

## LOCAL PLAN FOR SLOUGH – SPATIAL STRATEGY

### Selecting other Key Locations for appropriate sustainable development

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is preparing a new Local Plan for Slough. An important part of this is the Spatial Strategy which will set out what the pattern, scale and quality of development will be in the Borough. .
- 1.2 It is proposed that the Spatial Strategy should have the following five key components:
- ***Delivering*** major comprehensive redevelopment within the “Centre of Slough”;
  - ***Selecting*** other key locations for appropriate sustainable development;
  - ***Enhancing*** our distinct suburbs, vibrant neighbourhood centres and environmental assets;
  - ***Protecting*** the “Strategic Gap” between Slough and Greater London;
  - ***Promoting*** the cross border expansion of Slough to meet unmet housing needs.
- 1.3 This report identifies the Selected Key Locations that are suitable for major development or regeneration along with other Key Areas that are important for the Spatial Strategy.
- 1.4 In doing so it is important to understand how this fits in with the Spatial Strategy as a whole. The bulk of new housing and most of the other major development is proposed to take place in the Centre of Slough. This follows the overall guiding principle for the Spatial Strategy that development should be located in the most accessible locations which have the greatest capacity to absorb growth and deliver social and environmental benefits.
- 1.5 Elsewhere the suburban areas, which contain most of the family housing stock will be maintained and enhanced. There will be no loss of parks or public open space. It is not proposed that there should be any development in the Colnbrook and Poyle area which is to be protected as part of the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London.
- 1.6 In line with the principle of meeting needs as close to where they arise, it is proposed that any housing needs that cannot be reasonably accommodated in the Borough should be provided on the edge of Slough. It has also been

decided that in order to maintain the economy and a range of jobs in the Borough there should be no further loss of the Existing Business Areas to other uses. Despite this, it is acknowledged that the demand for more warehousing land in Slough cannot be met.

- 1.7 It is against this background of an overall shortage of land in Slough, that the “selected key locations for sustainable development” component of the Spatial Strategy has been prepared.

## **2 Context**

### Geography of Slough

- 2.1 Slough has a very small geographical area of just 32.5 km<sup>2</sup>. With a population in mid 2019 of 149,539 (ONS, 2019) and large employment areas it is a densely built up area which is more comparable with outer London than the surrounding Boroughs.
- 2.2 There are around 56,000 houses in Slough (HFR, 2019) mostly in suburban areas built in the last century. Slough has a very young population and many multi generational households. This, along with a lack of affordability has led to some over crowding. In Slough the average person has just 27.2sqm (292.4sqft) of floor space compared to the urban average floor space of 36.5sqm (393.4sqft) per resident in England and Wales (Centre for cities, 2018)
- 2.3 In addition to the town centre there are two District centres at Farnham Road and Langley. These are augmented by a network of neighbourhood centres. There are 4 superstores and three retail parks which are concentrated in the west and centre of the Borough.
- 2.4 Outside of the centre there are two railway stations at Burnham and Langley but only the later one is a potential focal point.
- 2.5 The M4 motorway runs along the southern boundary of Slough acting as an east west bypass. It also creates a barrier to the land to the south. The A4 is the main spine road through the town but is so congested at times that it does not cater for through traffic. The main north south route through Slough is the A355 which goes towards Windsor in the south and Beaconsfield/M40 in the north. The A412 leads towards Uxbridge.
- 2.6 One of Slough’s biggest advantages is its proximity to Heathrow airport. This not only provides a lot of employment on site but is a big boost to the local economy. The airport also creates some environmental problems and can add to congestion, particularly in the eastern part of the Borough.

- 2.7 The critical factor in determining how much development can be accommodated outside of the centre of Slough is the availability of land with major redevelopment or intensification opportunities. Apart from land to the south of the M4 motorway and east of Market Lane in Langley, the only substantial area of undeveloped greenfield land is in the Colnbrook and Poyle area. Proposals for this area are included in the “Protecting the Strategic Gap” component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 2.8 Major redevelopment opportunities are also constrained by high existing uses values and the problem of sites being in multiple ownership. There is also the need to ensure that only good quality sustainable development takes place which provides all of the necessary associated infrastructure. As a result owners may not have much incentive to put their land forward for redevelopment. It is often not viable to redevelop existing property particularly on small plots. Whilst large sites can sometimes accommodate a greater scale of development if they are developed comprehensively, assembling such sites is difficult. Overall, outside the Centre of Slough, deliverability on previously developed land to gain a large amount of development for the town is very uncertain and cannot always be relied upon in a Local Plan to establish future development capacity.

