

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 3rd February 2020

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WARD(S): Central

PORTFOLIO: Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategy - Cllr Swindlehurst

Cabinet member for Planning and Regulation - Cllr Mann

Cabinet member for Sustainable Transport and Environmental Services - Cllr Anderson

PART I **KEY DECISION**

REGENERATION UPDATE CENTRE OF SLOUGH

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 18 November 2019, members considered a report that introduced the Interim Planning Framework. The same meeting updated members on several key sites within a square mile of the town centre that have the potential to deliver in excess of £3bn of regeneration within a period of 10 years that could provide up to circa 9,000 new homes (in a high growth scenario), a new town centre with retail, leisure and cultural offerings and a Central Business District. Whilst several of the sites will be financed by third party investors/developers, it was noted that Slough Borough Council (“SBC” or “the Council”) is a major strategic investor (via partnership with Morgan Sindall Investments Limited) and will develop a pipeline of projects with a Gross Development Value (“GDV”) of circa £1bn. The report advised that an infrastructure based update would be presented to Cabinet in early 2020.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to test a series of guiding principles for traffic reduction and commence work on some of the key infrastructure planning that will help to shape and inform the emerging Regeneration Framework to support future Town Centre development.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to resolve:

- (a) That the inter-dependency between the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework and the emerging Transport Strategy and Car Parking Strategy.
- (b) Agrees that the Car parking Strategy and Transport Strategy will be scheduled for approval by Cabinet in Q3 2020/21.

- (c) Agrees that the Framework Masterplan should test the following propositions to reduce the impact of traffic on the highway network:
- i. Subject to further detailed modelling, bus lanes be introduced along the entire length of the A4;
 - ii. Junctions along the A4 are upgraded to accommodate bus priority.
 - iii. Guard-rails along the A4 be removed, subject to risk assessments, to facilitate better access for pedestrians, cycling and public transport.
 - iv. car parking ratios be reduced on commercial and residential developments in the Town Centre and around the borough to ensure the objectives of the Regeneration Framework and the Transport Strategy are met.
 - v. A new Multi-Storey Car Parking (“MSCP”) Strategy be introduced to inform and support the regeneration framework and planning policy for the town centre.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and the 5-Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Priorities:

- **Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities** – The Regeneration Framework will enable the creation of better quality and more connected public spaces in the town and promote the provision of high quality affordable homes, leisure facilities and places of work, increasing access to these for all.
- **Improving mental health and wellbeing** –The provision of high quality open spaces and townscape will be designed with health & wellbeing in mind as a central aspiration for the regeneration of the town moving forward.
- **Housing** - The Regeneration Framework will rationalise the apportionment of housing across the study area and will be a tool to enable early discussions with key stakeholders on design quality expectations and the provision of affordable and housing typology.

3b. Five-Year Plan Outcomes

The work currently being undertaken in the centre of Slough is addressing the Five-Year Plan outcomes as follows:

- **Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful;** - The provision of high quality public realm and open spaces and improved access will promote their use and promote health & wellbeing;
- **Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs;** - The provision of high quality public realm and open spaces and improved access will promote their use and promote health & wellbeing;
- **Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay;** - The Regeneration Framework will set out the Councils and stakeholder vision for the Centre of Slough, and set the tone for the quality of the revitalised Town Centre. Central to our aspirations is the delivery of a new central business district, good quality homes and a new daytime to evening and night time economy, aimed at making Slough a destination.
- **Our residents will live in good quality homes;**- The Regeneration Framework will assist in rationalising existing development sites, ensuring the

delivery of a range of housing provision and appropriate level of affordable homes;

- **Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents;** - Central to the emerging Regeneration Framework is the new central business district. Emphasis is also being placed on ensuring a new and vibrant high street and business incubation and innovation spaces, aimed at building on Slough’s history of being a place that supports and grows new business and entrepreneurship, as well as seeking to relocate and advance existing larger businesses and multinational companies.

4 **Other Implications**

a) Financial

The Regeneration Framework, by aligning and rationalising the various Square Mile workstreams, will enable the financial delivery costs and discussions around business planning and co-financing of development infrastructure to be explored and inform the next steps. This will include public realm improvements, the delivery of the MSCP’s and the Mass Rapid Transit (“MRT”) proposals.

