

CHANGING, RETAINING, GROWING – Update

1. OUTCOME 1

Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay

1.1 Establish a business inward investment and retention function

- Slough Smart bid submitted to Innovate UK for IoT (Internet of Things) Cities Demonstrator with focus on coordinated transport and health projects through smart infrastructure.
- Business meetings held with Karl Storz, Go Jumping and Universal Securities to understand business need and development that is required. This is part of our ongoing Inward Investment and Account Management process.
- Presentation on Five Year Plan delivered to business community at Slough Business Community Partnership (SBCP) meeting and Chamber of Commerce Committee to raise awareness and instil confidence in our business community.
- Invested in Economic Development within the council by appointing Economic Growth Manager, Economic Development Policy Officer, Economic Partnerships Officer and Town Centre Manager.
- Business Investment Group (BIG) marketing messages forum met and will be appointing a PR marketing agency to deliver a Slough brand and develop a collective/collaborative unique selling point for the town.
- ZTE UK Limited moved into Town Centre and have provided a case study to support Inward Investors from UK and China.
- KP Snacks moved into Slough on 14th September (case study to follow).

1.2 Ensure a fit for business transport infrastructure

- Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) consultation with SEGRO and businesses held, support from SEGRO and businesses.
- A key business stakeholder has agreed to sponsor Slough cycle hire bikes.
- Major schemes out to Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) tender (total value £18m). All 3 major contractors registered an interest. Major scheme evaluation completed Full Business Case submitted awaiting approval of the Procurement Review Board and Capital Strategy Board before awarding the contract.
- LED PQQ out to tender in the OJEU.
- Submitted 8 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) bids and attended 2 workshops.
- Expression of Interest received approval from Carplus for proceeding to next round of ELV (electric vehicle) funding.
- Red Light cameras launched.
- New cycle hub in Brunel Way launched.

- SWiFT (Slough Windsor Fast Track) benefit cost ratio report jointly commissioned.
- Stoke Road regeneration including station forecourt upgrade (north) feasibility study commissioned.
- Stoke Poges Lane bridge opened.
- Leigh Road bridge opened.
- Burnham's Station Road one way scheme introduced.

1.3 Enable partners to support residents to develop skills to meet local employers' needs

- Elevate Traineeship event delivered with 10, 16-24 year olds enrolled on a traineeship with local providers.
- Elevate Slough Lone Parents: Since 05/2015 88 economically inactive lone parents have been engaged with. Of 16 who regularly attend course 5 have entered into positive destinations of education/training.
- Three long-term unemployed lone parents have now secured employment following the Elevate Slough Gingerbread Marks and Starts programme.
- Elevate in partnership with Job Centre Plus running a work placement scheme within SBC. 2 of 3 clients in pilot secured jobs immediately following placement.
- Live apprenticeships vacancies now included on the Slough Elevate Web site.
- Elevate construction pathway delivered with 14 unemployed young people. 100% passed their Health and Safety City and Guilds Level 1 Course and 8 out of 14 passed the CSCS test. Four employers offered guaranteed interviews of which 2 young people secured employment. 3 young people went into related FE.
- 4 organisations – Workers Education Association, Best Practice, Destiny Support, Milton Keynes College (partnership with Slough Probation Service) commissioned to deliver skills based programmes from 1st August 2015.
- Interviewing for 34 new apprenticeships (increase from 25 – 14/15) for SBC, Arvato and Slough library.
- 23 new apprenticeships accepted placements and commenced their training on 7th September 2015 (11 SBC, 11 Arvato and 1 library service). Recruitment of a further 11 to take place during January with a start date early March 2016.
- Tracking of original 23 2014/15 Apprentices has revealed positive outcomes: (2 early leavers), 18 employed, 2 at College and 1 still seeking employment.

1.4 Develop planning policies which will deliver more high value business properties' needs

- We have agreed to join in a joint study to be commissioned by the LEP to establish what the Functional Economic Markets are in the sub region. This will help to establish what the balance should be between housing and employment in each authority.
- On 15th September the Cabinet approved the "Centre of Slough Strategy". One of the key elements of this is "Attracting More Business". The proposals

in the Strategy will be fed into the emerging Planning policies for delivering more high value employment generating development in the centre.