### Climate Change

- 2.9 Slough has declared a 'Climate Change' Motion which recognises that there is a growing urgency for national, and international and local action to combat climate change, and commits to developing a Local Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that will address the causes and consequences of climate change in Slough.'
- 2.10 The NPPF states that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. This can mostly be achieved through application of national policy and introducing policies in the later stage of Local plan preparation. These can include specifying the precise location, form and design of development in a way which encourages the reuse of existing resources, supports renewable and low carbon energy and promotes development that is adaptable, resilient and minimises greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2.11 The preparation of the Spatial Strategy has taken account of climate change issues by promoting re use of previously developed land, avoiding development in locations vulnerable to the effects of climate change, protecting areas of open space and green infrastructure and most significantly locating development which minimises the need to travel and supports the use of sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.12 In a regional context, locating development as close to where needs arise

within an existing town with good transport links is a sustainable option.

### Flooding

- 2.13 There are large areas of Slough identified as at risk from flooding.
- 2.14 The NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from the areas at highest risk. It states that all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development with the aim of steering it to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.
- 2.15 The overall approach in the Spatial Strategy of concentrating development in the Centre of Slough is entirely in line with policy because this is an area with the lowest risk of flooding. One of the reasons for applying restraint to any development in Colnbrook and Poyle is because it contains large areas that have a high risk of flooding.
- 2.16 The proposed strategy of protecting the suburbs from redevelopment means that there will be no intensification of those existing residential areas that are at risk of flooding. Some of the parks and open spaces in Slough are at risk of flooding from the water courses that run through them. Retaining these as green spaces will help to prevent flooding elsewhere.
- 2.17 In selecting key locations for development account has been taken of flood risks. It is recognised that there are potential problems in parts of Chalvey and Cippenham where regeneration is needed. As a result this issue will have to be addressed through careful planning, further research of precise flood risk and, if necessary, the use of innovative solutions for mitigating any building in flood zones.
- 2.18 Some of the sites being considered for release from the Green Belt contain areas that are at risk from flooding. This will be taken into account in the site selection process. One of the reasons that the area south of the M4 has been ruled out as having any potential for development is because it is in a high risk flood zone.

### Air Quality

- 2.19 Areas of Slough suffer from some poor air quality. The principal source of poor air quality within Slough relates to road traffic emissions but additional sources include local construction activities, diesel trains operating on the Great Western Mainline, the town centre bus station, local industrial processes, larger combustion processes, airport emissions, back-up diesel generators associated with datacentre use, as well as transboundary pollutants also contribute to the

background pollution levels, and will continue to do so.

- 2.20 The NPPF states that planning policies should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and Clean Air Zones (CAZs), and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local area. The NPPF also states that opportunities to improve air quality should be identified at the plan-making stage, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement.
- 2.21 There are currently 5 AQMAs declared in Slough due to breaches of the annual mean concentration for NO<sub>2</sub> (40µg/m<sup>3</sup>). These are clustered along the A4 in the centre of Slough and around the M4/A4 in the Brands Hill area. Due to exceedances recorded in Langley, it is likely that this area will be designated as an AQMA in the future. The dispersion modelling and source apportionment which has been commissioned this year will help to determine this.
- 2.22 The Low Emission Strategy was adopted in 2018 to address exceedances of NO<sub>2</sub> within the borough, which outlines mitigation measures across the borough, including the feasibility of introducing Clear Air Zones (CAZs). Work is currently focusing upon the three areas in Slough which suffer from high NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations which are Brands Hill, Tuns Lane and the Town Centre. This will help to determine whether it is feasible to implement a Clean Air Zone in the Borough.
- 2.23 The overall approach within the Spatial strategy is one of concentrating development in the most accessible location in the centre of Slough in order to reduce the need to travel by the most polluting modes of transport. The ability to absorb a huge amount of development within the “square mile” without exceeding the relevant limit values will have to be tested and if necessary suitable mitigation will have to be put in place. Details of these are set out in the section on the Centre of Slough.
- 2.24 Elsewhere the introduction of restraint policies in the Colnbrook and Poyle area should not make the problems with air quality any worse. Similarly the retention of the existing housing stock in the suburbs and protection of existing open space and green areas should help with air quality.
- 2.25 In selecting Key Locations for development elsewhere in the Borough, account has been taken of air quality and it is not considered that they are likely, either individually or cumulatively, to prevent compliance with the relevant limit values. This will have to be tested at the planning application stage.

#### Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.26 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Preferred Spatial Strategy has been

carried out to assess the extent to which the Spatial Strategy will help to achieve a set of environmental, economic and social objectives. Updates to planning policy guidance, new strategies and frameworks have led to a review of the Local Plan “Objectives” and “Vision”. These are minor changes. These revised objectives have been tested against the sustainability appraisal objectives.

- 2.27 The main conclusion that can be drawn from the testing of the Preferred Spatial Strategy through the Sustainability Appraisal that has taken place so far is that the five components of the strategy are the most sustainable for seeking to meet the housing and employment needs in Slough.
- 2.28 The key sites which will implement the Preferred Spatial Strategy have not been assessed individually. This is more appropriately done at a later stage when more information is available.

#### Environmental Constraints

- 2.29 Slough does not have any national significant environmental sites therefore we do not need to take account of this in the Spatial Strategy. Outside of the Borough we carried out a screening assessment which ruled out the impact of development in Slough on these important environmental areas.
- 2.30 A Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening (HRA) was undertaken by Lepus Consulting. This assessed all Natura 2000 sites within a 15 mile radius of Slough. This concluded that development of the scale proposed in the Issues and Options consultation would not have an impact upon 14 of these important environmental areas.
- 2.31 The only likely significant effect on a qualifying features which could not be ruled out was that upon Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC) preparing the Spatial Strategy we have taken account of the need to protect the Burnham Beeches SAC.
- 2.32 The overall approach has been to concentrate development in the Centre of Slough. It is recognised that this falls just within the 5.6 kilometre zone of influence radius that has been drawn around Burnham Beeches .The Burnham Beeches SAC Mitigation Strategy for the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan states it requires a financial contributions from all net new residential development within a defined zone of influence (500m – 5.6km). These are to fund a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) at Burnham Beeches SAC and mitigation measures. This SPD is currently out for consultation.
- 2.33 It is not considered that this development will generate a significant number of visitors to the Beeches. This is because there are opportunities for informal

recreation much closer to the centre of Slough which are easier to get to. The vast majority of new housing in the town centre will be flats with no gardens. As a result there is unlikely to be a large number of dogs. These flats will also have limited car ownership which means that dog owners would have limited ability to travel to the Beeches.

- 2.34 Part of the strategy for the centre of Slough is to improve local access to green spaces such as local parks or the Jubilee River which can be accessed on foot or by bike. It is therefore considered that the best contribution that can be made to protecting the Burnham Beeches SAC is by improving local facilities in and around the centre of Slough which will make it even less likely that residents will visit the Beeches.
- 2.35 The completion of the new park on the edge of Slough west of Stoke Road will have a large dog walking area. This will act as a sustainable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) and help to reduce the number of existing Slough residents who visit the Beeches for dog walking or enjoying the natural environment.
- 2.36 The only significant new residential development proposed in the west of the Borough is at Cippenham. Bearing in mind most of this development will be flats with low car ownership and less likelihood of dog ownership, the impact on the Beeches is expected to be small. Any identified effect can be mitigated by local measures, and can involve Natural England if needed.

### **3 Policy Background**

- 3.1 The Local Plan Issues and Options consultation (2017) identified a number of areas for possible major development in the Borough. These included:
- Option B – expand the centre of Langley,
  - Option C - Akzo Nobel site,
  - Option D1 - Canal Basin
  - Option D2 – Cippenham Central Strip
  - Option D3 – Chalvey Regeneration
  - Option H – Release of Green Belt land for housing.
- 3.2 The main conclusion from the Issues and Options consultation was that there was no realistic option or combination of options which could meet all of Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough.
- 3.3 As a result all of these options were brought forward and would have formed the “selected key locations” element of the “emerging” Preferred Spatial Strategy that was agreed in November 2017. There have been a number of changes in circumstances since then which need to be taken into account.

