

Outcome 3 Work Streams

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Site Allocations/Connections

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Introduction

One of the big advantages that Slough has is that there are a significant number of sites that are available for redevelopment in and around the centre. Many of these already have planning permission and nearly all of them are capable of being brought forward in the next few years.

As a result there is tremendous potential to make a real change to the way the centre of Slough looks and functions if site owners can be encouraged to develop these sites in a planned and coordinated way.

There are a number of work streams that need to be carried out in conjunction with each other taking account of the over vision for the area.

Site Assessments

All of the sites with development potential need to be identified, mapped and a preliminary site assessment carried out to establish the possible range of uses that could be accommodated. Detailed information about land ownership, planning status, constraints to development needs to be collated and the need for any further information about the site or desktop studies identified.

In addition to specific sites, general areas with potential for comprehensive regeneration need to be identified and a range of possible uses suggested.

Another related task, which will help to change the way in which people perceive the centre of Slough, will be to identify opportunities to exploit the views of Windsor Castle from development sites

Site Capacity

The site assessment study will be the basis for estimates of the scale of development suitable for each site. This will feed into more extensive capacity studies for the Local Plan and to show how new housing supply targets might be met. Related to capacity estimates are viability assessments to get an overview of how much floorspace is needed on a site to ensure good quality development takes place compared to the existing value of the site. These assessments can also identify what scale or type of development is needed to get affordable housing and other Section 106 developer contributions.

Planning Briefs

Where big sites are in single ownership there is more chance of comprehensive development taking place. Areas in multiple ownership but with potential for redevelopment or refurbishment need special attention to encourage development to take place and ensure it is comprehensive and coordinated. That is usually better than piecemeal redevelopment with each owner fighting to maximise development on small or

irregular shaped sites. Furthermore joining sites together will often result in more floorspace being achieved. That improves viability to encourage development to happen; attract experienced developers and get better quality design. To encourage such coordinated development in advance of the new Local Plan planning briefs or policy statements can be issued for key areas. Another and related option is for selected regeneration areas to be the focus of compulsory purchase to encourage comprehensive redevelopment.

Areas that can be looked at for comprehensive regeneration are the east side of Stoke Road, parts of the Mill Street area, commercial properties along the north side of Petersfield Avenue.

Quarters

In order to change the way people view Slough centre and inform the way in which the Strategy evolves it may be helpful to try to identify specific “Quarters” which have distinct, historical, visual or functional qualities.

These could include:

- Herschel Park/Herschel Village
- Central Business District (Dev Sec and Scottish Widows sites)
- Eastern End of High Street
- Prime Shopping area (Queensmere but not Observatory?)
- The Curve Quarter (including library and Crown crossroads)
- TVU site
- ICI/Akzo Nobel/National Grid site
- Canal frontage
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Part of this work should also include the identification of buildings of local importance which need to be protected or enhanced. These could then be considered as being designated as Locally Listed Buildings.

Connections

An important part of the Strategy will be to exploit Slough’s excellent transport links and improve internal connectivity which links the wider area to the centre. The latter point links to the Housing Led Regeneration part of the strategy; to make new residential areas attractive residents need to feel as if the town centre and station are close by and easy to get to. See pedestrian/cycleways below. There is also a need to improve the legibility of the town centre and the key road and pedestrian routes leading into it as part of changing the perception of the town. This links to the Public Realm workstream.

Heart of Slough

The Heart of Slough infrastructure work has resulted in a significant improvement to the public realm in the centre of the town. It will be important that the major development in the vicinity (TVU, Queensmere, Dev Sec) provide equally high quality public realm improvements. The extension of the bus station canopy should also be provided.

Major Road Schemes

The Windsor Road improvement scheme (and associated redevelopments such as the Shanly proposal) will make a difference to the appearance of the main entrance to the centre from the south. Improvements to the Stoke Road, which is the main entrance from the north are currently being investigated.

The Queensmere proposal will improve the appearance of part of Wellington Street and extend the Heart of Slough urban realm as far as the Yellow pages roundabout which will be turned into a cross roads. There is a need to improve the appearance of the rest of Wellington Street as far as Sainsburys, which is the main entrance from the east.

Improvements to the appearance of Albert Street, Yew Tree Road and part of Uxbridge Road should be examined.

Pedestrian/Cycleway links

An appraisal of all existing and proposed key pedestrian routes needs to be carried out to determine whether they need improvement. There should be a particular focus on links which will help to connect major development sites such as ICI and the Canal basin to the centre.

Links to and from the railway station and bus station need to be assessed in terms of quality and possible new links. Future residents of Canal Basin site might benefit from a quieter alternative to Stoke Road for walking or cycling to the station; this workstream can investigate longer term opportunities for new links as part of redevelopment schemes. In addition improvements to the views from Slough station, particularly for tourists waiting on platform 1 should be sought in order to improve the image and perception of Slough.

Links out of the centre to recreation facilities and open spaces should be improved including those to Herschel Park, Lacelles Park, Jubilee river, Salt Hill Park and the canal.

Active Frontages

In order to feed into much of the work outlined above it is also necessary to identify where the “active frontages” currently are in the centre. This will help to demonstrate how it currently works. Active frontages help make streets lively, attractive, interesting and safe.

The potential loss of retail units means that, unless we find new uses, there may be fewer “active” ground floor frontages in the future. As a result we will have to decide how we should prioritise where they go in a way which reinforces the strategy for connections and quarters. On busy streets residential use on the ground floor can be impractical; it is therefore useful to find non residential uses for these situations.

Links to other workstreams.

The Site Allocations work is of fundamental importance to the Centre of Slough Strategy and so will impact upon many other work streams. It will be particularly important for *Transport* and *CPO/Acquisitions*.