

Slough Borough Council

Housing Strategy 2016 to 2021

Consultation Draft

October 2016

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the new Housing Strategy for Slough.

We have ambitious plans for the success and growth of our Town over the next 20 years. We want Slough to be a place where people work, rest, play and stay. This means supporting economic growth by providing a full range of housing opportunities in good quality homes that people can afford.

This Housing Strategy is an important building block in our plans, alongside our new Local Plan which is currently in development. This Strategy covers a five year period but we are also looking to the longer term, so that in 20 years time we have a range of housing and support services that match the ambition and needs of our residents.

The population of Slough, and the number of people living here will grow dramatically over the next 20 years. We need to provide housing both for people who are already here and for those residents who will come as a result of developments such as Crossrail. This means providing a balance of housing to rent and to buy, but with a particular emphasis on homes that are affordable.

A good and secure home is central to the quality of life. It affects physical and mental health, job prospects, educational attainment and the ability for families to prosper. So although most people in the Borough are well-housed, that is why we need to tackle some problem areas.

- One household in four in Slough rent their home from a private landlord and most landlords provide a good and valuable service. But we need to address the minority landlords who are exposing their tenants to poor housing conditions.
- We have a growing homelessness problem, some it exported from London, It is vital for the sake of the families concerned that we work hard to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place.
- We need to do more to meet the needs of people in the community who have specific housing needs, such as care leavers or older people needing extra care.

We have a vital and valuable resource in the 7,000 homes that the Council owns and we need to make sure that we nurture and improve those homes for the benefit of existing residents and those that are to come, despite challenging changes that are currently being imposed by the Government. This means developing a vision for what our homes will look like in the longer term.

This Strategy commits the Council to pro-actively promoting the development of new homes, including itself delivering or facilitating the provision of at least 200 new homes per year. However, the success of the Strategy will depend also on the activities of others, including private developers, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector, housing associations, our partner Slough Urban Renewal and residents themselves.

The council will continue to work hard with its many partners to deliver all the action plans within the Housing Strategy and I look forward to seeing them delivered over the coming months and years.

photo

***Councillor Zaffar Ajaib, Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal
Slough Borough Council***

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Executive Summary

- The Housing Strategy is an important element of the Council's plans to build a town where people want to work, rest, play and stay. It covers a five year period but we are also looking to the longer term, so that in 20 years time we have a range of housing and support services that match the ambition and needs of our residents. The Strategy is presented under 5 themes.

Theme 1 : New Housing Supply

- The population of the Borough will grow rapidly over the next 20 years. When added to the existing demand for homes this means substantial numbers of new homes are needed each year.
- Rising house prices and private sector rents mean that many residents cannot afford accommodation at market rates.
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assesses the need for new homes at 927 units per year up to 2036. The Council will seek to achieve this but this depends on there being sites available for development.
- Although many of the new homes will be built by other agencies the Council itself is very pro-active in bringing forward development. This Strategy commits the Council to delivering or facilitating an average of at least 200 units per year over the life of the Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.
- A balance of new homes to rent and to own is required but a particular priority will be the provision of a range of affordable housing for people who cannot accommodate themselves in the market. This will include homes for key workers.
- New Subsidiary Housing Companies will assist in providing homes for vulnerable groups, such as care leavers.

Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing

- One Slough household in four rents their home from a private landlord and the proportion is growing. Most landlords provide a good service and standard of accommodation.
- However, national statistics show that the worst housing conditions are found in the private rented sector and some rogue landlords provide poor and unhealthy accommodation.
- The Council intends to actively support good landlords but will vigorously use its legal powers, including prosecution to make rogue landlords comply with their obligations. It will investigate a new registration scheme for private landlords and implement the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing.
- The Council will actively use its powers to bring empty properties back into use.
- Two new Subsidiary Housing Companies will act as exemplar private landlords in the Borough and help homeless households and others on modest incomes to access homes in the private sector.

Theme 3; Council Homes

- The Council owns over 7,000 tenanted and leasehold homes. They are its most valuable physical asset and play an increasingly significant role in the town in providing accommodation for people on low or modest incomes.
- Major investment plans are in place which will mean £100m spent on existing homes over the next 7 years and the building of 190 new Council homes.
- Service improvements are planned through a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract due to start in 2017 and wider engagement with residents.
- The financing of council housing is in a period of uncertainty, largely because of changes introduced by the Government. One of these is the forced reduction in rents over the 4 year period from 2016/17, which has removed substantial income from the Housing

Revenue Account (HRA.) A major review of the Business Plan will be needed in March 2017 because of this.

- In collaboration with residents the Council will undertake a major Options Appraisal to look at the future of the Council's homes over the next 20 years.

Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need

- Homelessness is increasing. More people are being accepted as homeless and the number of families in temporary accommodation, such as Bed and Breakfast, is rising very sharply. Rough sleeping is also an issue and may also be on the rise.
- This is due to rising prices in the private sector and static or reducing levels of welfare benefits.
- The problem is being exacerbated in Slough by homeless families moving from London, placed here by London Boroughs. Often this is without adequate notification to services in Slough and this can lead to vulnerable people not fully accessing services.
- The Council will develop a Preventing Homelessness Strategy in partnership with the voluntary sector and other agencies.
- I will end the use of B&B for families with children.
- The Scheme of Allocation for social housing will be reviewed to look at the priority homeless people receive;
- A Subsidiary Housing Company will acquire homes to alleviate pressure on temporary accommodation.
- The Council will work with Health services and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough.

Theme 5: Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups

- Population projections show that the number of people in Slough aged over 65 will grow by 40% in the next 10 years. The number over 85 will grow even more sharply.
- The number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will also increase. There is a clear link between poor housing conditions and poor health.
- Although there is already a range of specialist accommodation available more will be required to meet the growing demand. A greater range of options is also required, including for people who are currently owner-occupiers.
- The Council will develop a long-term strategy for older persons housing in the Borough, looking at increasing the options available for older people in the borough;
- The new Subsidiary Housing Company will be used to look at opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost-effectively.
- There will be an adequate supply of suitable accommodation for care leavers.
- Joint working between Housing and Adult Social Care will deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough and other forms of supported accommodation.

Introduction

Improving Housing quality and standards is a key component of the Council's ambition to make Slough a place to work, rest, play and stay over the next 20 years. In order to meet the needs of existing residents and to support the increase in population and jobs and the economic growth that will accompany it, we need to provide a broad and balanced range of new accommodation to own and to rent. We also need to improve the quality of existing housing.