- 3.4 There is now less likelihood of major residential development taking place at Langley but it remains important to set out what should happen if sites should come forward.
- 3.5 Akzo Nobel and the Canal Basin (now called Stoke Warf) are now included within the Centre of Slough. As a result the proposals that are coming forward on these sites are now dealt with as part of this component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 3.6 Some of the identified developments at Chalvey are underway, others are more longer term and some new opportunities have been identified. As a result it remains important that these are coordinated.
- 3.7 The “Wider Area Growth Study” is a government funded study which is intended to address issues arising from growth that is anticipated across the area. The work has been jointly commissioned by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the former Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils and Slough Borough Council.
- 3.8 Part 1 of the study, which was to define a broad ‘study area’, in which new housing development could provide reasonable substitutes for homes in the core places was published in June 2019.
- 3.9 Part 2 of the study is now being carried out by Stantec. This will look at housing needs, supply, capacity and constraints in the study area in order to identify specific locations where housing development could be deliverable and sustainable. The report is due to be completed by the end of the year and will then have to be agreed by all of the Councils.
- 3.10 As a result it has not been possible to progress work on whether the 10 Green Belt sites identified in the Issues and Options Consultation Document should be released for housing. This will have to be the subject of a separate consultation.
- 3.11 Proposals for a lot of development on the Slough Trading Estate are governed by the Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ). This is due for renewal in 2024 and so is necessary for the Spatial Strategy to set out how this important part of the Borough could be redeveloped.

#### **4 Selecting Key Locations for sustainable development**

- 4.1 Taking everything into account, the Spatial Strategy seeks to identify some “Selected Key Locations” that are suitable for large scale regeneration or development.
- 4.2 It has also seeks to identified a number of other “Key Locations” which have an

important role in the Borough but are unlikely to be able to provide many opportunities for largescale development.

- 4.3 It should be noted that proposals for the Poyle Trading Estate, which has been identified as a Selected Key Location, are set out in the Protecting the Strategic gap component of the Spatial Strategy.

#### Slough Trading Estate

- 4.4 Slough is unusual because the largest employment area is not in the town centre but the Slough Trading Estate. This means that it forms an important part of the Spatial Strategy.
- 4.5 The Trading Estate used to be famous for being one of the largest in Europe in single ownership. The offices along the Bath Road have now been acquired by AEW and the Bath Rd retail park sold off, but the rest is still owned by SEGRO.
- 4.6 Its latest claim to fame is that it has the largest concentration of data centres in Europe. This is an indication as to how it has changed from its industrial past, but it is still home to some manufacturers, such as Mars, plus a variety of other commercial premises including some warehousing.
- 4.7 The Trading Estate underpins Slough's role as an economic powerhouse. It is estimated that each data centre contributes £622m to the national economy. They do not, however, create many jobs and their huge energy consumption will make it very hard for Slough to meet its carbon emissions reduction targets.
- 4.8 At the same time a lot of the wealth created on the Trading Estate does not stay in Slough. This is because many of the well paid jobs are taken by people from outside of the Borough who do not spend much money in Slough.
- 4.9 There is currently a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) for the Trading Estate. This allows certain types of development to take place without the need for planning permission provided they meet all of the specified conditions. Although this applies to the whole of the Estate it is not particularly relevant for the Bath Road frontage because it does not cover proposed office development.
- 4.10 The SPZ will run out in 2024 and so it is anticipated that a new one will be produced for the area of the Estate that is owned by SEGRO. This will be the main way in which proposals for this Selected Key Location will be brought forward.
- 4.11 It is important that the Trading Estate retains a balance of employment generating uses. This will involve providing for a range of types and sizes of businesses which support the local economy.

- 4.12 One of the problems with the redevelopment of large parts of the Trading Estate to create new data centres is that there tends to be a loss of employment. Data centres also use a huge amount of energy. It will be important to ensure that data centres minimise waste heat or make productive use of the heat such as feeding it into a local heat network. Where this is not practical appropriate mitigation will be sought for the impact upon climate change.
- 4.13 As part of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, it will be important that support is given to training in order to ensure that the local workforce has access to the new types of jobs that are being created.
- 4.14 The Trading Estate is currently the subject of a parking cap which is enforced through the SPZ. It will be important that this is retained in order to encourage more modal shift away from the private car and reduce congestion and air quality problems. Continued support for public transport will be required including both the MRT which runs along the Bath Road and the Hoppa bus which serves the centre of the Estate.
- 4.15 The Buckingham Centre has been enhanced in recent years as a local shopping area and has a new hotel. It is now recognised that there is a need for more amenities to serve employees on the Estate. This includes food and beverage outlets which can cater for early evening as well as day time trade.
- 4.16 Bath Road Central, which contains all of the offices along the northern side of the A4, is also very important to the town both visually and economically. Although the Spatial Strategy proposes that major new offices should be located in the town centre, it is envisaged that some refurbishment or redevelopment will take place upon a similar scale to what is there at present. In addition to maintaining the existing avenue of trees along the Bath Road further improvements to the landscaping and amenity of the frontage could be provided. The proposed hotel on the corner of Leigh Road would also add to the facilities on the Estate.

