

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

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WARD(S): Chalvey

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PART I

FOR DECISION

81-127 WINDSOR ROAD – SELECTED KEY LOCATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE REDEVELOPMENT

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to seek Members' approval for the identification of 81 -127 Windsor Road as a "Selected Key Location" for comprehensive regeneration as set out in the Core Strategy Spatial Strategy. That allows the relaxation of some planning policies where this is justified in order to deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits to the area.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

2.1 The Committee is requested to resolve:

That 81 – 127 Windsor Road be designated as a "Selected Key Location" for comprehensive regeneration where, as permitted by the Core Strategy Spatial Strategy, a relaxation of the Council's policies regarding loss of family housing, building flats out side of the town centre and parking requirements may be allowed.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

3.1 The comprehensive redevelopment of this part of the Windsor Road near the town centre will help to promote Slough as a place where people want to live, work, shop and do business. It will also help to implement transport improvements and deliver the following priorities:

- **A Cleaner, Greener place to Live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

4 Other Implications

(a) Risk Management

The failure to promote the opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment provided by this site could affect the vitality and viability of the town centre and prevent the Council from implementing the highway improvement scheme for which it has obtained funding.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

It is considered that there are unlikely to be any significant implications in relation to the Human Rights Act.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

It is considered there will be no equality impacts.

(d) Workforce

There are no workforce implications.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 A major land assembly exercise has taken place in order to ensure that all of the properties in this run down part of the Windsor Road, including land held by the Council, can be amalgamated in to single ownership so that comprehensive redevelopment can take place.
- 5.2 The purpose of this report is to establish a planning framework that can be used to consider any planning applications that may be submitted for the newly assembled site.

Background

- 5.3 Nos 81 to 127 Windsor Road consist of some vacant demolished sites and a number of run down properties many of which are houses in multiple occupation. There has been a long term objective to redevelop the properties along this important entrance to the town centre.
- 5.4 The properties have been potentially blighted by a road widening line which has been in place for many years. A scheme has now been drawn up for the widening of the Windsor Road which should now be able to be implemented in 2015/16.

Planning Policy

- 5.5 It is recognised that a better form of development could take place on the site if the area was redeveloped comprehensively. This would mean that a scheme could be designed to accommodate the proposed road widening line, remove all vehicular access from Windsor Road and create a more attractive townscape along this important entrance to the town centre. At the same time a properly designed development could help to create a more attractive and user friendly pedestrian entrance into Herschel Park.

The Core Strategy Core Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) states:

...Proposals for the comprehensive regeneration of selected key locations within the Borough will also be encouraged at an appropriate scale. Some relaxation of the policies or standards in the Local Development Framework may be allowed where this can be justified by the overall environmental, social and economic benefits that will be provided to the wider community.

- 5.6 The Core Strategy identified where some of these selected key locations would be, and others were brought forward in the Site Allocations DPD. Core policy 1 sets the criteria for which additional sites can be brought forward for approval. It is proposed that as this part of the Windsor Road has potential to meet these it should now be designated as a “selected key location”.
- 5.7 This designation will then support and provide context for the relaxation of policies regarding loss of family housing, building flats outside of the town centre and parking requirements in order to deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits that comprehensive redevelopment can bring to Slough.
- 5.8 The site is outside of the town centre as defined in the Core Strategy. As a result it is not currently designated as a location where high density housing is supported. Core Policy 4 states

In the urban areas outside of the town centre, new residential development will predominantly consist of family housing and be at a density related to the character of the surrounding area.....”

5.9 Critically Policy 4 also states that:

There will be no net loss of family accommodation as a result of flat conversions, changes of use or redevelopment.

The Council has been consistently applying this Policy and its application has meant that planning permission was granted for houses on the Council owned land to the north with vehicular access from the Windsor Road.

Form of Development

- 5.10 The suburban character of this part of the Windsor Road has over the years been partly lost because of the number and size of blocks of flats, the busy main road, and the nearby tall buildings north of Albert Street/ Chalvey Road. It is an area of change. The site's location at the entrance to the town centre means that in design terms it would be appropriate to have larger scale development than is there at present.
- 5.11 It will be important to ensure that the design of the building takes account of the need to create good living conditions (including daylight and sunlight) for properties which front onto this busy main road.
- 5.12 The redevelopment of the properties should also mean that land for the road widening can be obtained without the need for Compulsory Purchase and the new buildings can be designed to accommodate the new road layout.
- 5.13 The comprehensive redevelopment of the assembled site means that they can all be served from the private service road at the rear without the need for any vehicular access onto the Windsor Road as there is at present. This will assist with road safety issues and compliance with Core Policy 7 (Transport).
- 5.14 Because the site is outside of the town centre, the current car parking standards would require up to two spaces per flat depending upon the unit size and whether the parking spaces are assigned or communal. Since the site is in a very accessible location close to the town centre it is considered that some relaxation of parking standards would be acceptable.
- 5.15 Core Policy 4 also requires sites with 15 or more dwellings to provide between 30% and 40% as affordable housing. There may be special circumstances which affect the viability of the scheme in terms of the need to provide for the road widening and the existing high land use value. It is not, however, proposed to consider relaxing the policy for affordable housing at this stage. This can be considered in the normal way through the submission of a Viability Study at the planning application stage. This will be able to take account of any abnormal costs associated with the proposal.
- 5.16 It should be noted that the identification of a site as a “Selected Key Location” establishes a policy framework which sets out the principles of development. It is not intended to be a Development Brief or a detailed Design Brief. As a result it is not proposed to identify how many dwellings can be accommodated on the site or what they should look like.
- 5.17 Two illustrative sketch schemes have been produced which show how the site could be developed. These are in appendix B for information purposes with no endorsement being sought at this stage.