1.5 Agree a coordinated plan to maximise the benefits of Cross Rail and Western Rail Link to Heathrow

- Burnham Station proposals ready to implement.
- Significant decision for Station Road Burnham closure signed and approved by Cabinet.
- £1.5M LEP funding secured to support improvements at Langley station.
- All Network Rail projects included within the Control Period 5 programme are subject to a review by Sir Peter Hendy, Chairman Network Rail, due to report at the end November. WRLtH is part of this review and we await the outcome.
- Business case refresh and transport modelling for WRLtH on-going independent of Hendy Review.

1.6 Develop a more mutually beneficial relationship with Heathrow Airport

- Heads of Terms and a programme of activity agreed. Officers meeting monthly to review progress against this.
- Working with HAL surface access to support updating the Slough Transport Model (could save the authority £75k - £100k).
- 24/7 bus service from Slough to Heathrow underway.
- Traffic surveys agreed with HAL, data to be shared saving SBC approximately £50K.

1.7 Ensure the gateways to the town, prominent places and green spaces are clean and well-maintained.

- EPA Cleaning performance baseline for gateways commenced in September with actual submissions for Q3 (October, November, December).
- Specifications and identification of gateways for 2017 contract commenced.
- Fly tipping taskforce set up.

2 OUTCOME 2

There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough

2.1 Higher quality private sector [rented] housing will be a valued housing option and will reduce long term health problems

- Continuing work with private sector landlords through the Landlords Forum to improve the overall quality of the private rented stock. Enforcement action is taken in the worst cases. The 'beds in sheds' project, now closed, has also contributed to bringing these unauthorised properties into the regulated housing stock and contributed to increasing council tax income.
- For note – as part of the Five Year Plan review "rented" will be added to the action title as included above.

2.2 Make best use of existing local authority housing stock

- An asset management focus on the HRA estate started in September 2015 with project to be scoped and initiated by November. This ties together with the re-commissioning of the repairs and maintenance contract (Interserve) to evolve into a repairs, maintenance and investment contract which will require a strategic asset management approach to all HRA stock.

2.3 Utilise land and resources in and outside of our direct control to develop new homes across all tenures to meet local need

- The Slough Regeneration Partnership/Slough Urban Renewal is a joint venture with Morgan Sindall with the purpose of developing council owned sites. Ledgers Road site currently under construction will provide 70 new houses/flats and Wexham Nursery will start construction early in 2016 providing over 100 new homes.
- The council has set up a Strategic Asset Purchase fund (Cabinet Decision September 2015) which has the potential to purchase land on the open market for regeneration purposes and to use these for housing development.

2.4 Make better use of land including using opportunities for new high quality, family and high density residential developments through the Local Plan

- The results of the joint housing study commissioned by the Berkshire authorities and the LEP have now been published. This Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) shows that Slough forms part of distinct Housing Market Area with Windsor & Maidenhead and South Bucks. It also shows that the predicted need for new households in this area is much higher than we have planned for in the past.

The technical report shows that Slough's objectively assessed need is for 927 new households a year compared to the 550 figure that we are currently working to in the 5 Year Plan.

The new study does not provide any solutions as to how this housing need should be met but provides the evidence that we need to feed into a review of the Local Plan and begin discussions with our neighbours about the future planning of the wider area.

It is important that the increased pressure for housing does not result in a loss of quality in the design of new development and that we continue to ensure that we have the right housing mix.

It should also be stressed that the publication of these housing figures does not mean that there has to be any significant changes in the short term. Any change in planning policies will have to be brought about through the review of the Local Plan which will be able to balance all of the competing needs for development in Slough.

2.5 Prevent homelessness where possible through early intervention and using a range of housing options

- A range of initiatives are in place to prevent homelessness largely focussed on keeping existing tenants in their rented homes or supporting new tenancies. Actions include deposit guarantee scheme, top up rent and rent in advance. Discretionary housing payment administered by Arvato is also used for this purpose. In the 5 months from April – August 2015 over 35% of potential homeless cases approaching the council were prevented through these initiatives.

3 OUTCOME 3

The centre of Slough will be vibrant providing business, living and cultural opportunities

A [report](#) was presented to Cabinet on 14 September 2015, agenda item 34, providing an overview of the activity being undertaken to deliver outcome three of the five year plan. An extract of the report is shown below:

Supporting Information

5.1 Outcome three of the five year plan states: The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living and cultural opportunities.

5.2 In order to achieve this outcome the centre of town vision and strategy will focus on the delivery of two key themes;

- Increasing footfall; and
- Economic wellbeing

5.2 An officer outcome group was set up after the adoption of the five year plan to drive actions under outcome 3, and member task and finish groups have been established to widen the vision and for other key workstreams.