Housing forms one of the major outcomes in the Council's 5 Year Plan for the Borough. Outcome 2 reads;

"There will be more homes, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough with the necessary infrastructure to support and sustain the community."

This Housing Strategy will help to deliver this outcome as well as the broader objectives of the overarching Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy. It draws together the key housing issues in the Borough into one document and summarises the Council's approach to addressing them. It has been prepared in parallel with the development of the Local Plan which will set out the planning and spatial framework for the Borough in the period up to 2036.

Our plans are ambitious, both for the Town and for the provision of Housing. We want to welcome the growth that is coming and harness it to fashion a high quality and successful environment where people want to stay and have access to good quality accommodation that they can afford.

We recognise that success will involve many different organisations and agencies. Residents, private developers, statutory agencies, housing associations and the voluntary sector all have an important part to play. The Council cannot by itself meet the significant housing challenges facing the Borough. We hope that this Strategy will form the framework against which our partners can join together to improve housing opportunities for all the residents of the Borough.

Structure of the Strategy

The document is structured into five key themes:

- **Theme 1 : New Housing Supply** - Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources.
- **Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing** - Ensuring that the private housing sector provides sufficient good quality market housing through support for landlords and tenants and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.
- **Theme 3; Council Homes** - Ensuring council homes *are managed and maintained to a high standard and the Council builds new homes for Slough residents.*
- **Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need** - Reducing homelessness *and rough sleeping through effective prevention work.*
- **Theme 5 : Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups** - Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people and those with special housing needs, for example, young people, older people and people, people with disabilities.

The Action Plans from each of the themes are brought together at the end of the document in a format which will be used to monitor the strategy over the next few years.

Theme 1 : New Housing Supply

Ensuring the right supply and mix of new homes and increasing affordable housing through the efficient use of land and capital resources.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- Slough has 51,000 homes accommodating 147,821 people with a predicted growth of a further 6,900 people over the next five years.
- Housing supply: 56% of households own their own home/have a mortgage; 24% are private rented, 20% are social rent homes (council and housing association);
- Slough has high levels of overcrowding compared to neighbouring areas;
- House Prices average £304,000 (Zoopla, August 2016), with one of the highest rates of increase in the country over the previous year;
- Affordability; the ratio between average house prices 11:1 and average income levels is 11:1;
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates a requirement for 927 new homes per year over the next 20 years;
- Pressure on housing supply is indicated by the growth of homeless households in temporary accommodation which has grown sharply in the 2 years to September 2016;
- Slough is under pressure from households moving from London, including households placed in Slough by London Boroughs;
- Land supply is a key constraint for building new homes in Slough
- Low development viability restricts the capacity to provide affordable housing and contributions to infrastructure.

This chapter describes the overall position on housing and housing need in Slough and sets out the current information on the need for new homes. It also outlines the pro-active role the Council itself intends to play in ensuring the delivery of new homes for residents of the borough.

Our Objectives

In setting out our Strategy on the supply of new homes we have a number of objectives;

To provide homes that will support economic growth and enable residents to build their lives and careers by staying in Slough;

To meet the new build requirements set out in the SHMA ;

To provide a balance of new housing to own and to rent to cater for the requirements of all income groups;

To provide affordable housing for the range of income groups who need it;

To facilitate opportunities for households to move to different types of housing for people at all stages in their life and as their circumstances change;

To make the best use of resources.in providing new housing;

To provide for new homes for special needs groups and vulnerable people within the community;

To ensure that new homes are of high quality and make a contribution to the quality of life in Slough.

Background

Population and Housing in Slough

Slough has a population of 147,821 which is expected to grow by 6,900 over the next five years (ONS). It has the most diverse population in Berkshire, which grew by 18% between 2001 and 2013. The population is due to continue growing. It is anticipated there will be an increase of almost 20,000 households between 2013 and 2036 (38%.) This is much higher than the 22% projected increase in England as a whole. These increases will be accompanied by an increase in the workforce.

Slough also has a very young age profile with 9.2% of the population of pre-school age and 20.3% at school.

A particular characteristic of households in Slough is the very high level of overcrowding. In the 2011 Census 21% of households were living in overcrowded conditions compared to just 8.5% for England as a whole. This figure represented a significant increase in overcrowding in Slough since 2001. Allied to this is the very high level of "concealed" households - that is, households living within other households (often with relatives) and yet to form. The number of such households has doubled since 2001 and is now the 3rd highest in the whole country. Slough also has a relatively high proportion of larger families, with 15% of households containing five or more people.

56% of households in Slough own their own home; 24% rent their homes from private landlords and 20% are social housing tenants (renting from the Council or housing associations). These proportions have changed sharply since 2001, with a reduction in the proportion of households owning their own homes and an increase in those in the private rented sector.

Housing in Slough is rapidly becoming more expensive. In August 2016, average house prices reached £304,000 (Zoopla, Aug 2016.) This was one of the most rapid price increases in the country compared to the position a year previously. The ratio of average house prices to average incomes in the borough had reached 11;1.

This brief outline of the housing situation in Slough points to a future in which the Borough is looking forward to rapid growth in the population and the workforce, to add to existing pressures on the housing market. The high levels of overcrowding and the rapid rise in market prices (and rents) suggest both that substantially more homes are required over the period of this Strategy and beyond and that the "affordability" of these homes will be a major consideration.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Borough has the benefit of a major new assessment of the need for new homes, published early in 2016. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a detailed study of the Housing situation in Slough (and neighbouring authorities), drawing on information about current housing requirements and future need arising from population and economic growth.

Slough is set within a wider "Housing Market Area" which also includes the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and South Buckinghamshire. The SHMA identifies the "objectively assessed need" to provide 927 new homes year on year in Slough over the period 2013 to 2036. This is higher than the Council's current target

of 550 homes and higher than either of the other two local authority areas within the Housing Market Area.

As part of its detailed analysis, the SHMA also made recommendations for the size of dwellings to be provided, to be used as a guide on individual developments.

Recommended Mix of New Homes (SHMA, 2016)				
	1 Bed	2 Beds	3 Beds	4+ Beds
Market Housing	13%	25%%	45.0%	16.0%
Affordable Housing	42%%	30.7%%	22.1%%	4.6%%

The Council accepts the analysis of the SHMA (subject to the analysis of housing need below) and the need for the provision of new homes on the scale proposed. This is consistent with its long term vision for the growth of Slough and with its ambition to provide an adequate supply of high quality accommodation for people who want to live and stay in the Borough. Via this Strategy the Council is committed to maximizing the supply of new homes as long as development is sustainable and consistent with the other objectives of the 5 Year Plan.