- 5.18 Any development will have to take account of its current and proposed local character and surroundings. In this case, in addition to being on a main road entrance to the town centre, the northern part of the site borders a pedestrian walkway into Herschel Park which has been restored to its former Victorian state. It is considered that the design and layout of any development should therefore help to encourage the use of this gateway pedestrian access. Whilst it is not intended to specify any design features at this stage, it is suggested that an architectural reference to the style of the villas in Herschel Park might be appropriate in this location. This would not preclude having a sympathetic modern design. The development will need to take account of the living conditions of existing homes to the rear of the site. However the Core Strategy design policy of new development respecting its location and surroundings will, in respect of existing homes adjacent, need to be interpreted with some flexibility to allow for the juxtaposition of two different scales of development.

Restrictions on Development

- 5.19 It is important to make clear that no relaxation of policy will be allowed if the site does not meet the conditions of Core Policy 1 for comprehensive redevelopment. This will have to include a planning application being submitted for the whole site, vehicular access being made available for all of the properties from the rear service road, land being provided for the road widening.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 It is considered that 81 -127 Windsor Road should be designated as a “Selected Key Location” in keeping with Core Policy 1 for comprehensive regeneration where the relaxation a limited number of specified planning policies including Core Policy 4 may be allowed in order to deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits to the area.