#### Cippenham Bath Road – 'New Cippenham Central Strip'

- 4.17 This site lies either side of the A4 Bath Road a short distance east of Elmshott Lane/Station Road Junction. It currently comprises various large businesses buildings (e.g. Halfords, Sports Direct) and vacant former business sites including the former Trade Sales car sales operation. Part of the site has been cleared on the northern side and for two of the sites on the south side there has been recent interest in redevelopment. Part of the site is restricted by being in a flood zone.
- 4.18 The site is not far from Burnham station (650m walking distance), is on a major

bus route and has retail and community facilities nearby such as Elmshott Lane shopping parade, library combined with community hub, church halls, Cippenham recreation ground, doctors surgery etc. The location means it's a reasonably sustainable site in terms of local travel and travel to some nearby towns and London.

- 4.19 The area was identified in the Site Allocations Plan (2010) as a "Selected Key Location for Comprehensive Regeneration" where major residential or mixed use development could take place. The site was Option D2 in the 2017 Issues and Options exercise.
- 4.20 The proposal would involve the loss of employment land but much of this is quite low key or consists of retail type jobs which could be accommodated elsewhere. And there is scope to re-provide some employment uses at ground floor level. The existing petrol station on the site could remain or relocate within the site bearing in mind it is an important facility for the west part of the town. A review of the petrol station could include potential electric vehicle charging points.
- 4.21 Further assessment work is underway regarding constraints, opportunities, ownerships, viability and capacity. In particular some of the existing buildings have been re-occupied recently such that redevelopment of the entire site may not happen or it may happen over a long period of time when redevelopment of recently refitted buildings becomes viable. As a consequence a strategy is needed that allows for redevelopment of some plots without hindering adjacent future redevelopment.
- 4.22 The aim of the proposal is to regenerate this area of Cippenham, provide new housing and provide space for some employment uses. This would be achieved through redevelopment of either all of most of the existing buildings/vacant sites to provide primarily new residential accommodation. This, combined with public realm improvements would improve the environment for this part of the A4 corridor. Some mixed use or incorporation of appropriate small scale commercial or community uses is possible.
- 4.23 Comprehensively planned or comprehensively coordinated redevelopment is required to achieve the regeneration aim, to optimise the capacity of the site for new homes and for highway/transportation improvement in particular safe access and traffic flow. Whilst a comprehensive redevelopment would provide most benefit, certainty and optimisation of development capacity it is recognised multiple ownership of the site might prevent this. So as a minimum coordinated redevelopment is needed. This might constrain development options on some sites such that adjacent sites can be reasonably redeveloped in the future. A Council strategy or brief for the site will guide this coordination.
- 4.24 Optimising capacity is intended to assist with development viability to provide

an incentive for land owners to redevelop bearing in mind some plots have existing commercial uses and to ensure the quality of development is sufficient to provide a step change to the image of the area. As part of that optimisation a balance needs to be struck between scale of development and impact on nearby existing homes and the effect on the character of Cippenham as indicated below.

- 4.25 It is expected that most of the homes would be flats but to limit the adverse effect of large scale buildings on living conditions of residents in adjoining existing suburban housing certain parts of rear of the site will need a form of development appropriate to its setting. This could take the form of family houses.
- 4.26 Furthermore it is not proposed for the site to have a cluster of tall buildings. This would not be suitable for the character of Cippenham and such scale of development is only appropriate for the centre of Slough. It is recognised that quite high density development might be needed to achieve the redevelopment aim and this would be part of the character of the A4 frontage of this part of Cippenham in contrast to the typical suburban character and established stable areas away from the A4.
- 4.27 To ensure the new housing provides for both local and town wide needs a mixture of housing accommodation is required in terms of form, size and tenure and to attract a range of households. Employment or community uses should be incorporated in order to help make it a sustainable development and help provide jobs to help compensate for any lost from existing business premises. Such uses at ground floor level of new buildings may be more suitable than residential property being close to the Bath Road with associated poor environment.
- 4.28 High quality public realm is needed for the new development and existing highway areas to improve the appearance of the area for residents and the image of the town the site having a frontage on the A4 an important entry point to the town. Part of that public realm enhancement should include where practical major landscaping including street trees. Contributions to off site public realm improvements may be needed.
- 4.29 There may be the opportunity to include other adjoining sites along the Bath Road within comprehensive redevelopment proposals. Proposals will need to be in accordance with any development brief issued by the Council.
- 4.30 There are a number of constraints to development. Part of the site is liable to flood and so the design and layout of any development would have to take account of this. It may mean no new buildings on part of the site. The layout, scale and design of new development will have to take account of the juxtaposition of adjoining residential properties. Development near the road

