

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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WARD(S): Central, Chalvey & Elliman

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

CENTRE OF SLOUGH: REGENERATION FRAMEWORK MASTERPLAN

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 On the 15 June 2020 Cabinet agreed the vision, objectives and principles of the Slough Regeneration Framework Masterplan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to consider the final Slough Regeneration Framework (“the Framework”). The Slough Regeneration Framework is the council’s corporate spatial aspirations for the centre of Slough over the next 10-15 years.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to:

- a) recommend to Cabinet that the Slough Regeneration Framework as set out in Appendices 1 & 2 be approved,
- b) note that the Slough Regeneration Framework is a corporate vision statement rather than a statutory planning document; and
- c) note that the Slough Regeneration Framework will be used to inform the emerging Local Plan Spatial Strategy and policies for the Centre of Slough and at this stage it will enter the public consultation process.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Setting clear aspirations that encourage the redevelopment of the Centre of Slough will make a significant contribution to the joint priorities captured within the Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025:

- Priority 1: constructing the new developments will improve local temporary employment opportunities as well as increasing apprenticeship opportunities enabling local people to start their working life well and improve their learning and skill base;

- Priority 2: coordinated and curated public spaces that are accessible to all will encourage integration and reduce inequality;
- Priority 3: promoting large scale architecturally designed mixed use regeneration schemes with high quality open spaces in the Centre of Slough, along with the prioritisation of walking and cycling routes, will encourage more active lifestyles, improved mental health and wellbeing, increase life expectancy and encourage strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods; and
- Priority 4: The development and operation of new commercial premises within vibrant and mixed use schemes will create quality permanent local employment opportunities with fit for purpose buildings supported by a range of local amenities promoting workplace health within the borough.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Framework will help deliver the following of the Five-Year Plan outcomes:

- OUTCOME 1: The promotion of high quality public realm with a network of open spaces, improved walking and cycling routes and improved public transport will contribute towards Slough's children growing up to be healthy, happy and successful,
- OUTCOME 2: Improved access to walking routes, cycling routes and engaging public spaces will encourage healthier lifestyles helping our people to be healthier and manage their own care needs,
- OUTCOME 3: Encouraging large scale place shaping mixed use regeneration within the Centre of Slough will contribute to Slough being an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay,
- OUTCOME 4: Increasing the supply of good quality new homes will contribute towards our residents living in good quality homes; and
- OUTCOME 5: Encouraging large scale, place shaping, mixed use regeneration within the Centre of Slough will increase demand, footfall, vibrancy and activity in the town centre helping to attract, retain and grow businesses and investment that creates opportunities for our residents.

4 **Other Implications**

a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
a) Agree the Slough Regeneration Framework set out in Appendices 1 & 2.	Market conditions – the global pandemic and associated economic recession may impact the viability of regeneration opportunities within the Centre of Slough	The Framework has tested that the redevelopment aspirations are feasible and realistic but acknowledges that each site will have it's own viability considerations	4	The Framework will allow SBC to continue to encourage and champion investment in the borough.
b) Note that the Slough Regeneration Framework is a corporate vision statement rather than a statutory planning document	The Framework won't carry material planning weight until it has been through public consultation.	The Framework will be used to inform the emerging Local Plan Spatial Strategy policies at which point it will become subject to public scrutiny.	4	Once the Framework has been through public consultation/ scrutiny developers and investors can start to rely on the capacities indicated within the document.
c) Note that the Slough Regeneration Framework will be used to inform the emerging Local Plan Spatial Strategy and policies for the Centre of Slough and at this stage it will enter the public consultation process	None	None		Once the Framework has been through public consultation/ scrutiny developers and investors can start to rely on the capacities indicated within the document.