Other Measures of Housing Need

The Council accepts the analysis of the SHMA. The urgency of the need to provide additional housing at the recommended scale is amplified by consideration of local pressures that are not fully taken account of in the SHMA. The SHMA is concerned in particular with longer –term economic and population trends, using nationally-available, but inevitably broad-brush data sources. The Council itself has access to other data which reflect day to day pressures experienced by residents of the Borough.

The Housing Register

One such source is the Housing Register. From January 2014 the Council restricted access to its Housing Register in order to reflect the limited availability of social housing and the fact that many people then on the Register had no realistic prospect of receiving an offer of accommodation. Prior to that, around 8,000 households had expressed a wish to be considered for an offer of social housing in the Borough. Of these, 43% required 1 bedroom; 31% required 2 bedroom, 20% required 3 bedrooms and 5% needed 4 bedrooms or more. Since 2014, the Register has been reduced to a figure of just over 2,000 households. Even so, the shortage of affordable accommodation still means a long wait for applicants. In 2015/16, households had waited an average of 2.65 years for a 1 bedroom home, 3.9 years for a 3 bedroom home and over 5 years for a home of 4 bedrooms or more.

Homelessness

A further key issue is homelessness. The Council has statutory responsibilities to provide accommodation for homeless households. Frequently, this is temporary accommodation, often in accommodation owned by private landlords. As families on low or modest incomes find it increasingly difficult to accommodate themselves in the private rented sector as a result of rising rents and static or falling levels of benefits, this pressure emerges as homelessness. The use of temporary accommodation is

therefore a sensitive bellweather of the pressure being felt in the local housing market by households on lower or modest incomes.

In Slough, the use of temporary accommodation is rising rapidly. At 31 March 2015, the Council had 156 households in temporary accommodation. A year later this had risen to 225. By September 2016 the total in temporary accommodation stood at over 300. At this rate of change, the position in Slough will soon be approaching that of a typical London Borough. Each year, the Department for Communities and Local Government publishes data on the level of homelessness acceptances in each local authority area, expressed as a proportion of the population. For 2015/16, the rate for Slough was 4.43 per 1,000 of the population, higher than the 3.04 for the London Borough of Hillingdon and only slightly behind the Hounslow figure of 5.52.

However, this expresses only a part of the current pressures on the Borough. Published statistics refer to the **placing authority**, not where they are placed. In reality, the pressure on the housing market in Slough is being made considerably worse by movement outwards from London and from other neighbouring authorities. Some of this is caused by the placement by London Boroughs and other authorities of homeless households in temporary accommodation **in** Slough. Some of the issues arising from this for the households concerned are discussed under Objective 4 below. Councils placing outside their area are required to notify the receiving authority of the placement. Over the last 3 years Slough has been notified of some 450 placements into the Borough by 28 different authorities. These include all the other Berkshire authorities, South Bucks and 11 different London Boroughs. It is believed that the true level of placements is far higher than this and that in reality not all placements are notified. It is believed this figure excludes some instances where other authorities have purchased properties in Slough, have used accommodation on nightly-rates or where they have discharged their homelessness duty into the private sector. Housing officers believe that it is likely that the total number of placements into Slough over this period is nearer 1,000 households.

Key Workers

The Council is aware that there are some vital services, for example in education, which are being hampered in their recruitment of key staff because of the difficulty of securing suitable and affordable accommodation. It is often the case that while such staff may not be able to afford to buy a home or to pay market rents, they are also excluded from the usual routes into affordable housing and in particular social housing. There is a very limited stock of accommodation for this group of workers, who may be able to afford rents which are higher than social housing rents but who cannot afford accommodation in the market. The Council wants to try and address this through the work of this strategy. This could be via new models of provision, perhaps via the new Subsidiary Housing Companies, or through the provision of new affordable homes specifically for this group.

Heathrow Expansion

At the time of writing the Government has not yet announced its decision on the expansion of Heathrow. Should this decision be made, this would be a further significant factor pointing to an increased requirement for new homes in the Borough.

The Council believes that these special and live pressures on the housing market in Slough will not fully have been taken into account in the SHMA and that they amplify the need for additional accommodation at the recommended level..

Affordable Housing

Market housing in Slough, both to rent and to buy is becoming more expensive. There has been a 40% increase in average house prices over the last 3 years with a 20% increase in the last 12 months alone. As noted above the ratios between prices and incomes are widening and it is becoming more difficult for households on even average incomes to find accommodation in the market. This position is unlikely to ease. The regeneration of the Town Centre, the introduction of Crossrail will offer reduced commuter journey times into central London and the promise of future fast rail links with Birmingham and the North with HS2. In both cases substantial numbers of new homes are planned as part of the regeneration, but demand for new housing will also continue to increase due to the growth in employment opportunities and population in the borough. It is therefore important that other opportunities for housing development are identified and existing housing committed housing sites encouraged to come forward for delivery, especially during the next five years.

While it will be important to achieve a balance in the new housing which is provided the Council sees it as a high priority to provide sufficient affordable housing to allow people to establish themselves and to stay in Slough even if they cannot afford market accommodation. The information earlier in the chapter points to the wide-ranging evidence that significantly more affordable housing is required. The Local Plan sets a target that 40% of all additional dwellings built in Slough to meet local housing need should be “affordable.” The ability to deliver this through planning applications has been hampered by low development values and viability. The review of the local plan will need to reassess the viability of the local plan requirements as part of an examination of the deliverability and soundness of the plan.

Over the last few years the term “affordable” has been used in variety of different ways.

The SHMA and Affordable Housing

The SHMA itself includes a considerable amount of material on the need for additional affordable housing. It uses the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition that affordable housing is “social rented”, “affordable rented” or “intermediate” housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. “Intermediate” housing is taken to include shared ownership and rented housing provided to households who can afford to pay between 80% of market rates and the full market rate. “Social rented” homes are provided by Local Authorities or Housing Associations at or below “Target” rents. “Affordable rented” housing provided by Housing Associations or local councils at rents between Target rents and a figure which is 80% of the market value. In other words, the SHMA discusses affordable housing as accommodation available to a wide range of income groups whose common factor is that they cannot afford to house themselves in the market.

