

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning committee **DATE:** 2nd August 2017
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WARD(S): ALL

PART I

FOR DECISION

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to obtain Members approval of the latest Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2016/17 for publication on to the Council's website. This will form statistical base for Review of the Local Plan for Slough and provide the ability to monitor its progress.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to resolve:

- a) That an Annual Monitoring Report 2016/17, based upon the information set out in this report, be approved for publication on the Council website.
- b) That the Council should continue to produce and publish future monitoring reports.

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

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

This will have an impact upon the following SJWS priorities:

1. Protecting vulnerable children
2. Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities
3. Improving mental health and wellbeing
4. Housing

3b. Five Year Plan Outcomes

The Annual Monitoring Report will help deliver the following Five Year Plan's outcomes:

- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.
- Our residents will have access to good quality homes.

- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
That the Committee approve the Annual Monitoring Report for publication as it is a statutory requirement.	Failure to publish the Annual Monitoring Report would not meet statutory requirements.	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

(e) Workforce

This Annual Monitoring report is produced within the existing planning policy team.

5. **Supporting Information**

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2016/17

- 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 provides the opportunity to review how we have met the Local Development Scheme (LDS), a timetable for production of the Local Plan. It then highlights the main achievements of 2016/17.
- 5.2 It’s an important tool in terms of recording meetings with other local authorities for meeting the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate especially as we are preparing a New Local Plan.
- 5.3 The statistical basis for the report is the financial year from April 2016 to March 2017, but additional information has been included where relevant. A copy of the full AMR 2016/17, which is summarised in this report, will be made available on Slough website.
- 5.4 The Localism Act 2011 made changes to the planning system and the way monitoring is carried out. The regulations (Town and Country Planning 2012) stated that there is still a statutory duty to produce monitoring report for local people but they don’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.

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;
- Extent to which the SPZ is achieving its purpose;
- Implementation of Site Allocations

5.5 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

- 5.6 The monitoring report shows that 521 net additional dwellings were completed in Slough in 2016/17. This is higher than the average for the past five years of 439 but below the Council's target of 550. There were actually 598 new buildings last year but 77 were lost due to demolitions or change of use.
- 5.7 We were expecting a higher number of completions, given that 983 were under construction at the beginning of the year, but progress has been slower than expected on a number of sites. This was particularly the case with the conversion of offices to residential where we currently have 339 units allowed under the prior approval process under construction. We have a large number of housing schemes in the pipeline with 1,251 under construction in April 2017.
- 5.8 A report will put to Committee in September which will provide more detailed section on housing. This will report on Slough five year housing land supply based upon updated housing trajectory. This will take account of 2016/17 housing completions and provide a housing trajectory which reflects current monitoring information and delivery updates supplied by landowners and developers.
- 5.9 81% of housing completions were on previously developed land (known as brownfield) and 23% on greenfield land. This figure tends to fluctuate annually as it is dependent on which sites come forward. In future years this figure is likely to rise as the supply of greenfield land runs out.
- 5.10 There were 37 affordable housing completions in 2016/17, which is lower than the 119 we provided in 15/16 and 96 the year before. This low figure is a result of fluctuation in sites coming forward with Castlevew and Britwell coming to an end and Ledgers Road and Wexham not yet completed. It is predicted that we should have around a hundred affordable homes this year.

- 5.11 The supply of affordable homes has also been affected by our inability to get contributions from office conversions that have come forward under the Prior Approval process or from sites with less than 15 units.
- 5.12 The results of monitoring for 2016/17 showed that 67% of housing completions were flats. This is not surprising as it is a result of the high number of prior approvals for conversions from offices to flats as well as planning permissions. This trend is likely to continue in the future. This reflects the effectiveness of the policy in the Core Strategy that seeks to direct new development to the town centre and other urban areas where flats are acceptable whilst ensuring that development in the suburban areas predominantly consists of family housing.
- 5.13 Whilst this has had a positive impact upon housing supply the prior approval schemes do not have to provide affordable housing as stated above. As a result we have lost office floorspace in the town centre. However there still a 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 and large new offices are under construction in the town centre.

Employment

- 5.14 The monitoring shows that there was a net loss of -21,382 square metres of employment floor space in 2016/17 as a result of the implementation of planning permissions. This shows the low activity in the commercial sector. 100 % of office floor space lost is a result of conversions to flatted developments.
- 5.15 The Loss of employment space needs to be monitored. This will be useful evidence when preparing our New Local Plan and trying to protect out employment land.

Retail, Leisure and offices

- 5.16 There was a small total net loss of -112 square metres of retail floor space during 2016/17. We have not had any major retail schemes in the last few years. The majority of the additional retail floorspace created has been in mezzanine floors on retail parks.

Retail vacancies

- 5.17 Retail vacancy survey was undertaken in February 2017. This included Slough High Street, Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres. The total vacancy rate for Slough Town Centre was 4%. Overall the results of the survey show that the town centre is relatively healthy. This does not take account of recent closures or reflect the quality of the retail offer.
- 5.18 Retail Vacancy survey was undertaken at the Farnham Road District Centre, Langley and Chalvey. This showed a vacancy rate of 5% for Farnham Road and Langley. Chalvey had no vacant units. These are healthy centres and have a range of shops that meet the daily needs of the local residents.

Appeal Decisions

- 5.19 The AMR also has to look at whether there are any lessons to be learnt from appeal decisions. There were 29 appeals against the refusal of planning applications in Slough in the 12 months from April 2016. This is a comparatively low number of appeals.
- 5.20 16 appeals (55%) were allowed by Inspectors which is higher than previous years. Generally 20% or lower have been allowed in past years. It should be noted that nearly all of the appeals that were allowed (14 out the 16) were related to design, character of the area and the amenity with regards to extensions, which is subjective.
- 5.21 None of the appeal decisions are considered to indicate that there is a need to review any policies.
- 5.22 We had success with a significant appeal. The SIFE site for construction of a strategic rail freight interchange in Colnbrook was dismissed by Secretary of State, who agreed with the Inspector recommendations to dismiss the appeal and refuse planning permission.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 5.23 A new Local Development Scheme was produced for the review of the Slough Local Plan. This sets out a timetable for the production of a preferred strategy by the end of the year. There is, however, no timetable for the submission of the local plan for examination. This will depend upon the timetable for the examination of the proposed third runway at Heathrow.

Progress on New Local Plan

- 5.24 The Local Plan Issue and Options consultation ran for six weeks in January 2017. A summary of the representations was reported to the last Planning Committee. Preferred Strategy will be produced by the end of the year which will contain high level policies and strategic allocations.
- 5.25 We have also been heavily involved in discussions with adjoining authorities about the progress of respective Local Plans under the Duty to Cooperate.

6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 Members' approval is being sought for the production of an Annual Monitoring Report 2016/17 as summarised above, so that it can be published on the council's website to meet statutory requirements.

7. **Background Papers**

- '1' Residential and Employment Planning Commitments 2005-2017
'2' Annual Monitoring Reports 2005-2017