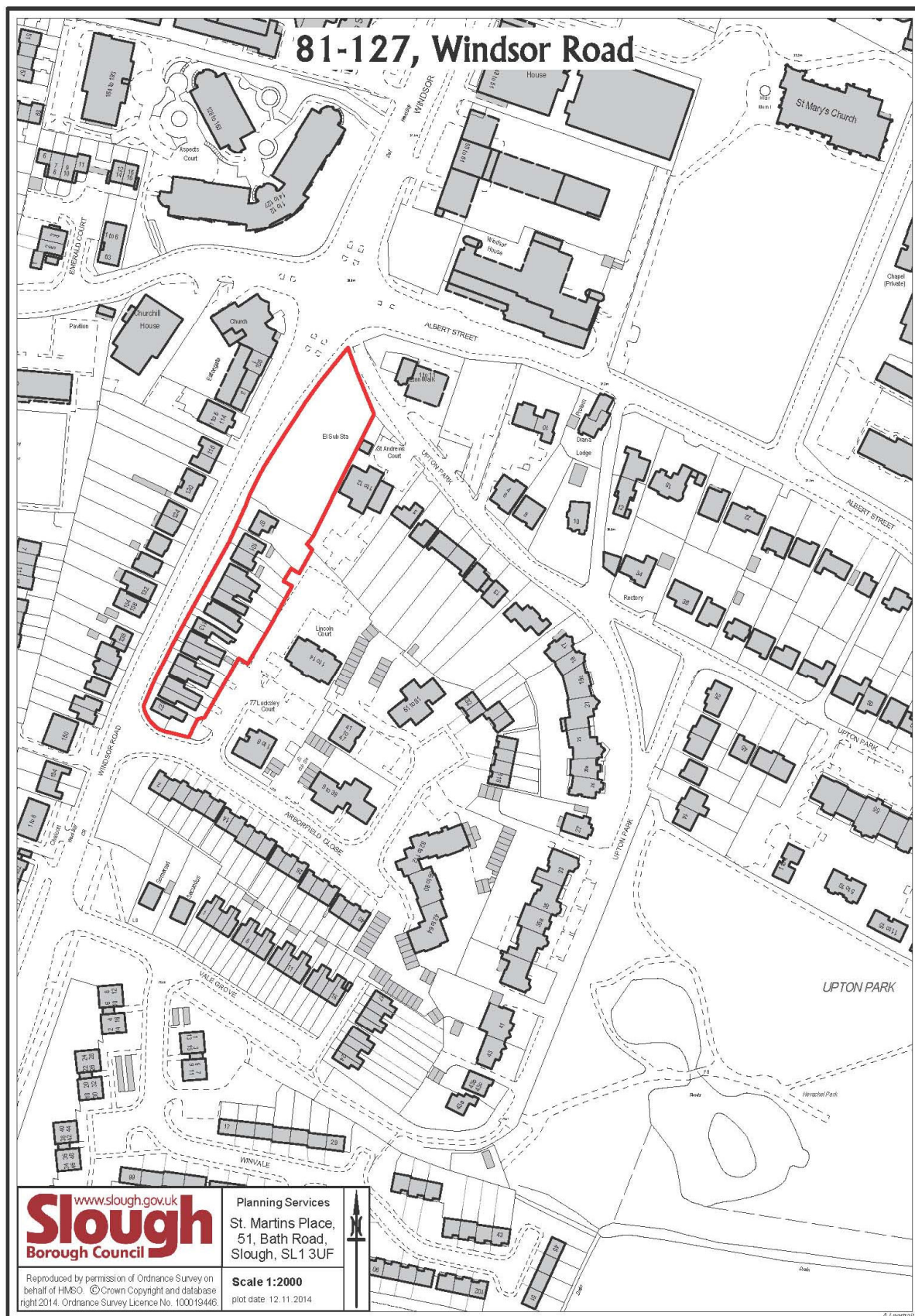
7 Appendices Attached

- ‘A’ - Site Location Plan
- ‘B’ - Illustrative sketch schemes
 - Option 1 Mansion Blocks
 - Option 2 Terraced Apartments

8 Background Papers

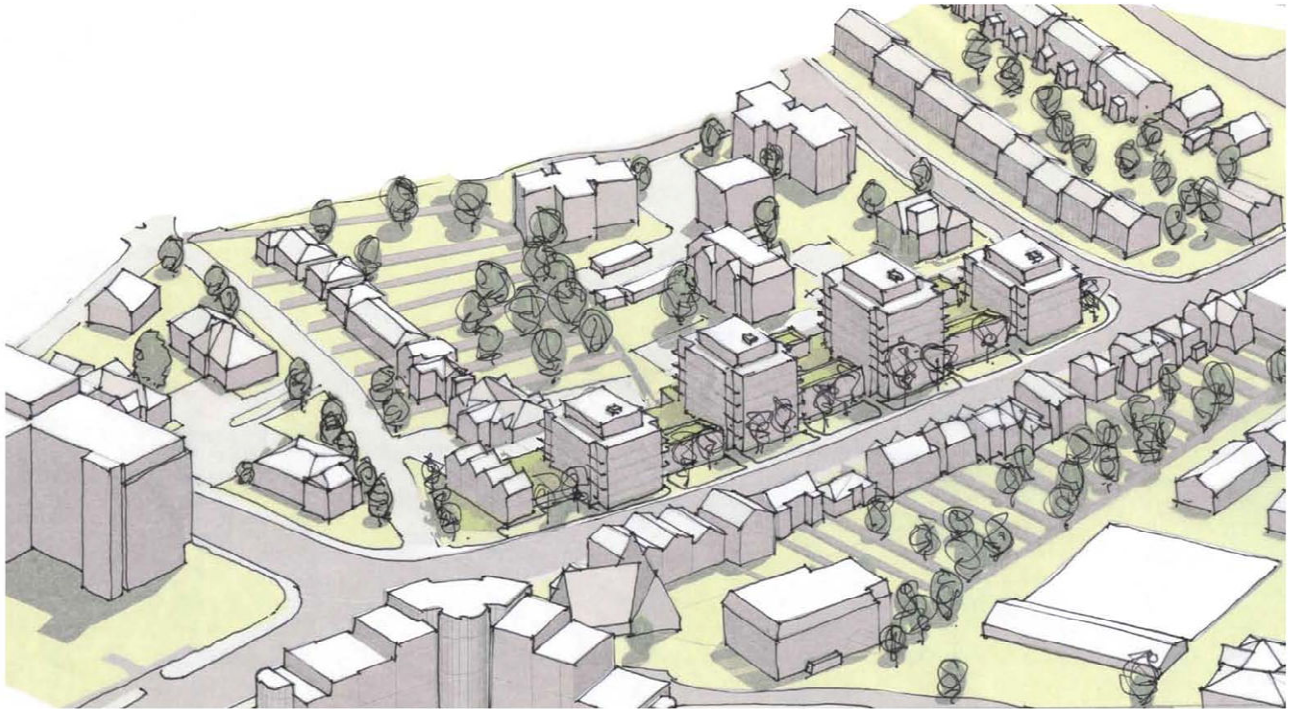
1. Slough Core Strategy 2006-2026
2. Site Allocations DPD 2010

Appendix A - site location plan



Appendix B - Illustrative sketch plans

OPTION 1 - MANSION BLOCKS



OPTION 2 - TERRACED APARTMENTS