The SHMA report also makes some general assessments on the annual household income required to purchase or rent in Slough without additional subsidy. For purchase in the lowest quartile of the market the figure is £50,000 (this assessment is before the sharp rises in house prices in the year to August 2016.) For rental the equivalent figures are; lower quartile private rent, £23,100; affordable rent, £18,500; lower quartile social rent, £15,000. Across the study area as a whole, one fifth of households had an income of below £20,000 per year and a further one third of between £20,000 and £40,000. The median income in Slough in mid - 2014 was £28,816 and the mean income £37,952.

By making assumptions about what proportion of their income households could be expected to spend on their accommodation the SHMA is able to make a broad

assessment of the scale of how many of the households requiring accommodation in Slough over the period to 2036 would need “affordable” housing to this definition. Looking at the likely demand and comparing this with the supply of existing affordable housing over that period the SHMA quotes a net requirement of 671 affordable homes per year. It emphasizes that this cannot be compared directly with the overall requirement of 927 units per year because it has been derived through a different method. Equally the SHMA suggests that this cannot be directly applied as a target and that it needs to be balanced with a range of other issues, not least whether it is practicable and viable to provide affordable homes on that scale. Nevertheless, it is a useful marker for the fact that a significant proportion of households looking to build their lives in Slough will be unable to do so with out some intervention that brings their housing costs below market levels.

The SHMA also make some broad recommendations about the type of affordable housing to be provided. It suggests that approximately 20-25% of the need for affordable housing could be met by “Intermediate” homes, that is between 80% of market rates and full market rates. The remainder would be met by rented housing at 80% of market levels or below. It does not make recommendations about the appropriate split between “social rent” and “affordable rent” due to the complexity of the relationship between the two, the changing nature of the funding arrangements and the role of the availability of Housing Benefit to support rent payments by households on low incomes.

Starter Homes

In addition to revised funding arrangements for affordable housing in recent years the Government has now introduced the concept of Starter Homes. Although at the time of writing the detailed implementation is still to be explained it appears that over next five years this will include the provision for 20% of new homes on each new development to be “starter homes” for sale. These will be sold at 80% of the local market price to people under 40 buying their first home in line with new legislation to increase home ownership levels. These homes will count towards the affordable housing contribution on larger developments and the market discount will need to come from the same pot of developer contributions that is used for other affordable housing and infrastructure needed to address development. Affordable homes for rent will therefore be over and above this provision for Starter Homes . This may in future be the route through which the assessment within the SHMA of the need for homes at between 80% and full market levels will be met. It may also become the primary route into home-ownership for households aspiring to own their own home for the first time.

The Council’s Approach

The Council wishes to support the future growth and development of the town through the provision of a balance of new housing which allows residents to build their lives and stay in the town and which also provides opportunities to move on to a range of other accommodation as their careers and circumstances develop and change. This means planning for a range of high quality affordable housing as well meeting the needs of those who will look to the private market for their accommodation.

The Council is determined to maximize the provision of affordable housing. Primarily this will be housing to rent although it will look for opportunities to facilitate low cost home-ownership (see the LAPP scheme below.) It recognizes that in the future aspirations for home-ownership may be met via the Starter Homes scheme.

In thinking about the cost of affordable rented homes there are a number of considerations;

First, the viability of individual schemes in an era where there is no longer national subsidy available for affordable rented housing. Depending on the site, the provision of affordable rented housing will be easier in some places than in others. There will often be a trade-off to be made between the number of affordable units which can be achieved and the level of rents. Viability may also vary between parts of the Borough. Accommodation at lower rents may be more viable on greenfield sites than on Town Centre or complex brownfield sites;

Second, many of the households seeking accommodation are on low incomes and cannot afford rents at “affordable rent” levels without subsidy;

Third, however, the SHMA has shown that amongst the households which would be looking to access affordable rented housing there is a wide spread of incomes, including families who could afford to pay rents up to 80% of market rates but who cannot afford to house themselves in the market. These households commonly do not have access to council or housing association accommodation through traditional routes and there is a very limited stock of accommodation in the Borough available to this group. In this sense they are caught between their inability to access the market and the limited likelihood of accessing social rented housing;

Fourth, the Council is also aware that under the terms of the Housing and Planning Act the Government is intending to introduce its policy of “Pay to Stay,” from April 2017. This will mean that rents paid in social housing (for Housing Associations, on a voluntary basis) will vary according to the income of the tenant.

Balancing these factors together the Council will therefore promote affordable rented housing at a range of rents, from traditional social housing rents to rents that are within the reach of households on middle incomes. However, it would not normally wish to see new affordable rented housing provided at rents above the Local Housing Allowance levels which are accessible to people claiming Housing Benefit. This is currently between 70% and 75% of market levels for most sizes of property.

Delivery of New Homes

Performance in Recent Years

The task in delivering new homes on the scale envisaged by the SHMA is challenging. However, performance in recent years demonstrates that this may be achievable. In 2015/16, across all housing tenures, 789 new homes were completed, well in excess of the Local Plan target of 550. This followed a total of 507 in 2014/15. The great majority of delivery in these years was on large sites.

Projected Future Delivery

The Slough Housing Trajectory estimates the number of homes likely to be completed over the period to 2036. Over the next 5 years, to 2020/21, the availability of known large sites means that delivery is likely to average between 700 and 750 homes per year. In the 3 years beyond that the combination of known large sites and other “core options” shows the prospect of reaching the SHMA target of 927 homes per year, taking account of how long it may in reality take to build our strategic sites. In the years after that, i.e. from 2024/25 onwards, the scarcity of sites in Slough appears to make the prospect of meeting the SHMA target difficult or impossible within the boundaries of the Borough.

Support for Private Sector Delivery

The Council recognises that the majority of new homes provided in the Borough will be built by private sector developers. We will support the development process through the Planning service via the provision of timely advice about the preferred mix and tenure of homes on individual developments. This will include advice about the required contribution of affordable housing. Where appropriate, we will support private sector development through assistance with site assembly and through asset management, where Council interests in neighbouring or ancillary assets can be used to facilitate development. This will particularly be the case where active asset management can achieve wider regeneration benefits for Slough over and above the provision of new homes. Where possible, the Council will look to use its Subsidiary Housing Companies (see below) to support and encourage private sector development of new homes.

A Leading and Pro-Active Role for the Council

The Council has already recognised that in order to achieve the delivery of the new homes required for the people of Slough now and in the future, it will itself need to act as the leading player and catalyst for development. It will not be sufficient to rely on the private sector to deliver the homes required. It is already aggressively promoting and achieving the delivery of new homes through a variety of mechanisms.