frontage would have to take account of noise and air quality issues from traffic along the A4. There are also road widening proposals within the vicinity of this area.

- 4.31 Redevelopment of any plot must not hinder reasonable redevelopment of adjacent plots. Rationalisation of site access points will be needed to minimise the number of accesses onto Bath Road and to improve road safety and traffic flow. This is likely to mean some sites allowing for access to adjacent or nearby plots when redeveloped.
- 4.32 Where redevelopment of one plot takes place next to any other plot where redevelopment is not expected soon and has unneighbourly activity the new development will have to ensure acceptable living conditions can be provided.
- 4.33 The two plots on the north side next to the culverted brook will need to provide land for a pedestrian/cycle link to Cippenham Recreation Ground. Improved cycle/pedestrian links to Burnham Station and Cippenham Recreation Ground will be required to make the site more sustainable.
- 4.34 In summary this site is proposed for redevelopment to provide primarily new residential accommodation and an improved environment for this part of the A4 corridor. Comprehensively planned or comprehensively coordinated redevelopment is required. Some mixed use or incorporation of appropriate small scale commercial or community uses is possible.

#### Chalvey Regeneration

- 4.35 The regeneration of Chalvey has been going on for a while. Recent developments including the new Grove Academy school and Chalvey Community Hub. This regeneration needs to be continued to address local problems of image of the area and provide new facilities for the neighbourhood.
- 4.36 New residential accommodation can play its part in providing new homes for local people and more choice in the type homes. New development can provide a better appearance in the streetscene than some of the existing property or sites. This combined with public realm and associated enhancements and new public facilities can assist regeneration. Co-ordination with the emerging Chalvey Community Plan will be essential. Support from local public authorities to tackle crime and to assist community support networks can contribute to regeneration. The sites identified below will contribute to regeneration of the area. Most will provide a variety of types of new homes including affordable housing, family housing and for the elderly. The other two sites relate to health care and, potentially, transport.
- 4.37 Small scale development can, collectively, play its part in regeneration if designed and suitable for the neighbourhood. This might include

redevelopment or refurbishment or changes of use. Which sites might be involved will be dependent upon individual site owners and developers etc. so it is not possible to identify them all at this stage. It is hoped that recent and proposed development identified below plus public realm enhancements will encourage existing owners to invest in their properties thus improve the overall image of the area, create a sense of confidence and hopefully encourage existing residents to stay in the area.

4.38 In addition to the identified development sites the Council is progressing with or has identified potential enhancements in the area. These are not necessarily linked to development sites but are mostly physical measures in the public realm that are intended to benefit the neighbourhood as a whole. Some are in preparation now others dependent upon funding or further studies.

- Public Realm enhancements including strategic tree planting, improving the watercourse Salt Hill stream to make it a pleasant feature in the neighbourhood. This can be combined with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's town wide water quality initiative and flood alleviation measures. The appearance of the A4 Bath Road opposite Ice Arena could be improved and direct pedestrian/cycle crossing into Salt Hill Park provided.
- North – south pedestrian /cycle route could be improved which would include making the link to the Jubilee River more attractive in order to encourage active travel and recreation with all of its health benefits.

4.39 There may be opportunities for enhancements or renewal of the Council Housing Estates in the future dependent upon the outcome of further studies by the Council's Housing Section.

4.40 Some constraints will limit the opportunity for new development that has not been identified such as the need to avoid flood zones and air quality management areas which cover part of the neighbourhood. Town wide measures to minimise the effect of new development on air quality will benefit Chalvey in the long term. Traffic congestion is also a local problem within the area as a result it will be necessary to control the amount of car parking associated with new development and require measures that will encourage non car modes of travel. Enhancements to public transport, including possible new bus links may be required.

4.41 It may also be necessary to consider using Compulsory Purchase powers to facilitate comprehensive redevelopment where a development or transport initiative is important for regeneration of the area.