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 matters 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, any other considerations which may be expected to affect those matters and such other matters as may be prescribed or as the Secretary of State (in a particular case) may direct. The matters also include any changes which the Council think 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 matters in relation to any neighbouring area to the extent that those matters may be expected to affect the Council's area and must consult with the local planning authority of the neighbouring area in connection with such matters.

d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("PSED") requires SBC to have due regard to: (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; and (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. 'Protected characteristics' are: gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

There are no equalities issues anticipated with this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

Background

- 5.1 In June 2020 Cabinet agreed the vision, objectives and principles of the Slough Regeneration Framework Masterplan ("the Framework").
- 5.2 The Framework is a statement of intent setting the Council's corporate vision and spatial aspirations for development in the town over the next 15 years. In setting the ambition and objectives as set out in section 5.4 below, the Regeneration Development team liaised and gained input from multiple services across the Council to ensure that the study took stock of and incorporated wider Council imperatives, existing and emerging strategies.
- 5.3 The Framework embraces and builds on the priorities of the Council's Five Year Plan 2020-2025, Interim Planning Framework, Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025 and the Transport Vision 2019. Looking further ahead, it will be closely tied to the emerging Local Plan Spatial Strategy and will be a major component of the emerging 2040 Plan.

Objectives and Principles of the Slough Regeneration Framework

5.4 The Framework aims to deliver the following objectives:

Objective 1	To deliver a 21 st century town centre that is accessible to everybody and enhances health and well being,
Objective 2	To develop a New Central Business District to the south of the railway station,
Objective 3	To revitalise the shopping and leisure offer in the town centre,
Objective 4	To deliver a range of new homes in the town centre,
Objective 5	To strengthen Slough's cultural offer,
Objective 6	To create a people focused public realm,
Objective 7	To improve connections between the town centre and Slough's neighbourhoods and the wider area,
Objective 8	To deliver a step change in the quality of design and architecture in the town centre,
Objective 9	To provide the right amount of car parking in the right locations; and
Objective 10	To deliver small interventions, events and early wins.

Role of the Slough Regeneration Framework

5.5 The Framework has a number of roles and purposes. It:

- sets a clear and overarching vision and spatial plan for the town centre that can guide development and regeneration in the centre of Slough,
- identifies the opportunities for growth and transformation at a town wide scale and then on a specific basis,
- identifies linkages and opportunities for improved movement, transport and access for people travelling by all modes but facilitates and encourages a shift to more movement by foot, bicycle and public transport,
- establishes design principles and development parameters at a town wide scale and then on a site-specific scale and the potential development quantum that could be delivered. This information will feed into the emerging Local Plan Spatial Strategy,
- identifies the potential meanwhile uses of sites pending more permanent development; and
- provides a strategic delivery plan setting out how projects might be phased, identifying priorities and delivery approaches.

The Slough Regeneration Framework

Step Change for Slough

5.6 The framework aims to transform the Centre of Slough into an attractive and vibrant urban centre, with economic opportunity and new transport infrastructure attracting business and reducing reliance on the motor vehicle.

5.7 Spatial fragmentations will be reconnected, underutilised and vacant buildings and spaces will be filled with places to live, work, shop and enjoy life both throughout the day and into the evening.

- 5.8 New diverse employment growth within a new Central Business District supported by Slough's enterprising young community will make Slough an even stronger economic driver for the region.
- 5.9 New economic opportunities will support demand for a range of housing across a spectrum of types and tenures that provides for a successful town.
- 5.10 Walkable tree lined streets fronted by attractive new buildings will replace clogged highways linking the centre with its parks and the Grand Union Canal. New public spaces will provide opportunity for the community to meet, relax celebrate and enjoy the town's rich and diverse cultural offer.
- 5.11 All of Slough's residents will benefit from the towns regeneration with increase access to jobs, new educational opportunities and skills training and enhanced digital connectivity: the restored health of the centre will flow across the entire borough enriching the lives and well being of Slough's people.

Understanding Slough

- 5.12 Slough is an exceptionally well-connected Borough, it is home to globally-important companies and has been voted the best place to work in the UK three years running (Glassdoor). Slough is also one of the UK's most multicultural places with its communities representing 80 different countries and speaking 150 languages and is the UK town with the youngest population. Slough is a hotbed of talent and entrepreneurship.
- 5.13 Slough has successfully attracted a huge number of businesses to the Borough and has the highest economic output per worker of any city in the country (ONS GVA data) but despite the economic success Slough still has areas of entrenched deprivation and poor health outcomes.
- 5.14 In many towns residential neighbourhoods rub up against the town centre. In Slough the catchment is restricted by road and rail infrastructure and by light industrial uses. So whilst Slough is strategically well connected, for many of its residents, walking into the town centre is not an attractive proposition.
- 5.15 There is a growing body of evidence (Bennett Institute of Public Policy. Townscapes: England's health inequalities) that suggest environmental factors underpin inequalities. Poor quality housing, lack of open space or an abundance of unhealthy outlets (e.g. fast food or vape shops) contribute to poor health outcomes. The spaces people use and the places they occupy encourage positive attributes for their physical, mental and emotional health.
- 5.16 The regeneration of the town potential development site (see Image 1 below) must benefit the whole community.