It is a commitment of this Housing Strategy that the Council will directly facilitate the delivery of an average of 200 new homes per year during the life of this strategy and the Local Plan. This will be through a combination of direct delivery and provision by partners on behalf of the Council. These homes will be of a range of tenures but with the main emphasis on affordable housing.

Development on Council-Owned Land - General Fund Sites

The Council is already directly using surplus General Fund land for the provision of new homes;

- At Ledgers Road, the handover of 73 new homes has begun in the Autumn of 2016. 23 of these will be passed as affordable rented housing to the Council's Housing Revenue Account, while the remainder are for one market sale to local people;
- A further scheme of 103 homes at Wexham Nurseries will provide 33 homes for the HRA and 70 homes for sale to local people.

Council Land - Housing Revenue Account Sites

The Council intends to maximize the development potential on its own land held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.) A new Business Plan for the HRA was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2016.

A programme of 190 new council homes will be delivered in the years up to 2019/20 on existing identified sites, using a combination of retained Right to Buy receipts, S106 contributions and council funding;

The Council is looking for further sites, such as under-used garages to allow for an increase in the scale of the programme;

The Council is looking actively at the scope for wider estate renewal. This follows successful regeneration schemes at Common Road Langley and at Britwell. The overall aim would be to increase the amount and quality of residential accommodation, improve the overall quality of the environment and ensure there is an appropriate mix of house types and tenures. The next major scheme will be

at the Tower and Ashbourne House tower blocks, which are already being decanted prior to demolition, a total of 120 flats. An appraisal of the site is currently being carried out to determine the best mix for the future development while maximising the number of replacement units;

The new HRA Business Plan also commits the Council to undertake a fundamental Option Appraisal of its housing stock, for completion by December 2017. This will help determine the future of existing homes and estates over the next 15 to 20 years and look at how overall quality can be improved while maximizing the overall potential of HRA land;

It is estimated that over the 15 years from 2016 a net gain of approximately 1,000 housing units can be achieved on HRA land.

Joint Venture Delivery; Slough Urban Renewal

The Council is confident it can deliver its ambitious programme for the delivery of new homes. We have established Slough Urban Renewal (SUR), a joint venture with Morgan Sindall (MSIL) which has already proven successful in developing new homes for both sale and rent. The sites at Ledgers Road and Wexham are current examples. SUR is also delivering a range of community projects, including vitally-needed extensions to schools. The Council sees SUR as a key vehicle in enabling it to deliver new homes in the next few years, through a variety of means.

For example, it has been a long-term ambition of the Council to create a high-quality, mixed-use residential scheme at the end of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal. To date, the redevelopment of this area has been stalled due to an inability to assemble land required to meet the Planning objective of delivering a comprehensive scheme. In October 2016 the Council's Cabinet agreed to grant an option to SUR to redevelop Slough Basin in partnership with Waterside Places, the joint venture entered into by the Canal and Rivers Trust. This will provide some 240 new homes.

Site Assembly and Pro-Active Asset Management

Slough Basin is an example of where the Council has used its strategic role to promote the assembly of sites and actively used the leverage of its own assets to help deliver development and regeneration. The Council is working on this basis on other sites in the Borough and will continue to do so in order to deliver the development of the new homes required either directly, via SUR or by the private sector.

Strategic Acquisition

The Council has already developed the capacity for the strategic acquisition of sites. Given the land constraints already referenced in the Housing Trajectory it will actively look for opportunities for acquisition, either directly or via SUR, in order to assist in the delivery of sites identified in the local plan.. It will do so in particular to increase the delivery of affordable housing.

One Public Estate – Upton Hospital

Combined with our assertive asset management approach we have a shared ambition with our public sector partners to make efficient and productive use of our joint estates and to see land and property as an enabler for growth and service transformation. We will be pooling data on asset holdings and developing joint plans with our partners. One current example is at Upton Hospital, where there is the potential to release surplus land and buildings which can be reused for housing and new enterprise, boosting local jobs, growth and house building in the longer term. There is potential for up to 1,000 new homes on the site.

Horizon Scanning for Large Sites

We will co-ordinate the work of this Strategy with that on the emerging local plan to look to identify large sites which are suitable for the provision of significant numbers of homes in the medium and long term. One such example is the ICI site which potentially has the capacity for up to 2,000 new homes.

Subsidiary Housing Companies

The Council's Cabinet in June 2016 approved a proposal to establish two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies – Herschel Homes and Slough Homes. Two companies are required in order to allow for intervention in different areas of the market. The companies would be in the business of acquiring existing or newly-built homes. They would contribute to the provision of homes in a number of ways;

Providing a potential buyer for new developments, for example at sites such as Slough Basin or those to be developed by private developers;

Bringing empty properties back into use;

Using existing accommodation to provide more affordable housing;

Providing specialist accommodation for particular groups, for example care leavers or key workers.

Compulsory Purchase

Elsewhere in this Strategy we set out the Council's determination to pro-actively intervene to improve standards in the private rented sector. This will include the use of compulsory purchase powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty properties back into use. As an example, the Council's Cabinet in November 2016 will consider a proposal to issue CPOs on 7 long-term void properties in the Borough.

LAPP (Local Authority Partnership Purchase Scheme)

The Council has introduced the LAPP scheme, This is a modern shared ownership scheme to help local people buy a home in the borough. It is aimed at buyers who can afford mortgage repayments, but who cannot afford to buy a property outright, or who may not have the large deposit often required. The scheme is available on properties for sale up to the value of £400,000 and within the Slough postcode area. LAPP helps people to buy up to 70% share of a home by obtaining up to a 90% loan to value mortgage on their share. Slough Borough Council will buy the remaining 30% The buyer will then pay rent to the council for this share of the property. It is hoped that the scheme can eventually be expanded to help 100 Slough households into home-ownership.

Partnership with Housing Associations

The Council recognises that Housing Associations already make an important contribution towards Housing in the Borough and in particular the provision of social housing. 7% of households in Slough rent their homes from Registered Providers (Housing Associations.) We also recognize that Associations have the potential and the capacity to deliver new homes that the Borough requires, including affordable housing, but that this potential is not currently being fully exploited. We therefore intend to re-invigorate the partnership arrangements with local Housing Associations both to encourage the development of new affordable homes and to involve them more fully in programmes to improve the quality of life in the town.