### Identified development sites

- I. **Greenwatt Way** – Health hub and extra care home.
- II. **Montem** (former leisure centre and car park site etc. ) – 160 or more homes; streamside and woodland enhancements, bus link to improve operation of Chalvey bus service. The Montem Leisure Centre site will become a new residential neighbourhood of flats plus family homes. It will include an enhanced streamside green corridor with a foot and cycle link connecting it to Salt Hill Park to the north and south to Chalvey Centre.
- III. **Tower and Ashbourne House** – redevelopment to provide 77 net additional homes and new public realm plus potential community use on ground floor. .
- IV. **Tuns Lane** (east side) redevelopment for residential development and possibly renewed fire station. This is a medium to long term redevelopment opportunity. Comprehensive or coordinated redevelopment is required to achieve benefits. Substantial benefits are needed to compensate for the loss of some family homes.
- V. **St. Martins Place** - new residential accommodation through change of use from offices; including possible extension or complete redevelopment.
- VI. **Site east of St. Martins Place. (33 Bath Rd (Lego)** new residential accommodation through change of use from offices or comprehensive redevelopment of the area.
- VII. **Chalvey Halt proposal** - New railway station on the Slough to Windsor branch line at the south end of Alexandra Road and east of Primary Road. Much of Chalvey would be within a 10 minute walk of this station. The provision of a Chalvey railway halt in the future would enhance accessibility for the local community and reduce reliance on the car at peak times.

4.42 In summary the Chalvey area is proposed for regeneration through the development of identified large sites for residential and health uses combined with public realm and travel enhancements.

### Greenfield/Green Belt releases for housing

4.43 Sites have been released from the Green Belt in previous Local Plans. Given the shortage of housing in Slough, consideration has to be given to whether further Green Belt releases should take place.

- 4.44 The NPPF makes it clear that Green Belt boundaries can only be altered in Local Plans where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified.
- 4.45 This was considered in the Issues and Options Consultation in 2017 which carried out a broad brush assessment of the Green Belt areas in Slough. This concluded that the largest area of Green Belt, in Colnbrook and Poyle, was not suitable for housing because it is subject to a number of environmental constraints including noise and air quality. The future of this area is considered in the Protecting the Strategic Gap component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 4.46 The only other significant area of Green Belt land is south of the M4 motorway, This was not considered suitable for housing development because it contains the Jubilee river and the sewage works, it has very poor access and most of it is liable to flood. Both of these areas are included in the area of search for new housing identified in Part 1 of the Wider Area Growth Study. They will therefore be reassessed in Part 2 of the Growth Study which is currently taking place and so cannot be completely be ruled out at this stage.
- 4.47 A number of other small pockets of Green Belt land were also examined and then ruled out in the Issues and Options consultation document because they were not considered suitable for residential development for a variety of reasons. No proposals have been brought forward for housing development on any of these sites either as part of the public consultation exercise or subsequently.
- 4.48 The Issues and Options document did, however, identify ten sites that could possibly be released from the Green Belt for housing specifically to meet the need for more family housing in Slough – a qualitative matter relating to rebalancing the local housing market. These sites were:
- St Anthony’s Field Farnham Road
  - Wexham Park Hospital School of Nursing site, Wexham Street
  - Land to rear of Opal Court Wexham Street
  - Land east of Wexham Park Hospital
  - North of Muddy Lane, Stoke Poges Lane
  - Land east of Rochford Gardens
  - Bloom Park, Middlegreen Road
  - Land east of Market Lane
  - Upton Court Farm
  - Land south of Castleview Road
- 4.49 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out government policy on Green Belts, stating in paragraph 133 that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the

essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF explains that Green Belts serve the following purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.50 Not all of these purposes are particularly helpful in considering the merits of individual sites in Slough.

4.51 Whilst it is important to assess sites against Green Belt criteria it is also important to assess them against other aspects not covered by Green Belt issues. These include what the harm would be to the intrinsic quality of the site is such as landscape character, ecological value, historic importance and agricultural land quality. It should also involve assessing the accessibility and sustainability of the proposed development and any benefits that it could produce in addition to meeting housing needs.

4.52 Consideration also needs to be given to strategic policies such as the protection of public open space, impact upon SACs, compliance with Regional Park designations and mineral sterilisation policies.

4.53 Finally site assessments have to take account of local designations which in Slough's case would include the Strategic Gap between Slough and Greater London.