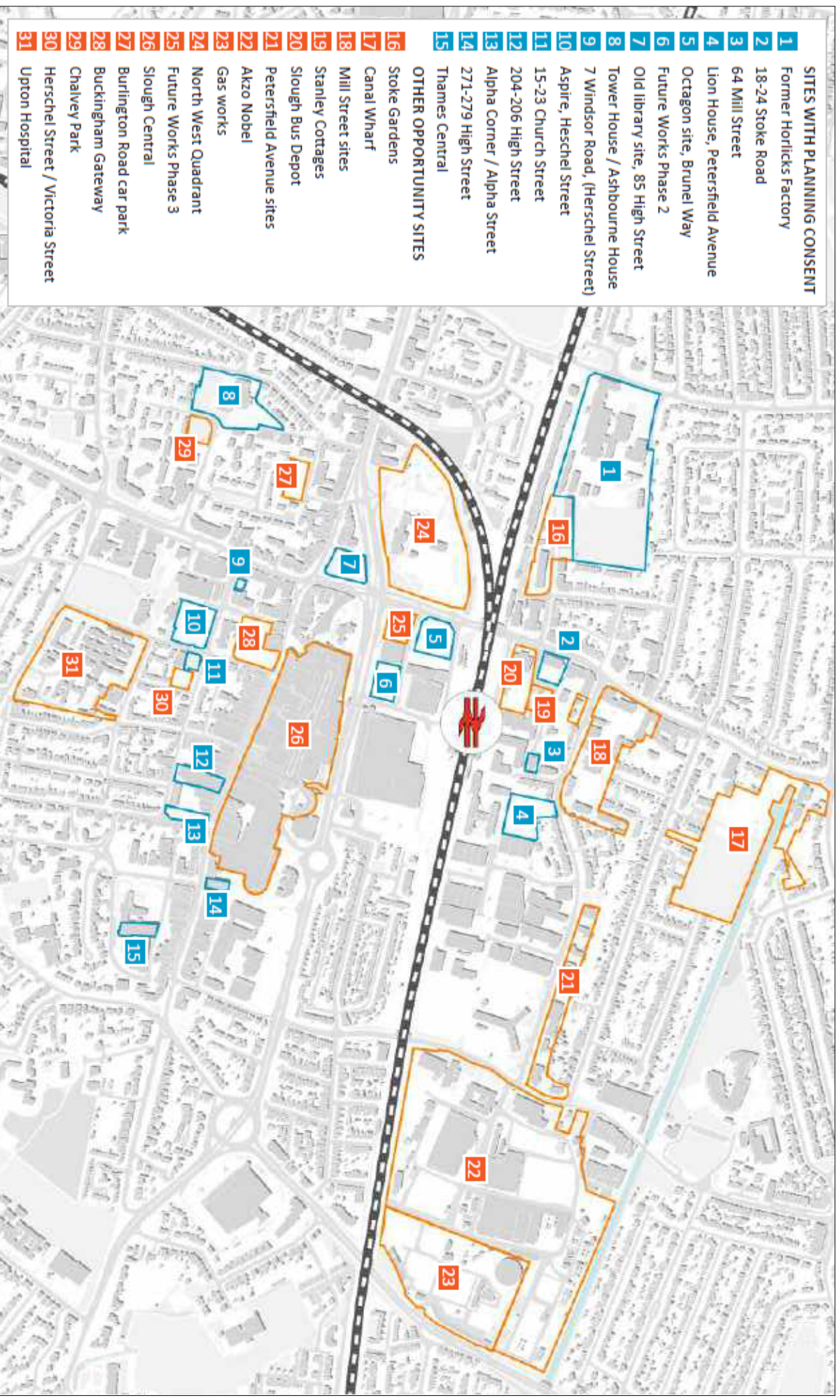


Image 1: Town Centre Sites

Vision for Slough

- 5.17 The Framework promotes connectivity between neighbourhoods and encourages active transport and movement across the town centre. This will support the Council's strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhood's programme and ensure inequalities are not exacerbated by any new development which may seem daunting or inaccessible to some of Slough's residents.
- 5.18 Delivering a step change in the Centre of Slough will not be delivered by building new homes alone but rather through the economic prosperity that comes with a new Central Business District ("CBD"). New jobs will support the local population, make town centre living more desirable and invigorate the retail, leisure and cultural activity in the town through increased weekday spending.
- 5.19 Creating vital and vibrant town centres means mixing uses so that there is activity at all times of the day. The traditional town centre with its shopping precinct, office quarter and residential hinterland is a thing of the past and creating a 21st century town means that leisure uses must be located to support office space, and a myriad of uses from cultural spaces, schools, doctors surgeries, gyms and dentists, cafes, hairdressers and bars are needed to support the increasing number of people that will be living in the centre.
- 5.20 The towns' shopping offer will be rationalised by nearly a half whilst ensuring what remains meet the needs of both the immediate resident catchment population as well as those people who are drawn to the centre from further afield.
- 5.21 The increase in people living and working in the Centre of Slough will start to change the dynamic of the town and help to support a richer and more diverse offer.

Masterplan

- 5.22 The illustrative masterplan which forms a spatial representation of the Slough Regeneration Framework (see Image 2 below) demonstrates how the centre of Slough can deliver approximately circa:
- 115 to 280,000 sq.m. of office floorspace,
 - 14 to 15,500 sq.m. of retail floorspace,
 - 6,700 sq.m. of leisure/ cultural floorspace,
 - 5,000 sq.m. of education/ innovation floorspace,
 - 48,000 sq.m. of industrial floorspace; and
 - 7,400 new homes.

Delivery Plan

- 5.23 The Slough Regeneration Framework contains a series of development projects. It sets out the sites that have scope for transformation and will shape the town centre for the next 15 years. The delivery plan describes each of the key sites on an individual, site by site basis.