Provision for special needs groups

The Council is committed to improving housing options for vulnerable groups ensuring availability within local communities particularly for young people, older people and people with disabilities as required and will be working with its various

health and other partners to develop new accommodation options where there is an identified need. It is a specific commitment of this Housing Strategy to facilitate the provision of more extra care units alongside the programme to maximise the delivery of new units.

The Local Plan and Land Constraints

This chapter has demonstrated that the Council has adopted a vigorous and interventionist approach in seeking the delivery of new homes to own and to rent. It accepts and will actively seek to meet the level of housing need set out in the SHMA to ensure that existing and future residents of Slough have access to good quality homes appropriate to their needs.. It will maximize the use of its own land and will actively acquire sites, either directly or through other vehicles, in order to increase the level and rate of completions. It will work positively through the planning process to encourage well designed developments that enhance the built environment. It will build partnerships with other agencies, including private developers, housing associations and other public sector bodies to assist delivery on other potential housing sites. It will use its strategic powers to assemble sites and build partnerships to allow development to be brought forward. Over the period of this Strategy there are sites and opportunities already identified which will deliver significant numbers of new homes.

In the medium and longer term, the pipeline of suitable housing sites may require further support to ensure that they come forward and in order to deliver the necessary housing. . It is anticipated that the review of the Local Plan currently underway will seek to address this issue. Considerations will include the question of whether it is feasible to meet all of the housing need up to 2036 within the borough boundaries or whether it will be necessary to pursue options for housing in other local authorities. The option for substantial housing to be located in South Buckinghamshire, possibly taking the form of a new “garden suburb” will require co-operation of the local authority and may also require considerable master planning input.

Action Plan

- Seek to enable the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the SHMA.
- The Council will directly deliver or facilitate a programme 200 units per year of new housing over the life of this Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.
- Maximize the provision of affordable housing on Council-owned land through infill development and estate renewal, including the net gain of 1,000 units on HRA land over the period 2016 to 2031.
- Prioritise available funds and council assets to provide for the delivery of affordable housing schemes in partnership with SUR and Housing Associations.
- Work with private and public sector partners to acquire and assemble sites to facilitate the delivery of new housing.
- Improve partnership arrangements with housing associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes
- Extend our programme of Council mortgage lending through our existing LAPP scheme.
- Produce a plan to improve housing opportunities for key workers.
- Provide new homes for particular groups within the community where required, for example those needing extra care or care leavers.
- Use our Subsidiary Housing Companies to assist in providing homes for

vulnerable groups within the community.

- Pro-actively use powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty homes back into use.

Theme 2 : Private Sector Housing

Ensuring that the private housing sector provides sufficient good quality market housing through support for landlords and tenants and, where necessary, robust quality control and regulation.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- One Slough household in four rents their home from a private landlord;
- Most landlords provide a good service standard of accommodation but a minority are rogue landlords who provide unsatisfactory and unhealthy accommodation.
- Nationally, bad housing conditions are most commonly found in the private rented sector. One third do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard.
- The Council is currently working to provide detailed information about the condition of private rented housing in Slough.
- The number of service requests from private rented housing, including complaints and requests for advice, rose from 683 in 2014/15 to 918 2015/16;
- It is estimated that there are approximately 3,500 Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Borough. The number will be clarified later in 2016 by BRE research.
- 64 HMOs are currently licensed under Mandatory Licensing and a further 42 HMOs under the Chalvey Additional Licensing Scheme.
- The Council's Housing Regulation Team is currently working on 11 long-term empty properties.

Objectives

The Council wants to ensure that Slough has good quality, affordable private sector housing which meets the needs of residents, improving health, well-being, and social mobility and makes Slough a thriving place to live and work. To achieve this we have the following objectives;

Improve the condition of private sector homes through assistance to tenants and landlords and through robust regulation where necessary;
Improve the standard of the management of private sector homes in the Borough;
Support residents to access affordable, well-managed private sector homes;
Increase the supply of private sector housing by bringing empty properties and abandoned commercial buildings back into residential use.
Support disabled and vulnerable home owners to live independently in safe, secure and warm homes.

Background

The great majority of residents in Slough live in privately-owned homes, both owner-occupied and privately-rented. Private housing is therefore a critical resource for the Borough, its residents and its economy. To a large degree the private sector satisfies the requirements of many residents to own their own homes or to occupy accommodation which is suitable for them at particular times in their lives.

As in most other parts of the country the proportion of Slough households living in privately-rented homes has been increasing. The latest information suggests that over 25% of households now rent their home from a private landlord, higher than the national figure of 17%. Most landlords provide good quality homes which are well-managed and cater for a wide range of income groups.

The Council itself has a range of partnership arrangements with private landlords, particularly where it is preventing families becoming homeless or placing residents in private rented accommodation as an alternative to expensive and unsuitable Bed & Breakfast hotels. Private sector homes are a vital resource when there is not enough permanent social housing available.

However, while most private sector homes provide a good standard of accommodation, there are also some severe problems;

Nationally, conditions in the private rented sector are worse than in other housing tenures. A third do not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard;

Many tenants in Slough are living in overcrowded conditions;

Research by Shelter nationally shows that over half of tenants had experienced at least one of the following problems over the previous 12 months; mould or damp; leaking roofs or windows; electrical hazards; pest infestations; a gas leak or inadequate heating. 10 % of tenants reported their health has been affected in the last year because their landlord has not dealt with repairs and poor conditions in their property and 9% of parents said their children's health has been affected. The Building Research Establishment has estimated that that poor housing is costing the NHS over £600m per year;

Poor housing conditions, particularly associated with the private rented sector, have an adverse effect on public health and well-being and exacerbate health inequalities.

The energy efficiency standard of a home and inadequate heating systems can lead to fuel poverty for low income households and further exacerbate the health effects of living in poor quality housing.

For a number of elderly, disabled or vulnerable residents, particularly owner-occupiers, they now need support or adaptations to their homes to allow them to continue to live independently

In a small minority of cases, landlords are deliberately keeping their properties empty. Empty homes are a wasted resource and can be a major source of nuisance to local residents. The Council is proactively working on 14 sites and 7 of these are at an advanced stage towards a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Regulation of HMOs

The Council has statutory responsibilities to ensure there are good standards of accommodation in the private sector and regulatory and enforcement powers available to assist in achieving this objective. The use of these powers of regulation will be extended following the announcement in October 2016 that Government will expand the mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs.)