Discussions are ongoing with partners and key stakeholders on the financing, requirements and approaches that can be used to deliver development and supporting infrastructure requirements.

b) Risk Management

Recommendation from Section Two	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
(a) Notes the inter-dependency between the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework and the emerging Transport Strategy and Car Parking Strategy	<p>Not aligning the transport work, including the next stages of transport modelling with the Regeneration Framework.</p> <p>The opportunity offered by the Regeneration Framework is to ensure the appropriate sequencing of further transport modelling in line with the key framework outputs including the agreed location, quantum and type of uses across the project area.</p>	<p>Ensuring the Regeneration Framework is delivered with the appropriate specialist input</p> <p>Ensuring the Regeneration Framework and Transport work is coordinated via the TCRG with specialist advice as needed</p>	L:3 I:2 Score: 6	Ensuring the TCRG has monthly updates and scrutiny of the work programme and outputs.

<p>(b) Agrees that the Car parking Strategy and Transport Strategy will be scheduled for approval by Cabinet in Q3 2020/21</p>	<p>Delays in determining locations for new car parks and modelling assessments delayed due to decisions on scale of development</p>	<p>Workshops on options undertaken at an early stage for sites and scale of development as part of the Regeneration Framework</p>	<p>L:3 I:2 Score: 6</p>	<p>Ensuring the TCRG has monthly updates and scrutiny of the work programme and outputs.</p>
<p>(c) Agrees that the Framework Masterplan should adopt the following guiding principles to reduce the impact of traffic on the highway network:</p>				
<p>a) Subject to further detailed modelling, introduce bus lanes along the entire length of the A4;</p> <p>b) Upgrading junctions along the A4 to accommodate bus priority.</p> <p>c) Removal of guard-rails along the A4, subject to risk assessments, to facilitate better access for pedestrian, cycling and public transport.</p> <p>d) A reduction in car parking ratios on commercial and residential developments in the Town Centre and around the borough to ensure the objectives of the Regeneration Framework and</p>	<p>Modelling indicates that there will be delays to journey times</p> <p>Potential risk of casualties when guard rail is removed</p> <p>Slough may not be an attractive place for business to locate too in terms of car parking provision</p>			

the Transport Strategy are met.				
e) Introduce a new Multi-Storey Car Parking (MSCP) Strategy to inform and support the regeneration framework and planning policy for the town centre.	May provide an under/over supply of car parking spaces in the town centre			

c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Under Section 13 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council must keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development. These include:

- The principal physical, economic social and environmental characteristics of the area, The principal purposes for which land is used in the area,
- The size, composition and distribution of the population of the area,
- The communications, transport system and traffic of the area, and
- Any other considerations which may be expected to affect development planning.

The review described above must also take account of any changes which the Council thinks may occur in relation to any other matter and the effect any such changes are likely to have on the development of the Council' s area or on the planning of such development.

The Council must also keep under review and examine the above in relation to any neighbouring area to the extent that those matters may be expected to affect local planning authority for the neighbouring area in question.

Slough Borough Council (“SBC” or “the Council”) is working collaboratively with British Land, which is operating in a development management capacity for the owners of the Queensmere and Observatory sites. British Land is seeking to accelerate work for a concept scheme/masterplan for the two sites. The Council is currently working with British Land to establish a Project Steering Group (“PSG”) and a Project Working Group (“PWG”) to examine in detail issues relating to British Land’s redevelopment of the current shopping centre. Subject to the PSG and PWG Working Group ToRs being agreed, there are no current legal Implications captured on the wider Risk Register. SBC is also working with Muse to set up a North West Quadrant (“NWQ”) Steering Group to progress that development.

Moving forward, officers representing SBC on the various Steering Groups and Working Groups will report any potential legal implications as they arise.

Human Right Implications: N/A

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no current Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken. The Regeneration Framework is a non-statutory document, which will be subject to an EQIA as part of its delivery.

