

Agenda Item IMD8

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2017/08

TITLE	Wokingham Borough Council response to the Slough Borough Council Issues and Options Consultation Document 2017
DECISION TO BE MADE BY	Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Mark Ashwell
DATE AND TIME	17 March 2017 – 12:30PM
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Director of Environment, Josie Wragg
REPORT TO BE PUBLISHED ON	10 March 2017
VENUE	LGF4

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that the Slough Local Plan Review has minimal negative impacts upon Wokingham Borough and that any positive benefits are maximised.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration

- a) approves the comments outlined in this report
- b) approves that they be submitted as a formal response to the consultation on the Review of the Local Plan for Slough, Issues and Options Consultation Document.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Slough Borough Council is consulting on an Issues and Options Consultation Document as part of a review of their Local Plan. This report considers the implications of this consultation and details a proposed response.

It is recommended that Wokingham Borough Council:

- Welcomes the objective that Slough Borough Council will seek to meet development needs within Slough Borough or as close to as possible.
- Encourage Slough Borough Council and those in the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area to review development needs as the plan process continues.
- Encourage Slough Borough Council to seek to engage across the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area, encouraging all authorities to undertake robust and objective analysis which challenges constraints and proactively investigates opportunities for meeting development needs in full.
- Responds that Wokingham Borough Council would expect discussions between the authorities in the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area to have been completed prior to considering before consideration could be given to engaging with other functional areas.

Background

As part of the Review of the Local Plan for Slough, Slough Borough Council is consulting on an Issues and Options Consultation Document (I&O). The consultation document is accompanied by a number of supporting documents, most notably a housing capacity topic paper.

The consultation closed 27 February 2017; however an extension has been agreed with Slough Borough Council to enable consideration of this report.

Analysis of Issues

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) set out that need should be assessed and met within the functional geographical areas. Slough Borough Council is situated within the following functional areas:

Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Borough Council • South Bucks District Council • RBWM
Eastern Berkshire Functional Economic Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slough Borough Council • South Bucks District Council • RBWM

The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) concluded that at the time of assessment that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) arising for Slough Borough Council was 927 homes per annum between 2013-2036.

The I&O Consultation Document sets out a number of objectives. These include a) “to meet Objectively Assessed Housing Need of 927 dwellings per annum within the borough or as close as possible to where the needs arises within a balanced housing market” and e) “to create 15,000 jobs supported by a competitive local workforce who have the skills to meet businesses’ changing needs.”

Initial analysis of housing capacity provided alongside the I&O Consultation Document suggests there is insufficient capacity to meet OAHN within Slough Borough. Options are presented to increase capacity both internally within Slough and externally.

Insufficient information is provided within the I&O Consultation Document to understand how economic needs will be addressed and the capacity which exists within Slough Borough.

The I&O Consultation Document sets out 11 spatial options ranging from intensification of the urban area (Options A-F), the redevelopment of employment estates for housing (Option G), release of land from the Green Belt within Slough Borough (Options H-I) and outside of Slough Borough (Options J-K). Options J identify specific areas within the adjoining local authorities South Bucks District Council and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). Option K makes reference to engaging with other local authorities and includes reference to the Western Berkshire Housing Market Area in which Wokingham Borough is

situated.

The initial analysis of housing capacity undertaken by Slough Borough Council estimates that even if Options A to K were all chosen and delivered that a shortfall of around 8,000 dwellings would remain compared to the OAHN.

The deliverability of development in the adjoining South Bucks District Council and RBWM is unknown. Option J1, a northern expansion on land in South Bucks is estimated to have a capacity of around 5,000 dwellings. From the consultation material it would appear that Slough Borough has made approaches but no response is referenced. Indeed the land identified within RBWM appears to have been identified by that authority for development to meet its own housing needs.

It is acknowledged that the non-alignment of local plan reviews within the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area makes the consideration of needs more complex. Notwithstanding this, the local authorities should be actively engaging on issues which impact the wider functional area. In particular the assessment of exceptional circumstances relating to the Green Belt should consider not only the local capacity but the strategic position regarding delivery and the implications.

It should be noted that the assessment of development needs will need to be reviewed as the plan process continues. A significant input to the published SHMA was the 2012-based household projections. Since this time the 2014-based projections have been published. These show a reduced growth in the number of households projected to form within Slough Borough Council; a reduction from 890 per annum to 700 households per annum. RBWM is projected to also see slower growth in the number of households. Since demographic need in the Eastern Berkshire HMA the projected fall in household formation may reduce the overall level of housing need. The 2016-based projections can be anticipated next year.

It is recommended that Wokingham Borough Council:

- Welcomes the objective that Slough Borough Council will seek to meet development needs within Slough Borough or as close to as possible.
- Encourage Slough Borough Council and those in the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area to review development needs as the plan process continues.
- Encourage Slough Borough Council to seek to engage across the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area, encouraging all authorities to undertake robust and objective analysis which challenges constraints and proactively investigates opportunities for meeting development needs in full.
- Responds that Wokingham Borough Council would expect discussions between the authorities in the Eastern Berkshire Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area to have been completed before consideration could be given to engaging with other functional areas.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including property and priorities?)

N/A

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Director – Finance and Resources	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comment

List of Background Papers

Review of the Local Plan for Slough 2016-2036, including:

- Issues and Options Consultation Document
- Sustainability Appraisal Issues and Options
- Draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Habitat Regulations Assessment

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/the-emerging-local-plan-for-slough-2016-2036.aspx>

Contact Ian Bellinger	Service Development Plans and Policy
Telephone No 0118 974 6231	Email Ian.Bellinger@wokingham.gov.uk
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