Improving Data on Private Rented Housing

The Council is in the process of updating its information about private rented homes in the Borough using research carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE.) The main purposes of the research are to;

Obtain an up to date picture of private rented homes in the Borough;

Identify and highlight the extent of the main "Category 1" hazards found in homes in Slough. This is a hazard that presents a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety;

Identify where to target resources to achieve the greatest health outcomes, for example by relieving excessively cold homes, fuel poverty, dampness and overcrowding .

Dealing with Rogue Landlords

The Council will target rogue landlords who exploit vulnerable people by renting out unsafe, illegal and overcrowded structures. We will use stock modelling and other available intelligence to take robust action against rogue landlords persistently break the law. We will develop a pro-active programme of inspections of properties rented by rogue landlords and estate agents and use all our statutory powers to ensure they comply with their legal duties. The Council has set up a multi-agency taskforce help tackle this issue.

Landlord Registration

Many local authorities across the country have concluded that the best way to support tenants and good landlords and to improve the private rented sector would be the mandatory registration of rented properties. This would promote the letting of properties as a business, help the Council to develop a programmed and methodical approach to regulating the properties in the worst condition and drive out the rogue and criminal elements from the market. The Council will be investigating the feasibility of introducing borough-wide registration of all rented properties, This would mean that for a relatively small fee landlords register their properties with the Council. This would then give landlords access to expert advice and support on ensuring the best use of their investment.

Energy Efficiency

The private rented sector has the highest proportion of poorly-insulated, energy-inefficient buildings. The Energy Act 2011 contains powers such that from 2018 landlords should ensure their properties meet a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E or that they have installed the maximum package under the Green Deal. The Council will use the evidence from its BRE stock modelling to build a business case for bringing external investment to improve energy efficiency into the housing stock in the Borough, particularly the older private sector stock in the owners-occupied and private rented sectors.

Using the RMI

The start of the Council's new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment (RMI) contract in 2017 provides an opportunity for the Council to provide a package of support to private landlords and help them to provide a better standard of accommodation. This will also make it more attractive for the landlords concerned to offer their properties to the Council rather than to London Boroughs as has happened on a large scale over the last few years. In conjunction with the ambition to bring in external funding referred to above, the RMI can also help to tackle fuel poverty amongst older or vulnerable residents.

Action Plan

- Create two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies to act as exemplar private landlords in the borough and to assist homeless households and others on low or modest incomes to access affordable private sector homes.
- Undertake a feasibility study for introducing a borough-wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive our rogue or criminal landlords from Slough.
- Following the announcement of the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing we will implement the scheme once the commencement date has been announced.
- Undertake rigorous enforcement and prosecution against rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.
- Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.
- Use the new RMI contract to provide support and services to private landlords.
- Use all available powers to bring empty properties back into use.

- Work with our partner agencies to tackle the problem of illegally-occupied outbuildings.
- Create and operate a professional, ethical and effective social letting scheme to help good landlords as well residents who are being exploited by rogue landlords and agents.
- Work with utility companies and other agencies to insulate homes and improve the energy ratings of older buildings.
- Through partnership working, particularly with Adult Services, Public Health and the CCG, develop services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and reduce the impact of poor housing on the health of borough residents.
- Build a well-resourced and self-financing Private Sector Housing Service to support good landlords and carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities towards tenants and landlords.

Theme 3; Council Homes

Ensuring council homes *are managed and maintained to a high standard and the Council builds new homes for Slough residents.*

Evidence Base - Key Points

- The Council owns 7,100 tenanted and leasehold homes, managed through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Over the next 7 years there will be £100m investment programme in existing homes and £40m invested in building new council homes.
- The award of a new repairs and investment contract to start in 2017 will provide a focus for improved services to tenants.
- However, there are threats to the viability of the HRA, mainly brought about by Government policy. These are the mandatory reduction in rents for 4 years from 2016/17; a requirement to make a payment to the Government following the sale of “higher value” voids; and Pay to Stay which will mean tenants with a household income of over £31,000 paying a higher rent.

Objectives

The Council has a number of important objectives in planning the future of Council homes in the Borough;

- To place tenants and leaseholders at the centre of the development of services and planning for the future of council homes;
- To keep homes in good repair and to maximise the potential of council homes for the long-term benefit of the people of Slough;
- To take opportunities to provide additional affordable homes on council-owned land;
- To develop and provide high quality and responsive services for tenants and leaseholders

Background

The Significance of Council Housing

Slough Borough Council owns and manages 7,100 rented properties across the borough and is the freeholder for a further 1,700 leasehold homes to which it also provides services. This is the Council’s most valuable asset. Around x% of households in the borough rent their home from the Council. These homes are financed through a special account – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.)

A wide and diverse range of residents are accommodated in council homes across a range of income groups. However, council homes are a particularly important resource for households on low or modest incomes who cannot afford to house themselves in homes available on the private market. Its significance is increasing as house prices and private sector rents escalate. Demand for council homes is high and far outstrips supply. This explains the length of the Housing Register and the growing need to use temporary accommodation for homeless households.

The Council’s housing stock is a particularly vital resource for people who are vulnerable or disabled or elderly, who will not be able to find a home elsewhere. In an environment where market housing is increasingly unaffordable for many residents, council housing is also vital

for the economic future of the town in that it provides affordable accommodation for people who work in the borough.

For all of these reasons the Council's wants to retain and enhance its homes for the long-term benefit of Slough. At the same time, as this Strategy is being written, council housing in Slough, as elsewhere, is subject to fundamental external change and pressure. This means taking a long-term look at the future of this critical asset and maximising its contribution to the future of the town.

Residents at the Centre of Services

The Council wants to place residents – tenants and leaseholders – at the centre of its strategy for council homes. This means improving the responsiveness of the services provided and broadening the ways in which residents can become involved in monitoring and developing services. Central to this will be the use of digital technology to improve the delivery, quality, timeliness and value of services.

The centrepiece of the Council's drive to improve services to residents will be a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract which will begin in December 2017. This will cover both day to day repairs and planned maintenance and improvements and will allow for a long-term and more planned approach to maintaining and enhancing these important physical assets. A particular priority will be to shift the balance of works to property so that 70% is planned, cyclical maintenance and investment and only 30% is reactive routine repairs. The Council will also take the opportunity of this new contract to build local. In-house capacity to carry out maintenance work on public and private assets.

