs from residents, developers and landowners. All of the 134 proposals that we received, together with some other ideas, are currently the subject of a public consultation exercise.
- 5.4 The initial conclusion from all of this work is that there is likely to be a severe shortage of land in Slough which will make it very difficult to meet all of its needs. As a result we are about to carry out a Green Belt study to assess whether any of this can be released for development.
- 5.5 The next stage will be to produce an “Issues and Option” report for public consultation by the end of the year. That will set out the key issues that the plan needs to address, and the Local Plan options for managing them. Given the shortage of land and development pressures in Slough it will be necessary to look at some radical options for the future planning of Slough. In addition to releasing Green Belt land, this could include considering increasing housing or employment densities and looking at how London Boroughs have had to address similar issues in the past. The options will also have to take account of the proposed third runway at Heathrow.

The Evidence Base

- 5.6 Any new plan for Slough will have to set out how it will balance competing pressures for development in the Borough. In order to understand this we have tried to first assess what the need for new housing and employment land are.
- 5.7 We jointly commissioned GL Hearn to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) with the LEP and Berkshire Authorities. This concluded that Slough is in a Housing Market Area with Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks and that Slough has an “objectively assessed” need for 927 new dwellings a year. This means that we would have to build around 20,000 new houses over the plan period up to 2036 if we wanted to meet the housing needs in full. There are 53,000 dwellings in Slough at present which shows just how large the scale of development would be.
- 5.8 We subsequently jointly commissioned a Functional Economic Market Assessment (FEMA) from Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners together with the LEP and the other Berkshire Authorities. This has identified that Slough has 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.

- 5.9 The same consultants have also carried out an Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA). The initial results of this suggest that there could be a need for up to 160 hectares of new employment land in Slough. Once again, in order to put this into context, this is the same size as Slough Trading Estate.
- 5.10 Taking into account the challenges the Borough is currently having in identifying sites for new schools and other facilities it is clear that it will not be able to find enough land for all of the competing uses.

A New Vision for Slough

- 5.11 Before we look at what the alternative strategies may be for the Plan Issues and Options consultation, it is necessary to develop a new 'Vision' for Slough and set of supporting strategic objectives. These will help us to assess the options that are produced for consultation. The main purpose of this report is therefore to seek Members views as to how this should be achieved.
- 5.12 It is very important that the Local Plan is seen as a mainstream Council strategy and not just a planning document. This is decisions made about the growth of the town will affect the way the Council is able to provide its services in the future.
- 5.13 The starting point for the review of the Vision for the Local Plan is the Five Year Plan which already contains a vision for Slough and sets out a number of objectives. It also includes a number of "Outcomes" which are directly related to the future planning of Slough. The Council's various strategies and those of other bodies, such as the Wellbeing Board, are also helpful in identifying what the Plan's objectives should be.
- 5.14 It is important, however, that in producing the Local Plan we look beyond the short or medium that these strategies tend to cover. This means that we need to produce a clear vision as to what sort of place we would want Slough to be in twenty years' time. This will involve deciding what sort of identity we would like for Slough and what its role should be in the future.

6 Comments of Other Committees

- 6.1 An information report on the Progress on the Review of the Local Plan for Slough was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 27th April 2016.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The work on the review of the Local Plan for Slough is now moving from the technical evidence gathering stage towards the development of a new strategy for the future. In order to achieve this it is necessary for the Council as a whole to begin to make some decisions about what it would like Slough to look like in twenty years' time. This requires the development of a new corporate approach for the review of the Local Plan.

8 Background Papers

- '1' - Strategic Housing Market Assessment – GL Hearn 2016
'2' - Functional Economic Market Assessment – NLP 2016