4.54 It is recognised that sufficient work has not been carried out yet and that further consultation will have to take place before a proposal can be made to release any sites from the Green Belt in Slough. This will also have to take account of the results of Part 2 of the Wider Area Growth study which is assessing major sites which could adjoin some of the small ones identified in Slough..

4.55 In summary the greenfield/Green Belt ten sites that have been identified as having potential for housing development are only being identified as possible Selected Key Sites at this stage so that they can be the subject of initial public consultation.

#### Centre of Langley

4.56 It is no longer proposed to promote the centre of Langley as a Selected Key Location for major development. This is because the owners of the Langley Business Centre now proposed to redevelop the site for data centres and there

is not enough scope to accommodate a significant amount of development without this key site.

- 4.57 It was previously proposed to promote major residential development next to the Elizabeth Line railway station in order to meet local needs in a sustainable way which reduced the need to travel.
- 4.58 If circumstances change the site could be developed for primarily high density residential development with ancillary retail, local leisure/community uses and a nursery. Small scale employment uses suitable for a residential area could also be included. Residential use should include some family accommodation including houses. It should include improved pedestrian and cycle access along the frontage and to Harrow Market Centre to the south and to the station to the north and east to Meadfield Road. The scale of the development will need to respect the living conditions and character of the existing suburban residential property adjacent. The retail and leisure use should complement the Langley Village shopping Centre
- 4.59 There were also proposals to develop the Canal Wharf and Canal Industrial Estate north of Langley Station. This is not currently being promoted as a result of the general principle of not allowing any further loss of Existing Business Areas. An exception to this could be made if either the Langley Business Centre is redeveloped for residential purposes or proposals for the Northern Expansion of Slough come forward close to the site. In either case this would have to be comprehensively planned.
- 4.60 The former Langley Oil Terminal east of Langley station was identified for residential development as a Selected Key Location for Comprehensive redevelopment in the Site Allocations DPD (2010). This site is now needed for flood storage as part of the Western Rail link to Heathrow. This can continue to be used for open storage until construction takes place. If any land is not required for the rail link it should be allocated for either residential or commercial use which reflects its very sustainable location near the station.

#### Other Key Locations

- 4.61 There are other Key Locations which are recognised as having an important role to play in the Borough but it is not envisaged that there will be any major development within them. This includes the Farnham Road and Langley District shopping centres. Proposals for these areas will also be included in the Spatial Strategy.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report has identified some “Selected Key Locations” that are suitable for

large scale regeneration or development which form part of this component of the Spatial Strategy.

- 5.2 The largest and most important part of the Borough, outside of the centre, is Slough Trading Estate .As a result it is identified as a Selected Key Location where continual renewal will take place to meet changing needs. This is likely to be implemented through the preparation of a new Simplified Planning Zone for the Estate.
- 5.3 The Poyle Trading Estate is the second largest employment area in the Borough which also needs to be identified as a Selected Key Location. Proposals for this are set out in the “Protecting the Strategic gap” component of the Spatial Strategy.
- 5.4 The regeneration of Chalvey has been underway for some time. It has been decided to continue to identify this as a Selected Key Location for regeneration in order to ensure that that the remaining major sites are fully integrated with the neighbourhood.
- 5.5 There is an opportunity to redevelop the former Trade Sales area on the Bath Road for residential use. Some nearby properties on the Bath Rd could also be redeveloped. This has been identified as a Selected Key Location known as the Cippenham Central Strip.
- 5.6 Due to the shortage of land for housing in Slough and the lack of opportunities to provide family and affordable housing it is proposed to consider releasing some green field/Green Belt land for residential development. Ten possible sites have been identified but they will have to go through a separate consultation process which also takes account of the results of the Wider Area Growth Study. As a result none of these have been identified as Selected Key Locations for development at this stage.
- 5.7 Elsewhere the opportunity for expanding the centre of Langley around the railway station to have gone because key sites, such as Langley Business Centre, are no longer available for large scale residential or commercial use. As a result this is no longer identified as a Selected Key Location. Suggestions have been put forward for this Key Location should circumstances change.
- 5.8 Langley and Farnham Road are both District Shopping Centres which have an important role to play. They have therefore been identified as Key Locations but it is not envisaged that there will be any major new development in these areas.
- 5.9 As a result it can be seen that there are selective opportunities for major development outside the Centre of Slough but these are not likely to produce much of a net increase in commercial floorspace or a significant number of new residential units.