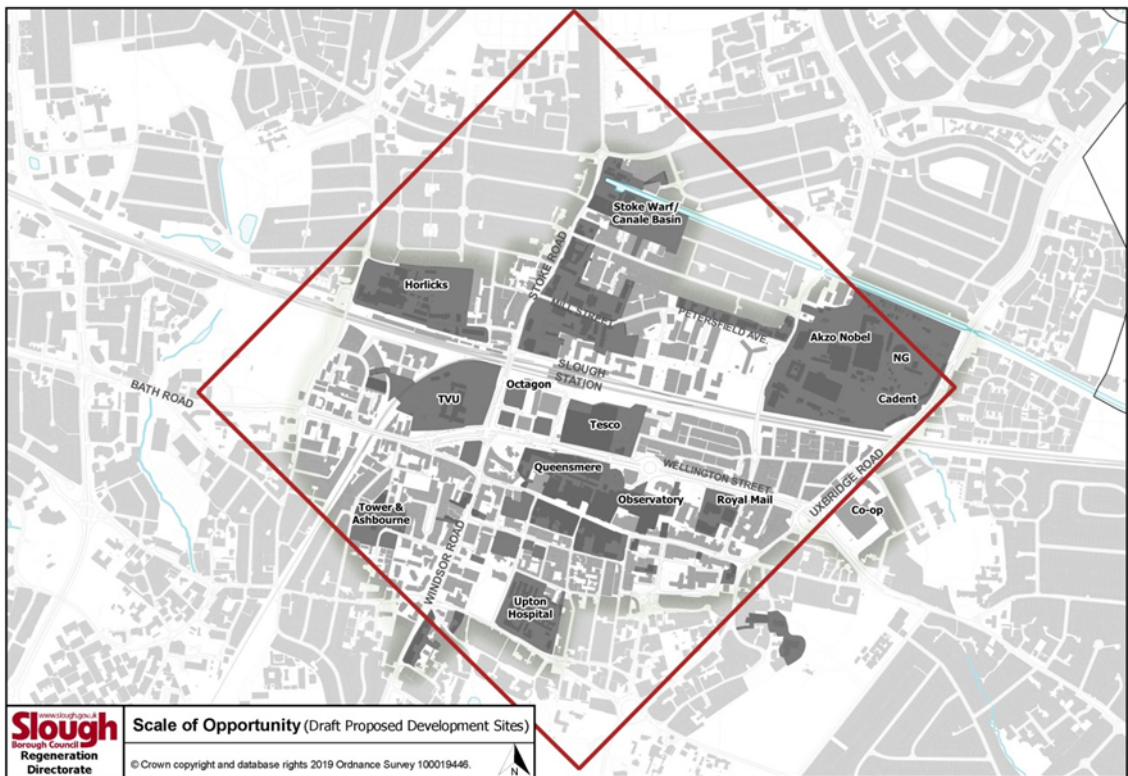
e) Property Issues

See section 5 below

5. Supporting Information

Background

5.1 As reported previously, the Council’s aim is to produce a Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework that establishes a vision for the redevelopment of the Square Mile in the centre of Slough (see image below) that will inform the best allocation of uses between key regeneration sites and dovetail with an updated masterplan for the North West Quadrant (“NWQ”).



Both documents will be presented to Cabinet in Q3 2020/21. These documents will also show the integration of the proposed MRT route and car parking sites as per the emerging Car Parking Strategy.

5.2 This infrastructure-led report seeks Cabinet approval for a series of high level guiding principles for traffic reduction, which will be an integral part of the Regeneration Framework.

Transport Strategy

5.3 The key principles of the Transport Vision, which were approved in February 2019, are as follows:

- Making public transport the dominant mode of travel to and from the centre of Slough and the rest of the Borough and beyond;
- Providing the necessary increased capacity for movement to and from the centre of Slough, in the form of a high quality, reliable, high capacity public transport network, which enable the proposed scale of development to be delivered;
- Maximising the benefits of enhanced strategic public transport connectivity to London, Heathrow Airport and the wider Thames Valley;
- Making walking and cycling to and from the centre of Slough an attractive option, and greatly improve the permeability of the centre of Slough for pedestrians;
- Reducing the dominance of the car as a mode of travel to, from and through the centre of Slough; and
- Minimising the impacts of roads, parking and motorised vehicles on the urban realm and on people, including improved air quality and road safety.

Car Parking Strategy and Updated Town Centre Parking Standards

5.4 Linking the key principles of the vision to the emerging Transport Strategy, the expectation is that it will seek to deliver:

- A high quality public transport network, the core component being a Borough-wide MRT system;
- High quality walking and cycling routes to and from the centre of Slough, and pedestrian environments within the centre;
- Modifications to the current highway network, including phased closure of Wellington Street; and
- Provision of public and private parking supply, including the role of park and ride.