5.3 The centre of Slough consists of much more than the High Street and the narrowly defined area that we have used for planning and other purposes but rather incorporates the wider but defined area indicated by the plan below.

5.4 The vision proposed is:

“The centre of Slough is where people, businesses, shops, transport and public spaces come together to create an atmospheric, high quality and vibrant urban living environment. A place where the latest technology is harnessed, jobs are created, design is innovative and culture is celebrated.”

5.5 The vision is intended to change the way the centre of Slough looks and works in a way that changes people’s perception of the place. This is needed to ensure we can attract people to visit, invest, live and work in the centre.

5.6 In order to do this we need to emphasise the advantage of Slough’s transport links that will make it one of the best connected places to do business. We also need to improve local connections so the centre can properly serve the town. We need to redefine the role of the centre of Slough so it is less dependent upon shopping and becomes a destination for a whole range of uses. This also means celebrating the fact it is different.

5.7 We have produced a high level strategy with a deliberate light touch. It has taken a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling the recognised problems and exploiting the potential strengths of Slough town centre. The strategy is not intended to have any formal status but will form an agreed framework for future development and regeneration.

Strategy

The main elements are:

- A housing led regeneration
- Attracting more business
- Reshaping the shopping centre
- Developing new attractions
- Insisting on high quality development
- Creating a sense of place
- Taking care of and improving the local environment
- Making the most of Slough's place in the world (next to Heathrow, Windsor and the Thames Valley)
- Getting best value from public and private investment (Slough Pound)
- Connecting the centre with surrounding areas

5.8 Twelve work streams have been created to deliver this new vision for the centre of Slough, which we are calling "Changing Views". Summaries of each are below and those with comprehensive plans are appended to this report.

5.9

(1) Site allocations

To look at all current, upcoming and potential development sites in the centre of Slough to ensure best use to fulfil the vision and to encourage redevelopment or refurbishment to come forward. This includes major regeneration sites such as the canal basin and the Akzo Nobel site, plus smaller sites suitable for housing, business or retail units.

(2) Transport

Ensuring the centre is the best connected town well served by road, rail, air and bus services including cycling and walking facilities, major transport schemes such as Windsor Road widening, WRATH, Crossrail and options for additional Slough to Windsor rail services.

(3) Showing our vision

Creating a method by which the vision and all its component parts and areas of redevelopment can be brought together and demonstrated to residents, businesses and visitors. This currently includes a video including interviews, animations and CGI and back up printed materials.

(4) Digital High Street / Smart Cities / economic redevelopment

To make the High Street more convenient, accessible and vibrant for all shoppers; to become a centre where retailers understand their customer's needs and requirements. To ensure retailers are working in partnership with each other, the council and other stakeholders of the centre of town.

(5) Public Realm

To focus on the regeneration of open spaces and the spaces between buildings, creating a higher-quality environment including, streets, squares, parks, greenery, surfaces, seating, lighting and highways fittings.

(6) Housing

Leading housing regeneration in the centre of Slough, allocating sites available, as part of the strategic housing assessment. Agree the number, tenure and type of units to be built and a strategy for encouraging quality in terms of appearance and accommodation.

(7) The Curve opening

To launch The Curve to residents, businesses and staff with four days of activities showcasing the building, its facilities and its place in the town centre. Event proposal and accompanying communications plan.

(8) CPO strategy / site acquisitions

Putting in place new strategy to maximise and encourage use of empty and run down properties and sites in the centre of Slough area. To adopt the “use it or lose it” approach with landlords and site owners; if they do not put their sites to good use, we will.

(9) Communications strategy

To implement a comprehensive communications plan on the range of activities being undertaken under outcome three using traditional and social media, marketing and digital methods.

(10) Retail assessment

Following a joint household survey with RBWM we will commission Slough specific assessment on the future of retail in the borough; to inform a strategy for the High Street and shopping centre area.

(11) Rationalisation of council assets

To assess all council assets in the centre of Slough and create proposals for the rationalisation of those assets.

(12) Evening economy / active High Street

Creation of a programme of activities: promotional, charitable and council related for the Town Square, Mackenzie Square and High Street including markets, sporting activities and engaging promotions.

5.10 Next Steps

Once approved, the Centre of Slough Changing Views Strategy will be used for a number of purposes. One of the key things it can do is influence the review of the

Local Plan for Slough and be translated into planning policy. The strategy will also be useful in making bids to the LEP, as an inward investment tool, informing disposals and acquisitions, determining transport priorities and deciding spending priorities.