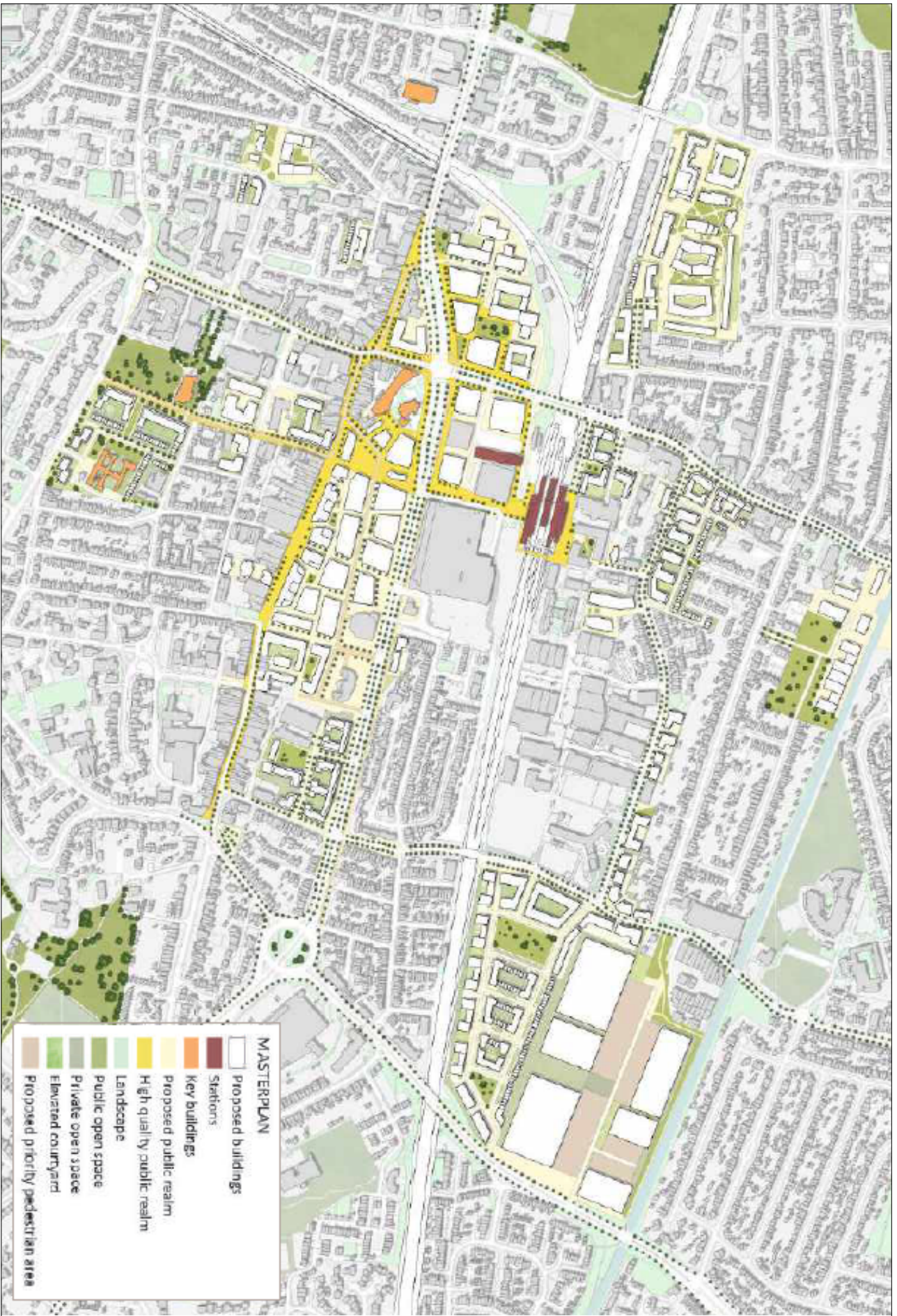


Image 2: Illustrative Masterplan for the Centre of Slough

Wider Implications for the High Street

- 5.24 In addition to the ramifications of a car-dominated town centre in relation to public health, there are also significant economic implications for the High Street. Numerous studies have now demonstrated the importance of pedestrians to the success of our High Streets.
- 5.25 In essence, those who walk have consistently been shown to spend more on their High Street over the course of a week than those who drive. Essentially, if making it easier for one person to drive to their High Street also discourages one person from walking then the net economic benefit is likely to be negative. The Framework therefore seeks to reverse the priority of motorist over pedestrian.
- 5.26 Creating a new civic square in the heart of the town at the meeting point of the north south Brunel Way/ Church Street axis and the east west aligned High Street and upgrading and improving the pedestrian link between the railway station, bus station, central Mass Rapid Transit stop and the High Street will encourage pedestrian access increasing the vibrancy, vitality and viability of the town centre.

COVID 19 Public Realm and recovery

- 5.27 Covid 19 has shed new light on the value of open space in peoples' lives with the benefits of access to open spaces, gardens and even balconies increasingly recognised and the inequalities for people who lack this fundamental human need sharply defined.
- 5.28 The design of public realm (the streets and spaces around buildings) is as important as the design of buildings. The public realm, together with landscape, can have a huge impact on the quality and experience of a place. It forms the backdrop to public activities and engagement and when designed well can encourage social interaction, act as meeting points for communities, add value to surrounding properties and generally add to the character of a town centre.
- 5.29 Trees and landscape incorporated into the public realm have multiple benefits: providing both physical and visual amenity, improving biodiversity, enhancing sense of place, assisting in enhancing air quality, softening the impact of buildings and structures; whilst indicating the passage of the seasons.
- 5.30 The emerging Public Realm Strategy will address and give further detail on public realm solutions, which will support, recovery, high quality design and material use, and people focused place making centred on modal shifts and public spaces which promote health & wellbeing.

6 Comments of Other Committees

- 6.1 This report has not been considered by any other committee.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Slough Regeneration Framework contains the vision and objectives, which underpin our ambitions for the future of the Centre of Slough. The Framework also includes a series of proposals for the potential development of sites across the study area. It sets out which sites have scope for redevelopment and transformation and will shape the town centre over the next 15 years and beyond. It is visionary, yet provides flexibility to ensure that it can meet changes in market signals, particularly around economic and property related considerations.

8 Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Slough Regeneration Framework Executive Summary – August 2020
Appendix 2 – Slough Regeneration Framework – August 2020

9 **Background Papers**

Shaping Slough Town Centre: Regeneration Update Cabinet Report – June 2020