5.5 To deliver the strategic objectives of the Regeneration Framework, it is critically important that the Transport Strategy, Car Parking Strategy and Car Parking Standards are considered in tandem at the appropriate time. As a consequence, work on these workstreams has been realigned. One of the key tasks of the Regeneration Framework will be to rationalise and propose the appropriate locations for communal car parking in the town centre/ centre of Slough. The aim is to appropriately support the emerging quantum and type of uses in the area, whilst also ensuring that a modal shift is achieved, supporting less car dependant travel modes.

5.6 New car parking standards are crucial for the long term plan for the town. Slough is already experiencing high levels of congestion in the town and based on modelling data this is indicating that these are short journeys not through journeys. With new developments coming through, outside of the town centre it anticipated that if this trend continues that future growth will be impacted severely on two fronts; Air Quality will be so adverse that this may lead to refusal on the grounds that the

impact is causing significant adverse effects and also detrimental impact to journey time for public transport and general traffic.

- 5.7 Network Rail is in principle prepared to consider development of an expanded multi storey car park on the West Yard carpark that could possibly support both rail customers and town centre users. A project team are commissioned to establish the car parking capacity of the site and consider the business case that will provide SBC the basis for considering the appropriate contribution the site could make to the Car Parking Strategy. The study will help the SBC project team to appraise the financial implications from the Council's perspective and inform subsequent negotiations with Network Rail. The outcome of this work will be incorporated into the emerging Regeneration Framework.

A4 work programme update

- 5.8 Central to the development of the Transport Strategy for the centre of Slough will be traffic reduction along the A4. The A4 is the most critical part of the highway network in Slough but is also the biggest obstacle to growth due to its location within the borough. The Transport Strategy will look to provide alternative options for the A4 as more development takes place. The proposals will be to promote public transport; which will require reliable and quicker public transport journey times to the private car. Aligned with the Transport Strategy the following work is being delivered:

- 5.8.1 The A4 is being modelled to provide more capacity for public transport and this will include a number of step changes. The first element has been delivered with a low stopping service between the trading estate and the rail station, which has seen a growth of circa 50% since the service was launched in January 2019. The second stage of transport work, which includes a park and ride facility near junction 5, is due to start on site in late January 2020.
- 5.8.2 With the first two elements of the MRT nearing completion at the end of 2020, the Council will be in a place to change the A4 by implementing bus lanes from its borough boundary at Huntercombe to the boundary with the by-pass. This will mean that there will be significant change to the journey time for buses and the current MRT service. It will however also see the reverse of journey time improvement for private cars. However, in order for public transport to see an upward trajectory in usage, these steps will need to be implemented.
- 5.8.3 Whilst large sections of the A4 already have bus lanes, there remain sections between Huntercombe and the town centre that need to be upgraded to an equivalent standard to maximise the benefit to the overall network. Before work can commence on completing the routes, traffic signals at all junctions will need to be reviewed, adjusted and/or changed to ensure that other bus services connecting on to the A4 are not affected. Following this a decision will need to be made whether to undertake an incremental implementation or switch over to bus use with immediate effect.

Implementation of the Transport Strategy

5.9 Subject to detailed modelling and car parking standards being updated to support the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework, further work is being undertaken to test the impact of:

- Altering traffic signal timings and modifications to junctions where applicable
- Revising car parking standards to reduce car parking on private developments
- Increasing services along the A4
- Implementing bus lanes on the A4 where there is currently no infrastructure through an incremental stage starting at the borough boundary and moving toward the town centre.
- Implementing further mitigation on the Windsor Rd Spur and Upton Court Rd to facilitate an Emergency Diversion Route through to Junction 6 and along Mill St and Petersfield Rd
- Making further junction upgrades to the A4 to facilitate a switch of bus services
- Moving bus services to one side of the A4.

6. Comments of other Committees

6.1 Non Applicable

7. Conclusions

7.1 Following the presentation in November 2019 of all the various development sites coming forward within the Square Mile, the Council has been assembling resources to meet the challenges of this significant regeneration programme. It has been aligning the various strategies to support the regeneration of the town centre and has begun to prepare and progress a Regeneration Framework.

7.2 The Regeneration Framework will work to pull key strands of work together, identifying and agreeing key uses and their quantum and location across the study area. The Framework will also assist in identifying and quantifying the type and amount of infrastructure including car parking, public realm interventions, further traffic upgrades and interventions and transport modelling, needed to ensure development is sustainable and modal shifts can be achieved. Subject to approval, this report will allow SBC to model various scenarios to ensure that the impact of traffic on the highways network is reduced.

8 Appendices

8.1 None.

9 Background Papers

9.1 None.