Responding to Change

At the time of writing this Strategy the Government is introducing a number of changes through the Housing and Planning Act and other legislation which will have a major impact on the future of council homes in the Borough. Chief amongst these are;

The Government has taken control of council rents and these will fall by 1% in each of the 4 years from 2016/17. While this benefits existing tenants it will have a major impact on the HRA, including money available for investment;

From April 2017 the Council will be forced to sell some its higher - value homes as they become empty and pass some of the proceeds to the Government;

Again from April 2017 tenants with household incomes over £31,000 will be required to pay more rent. Under this "Pay to Stay" policy, rents could rise towards market levels depending on the level of income;

The Government is changing the rules on new council tenancies and the granting of fixed-term as opposed to lifetime tenancies. This will not affect the position of existing tenancies.

These changes are being introduced at the same time as further measures to reform the benefit system, particularly the reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap and the further rollout of Universal Credit, both of which could significantly affect the finances of individual tenants and the HRA itself.

The combination of these measures means that the Council will need to look fundamentally again at access into council homes and how to ensure that homes are used to their greatest benefit. This will include a review of the existing Tenancy Strategy, the Scheme of Allocation and at the effectiveness of existing policies to encourage under-occupying households to move into smaller accommodation.

HRA Business Plan

In 2012, the Government of the day reached an agreement with Local Authorities which still owned their housing stock, aimed at providing long-term stability for the HRA. This “Self-Financing” regime included a settlement on outstanding debt and the transfer of risk to the Council. In return, the Council would be free to plan its housing finances for the long term.

The changes outlined above effectively set that agreement aside. A new 30 year Business Plan is being prepared and this will be subject to a further major review in 2017 when more will be known about the Government’s intentions and the Council will have comprehensive and up-to-date information about the condition of its homes.

Major changes are already in train. For example;

- The regeneration of Britwell has included the provision of around 300 new homes;
- The current development programme will provide a further 180 affordable Council homes over the next 3-4 years;
- The council has decided to redevelop the tower blocks at Tower House and Ashbourne House.

However, alongside residents, the Council now needs to take a fresh and long-term look at the future of the assets which are its council housing; the resources which will be available for keeping good-quality existing homes in good repair; and the need and scope for replacing homes which are outdated and worn-out with more and better homes which maximise the potential benefit for the residents of Slough.

Action Plan

- Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account in the Autumn of 2016.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council’s housing stock, for completion by January 2017.
- In the light of the results of the condition survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan in March 2017.
- In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and option appraisal of the Council’s housing stock for completion by December 2017.
- Complete the existing programme of 190 new homes on Housing-owned land and seek to continue the programme beyond 2020.
- Adopt the following priorities for improving the services to residents;
 - Awarding a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract for council homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of repair for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide maintenance services
 - Engaging and enabling residents so as to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services ;
 - Increasing resident satisfaction through greater responsiveness to customers and in particular through the greater use of digital technology.
- Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for council tenancies in the light of the Housing and Planning Act.
- Undertake a formal review of the scheme for the Allocation of social housing in Slough.
- Develop proposals for the more effective use of council homes by increasing the number of tenants choosing to downsize when their family circumstances change.
- Monitor “right to buy sales” and adjust the HRA business plan accordingly.

Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need

Reducing homelessness *and rough sleeping through effective prevention work.*

Evidence Base – Key points

- 2500 applicants on the Housing Register (people needing accommodation)
- The Council had a total of 2,373 homelessness approaches in 2015/16; of these 963 needed housing advice and 1,410 were on an emergency basis;
- The number of households accepted as homeless in Slough increased from 74 in 2013/14 to 241 in 2015/16, an increase of 225%.
- The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation increased from 156 at 31 March 2015 to 225 a year later. By September 2016 the total had exceeded 300 including some households in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- The market in Slough is experiencing increasing pressure from other Authorities, particularly London Boroughs, who are placing homeless households in Slough.
- The effect of Welfare Reform is to create more homelessness through the impact of the affordability of private sector accommodation.
- Rough sleeping is an issue and may be on the increase.

Objectives

The Council has a number of important objectives in addressing Homelessness in the Borough;

To prevent homelessness and minimize the need to place households in temporary accommodation;

To ensure there is a good advice and support network in Slough for both statutory and non-statutory households, including single homeless people;

To ensure there is a supply of affordable alternative accommodation available to assist in preventing homelessness;

Where it is necessary to use temporary accommodation, to ensure that it is suitable and of a decent standard;

To minimize the cost to the council tax payer of the use of temporary accommodation.

This chapter summarises the current position on homelessness in Slough. It sets out the causes of the pressure in the market and commits the Council to building a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy based homelessness prevention and wider partnership working.

Background

Pressure from the Market and from Benefit Changes

In Slough, those households on low or modest incomes who do not yet have access to social housing are mainly accommodated in the private rented sector. Households in this position have been under increasing pressure in the last few years.

This is due partly to the effect of the growth of population. However, it is also more directly due to increasing rents and to restrictions in the availability of benefits. Following the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which capped the

level of Housing Benefit available, the gap between the LHA and market rents has grown. As an example, the maximum Housing Benefit available for a 2 bedroom flat in Slough is £840 per month. The average market rent, in contrast is £1,100 per month. For some families, the Overall Benefit Cap, which restricts the total amount of benefit which can be received, acts as a further reduction on the help available with rent. The overall impact of this is to make it more difficult for households on low or modest incomes to find and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector.

One symptom of this is overcrowding and Slough already has the eleventh highest incidence of overcrowding of all local authorities in England. Private renting is also the least secure form of accommodation and we know that many thousands of our residents are renewing and recycling their private sector tenancies on short term six month agreements. As a result, many are becoming increasingly vulnerable to homelessness .

The Increase in Homelessness and Its Impact

The combined effect of these factors has been an increase in homelessness. Some of this hidden - for example the number of people who are "sofa-surfing " or withstanding overcrowded conditions in the private sector. However, some of it has emerged as stark upturns in applications and pressures on the local authority;

- In 2015/16 there were a total of 2,373 approaches to the Housing Service, of which 1,410 were on an emergency basis;
- The number of homeless households accepted as homeless in Slough increased from 74 in 2013/14 to 241 in 2015/6, an increase of 225%.
- As a consequence, the number of households placed in temporary accommodation also increased rapidly from 156 on 31 March 2015 to 225 a year later. The numbers continued to rise in 2016 and had topped 300 by September.

Unfortunately, some of these households have had to be accommodated in Bed & Breakfast hotels, a problem also facing most neighbouring councils, and particularly those in London. The Council has however, begin to buck the trend in recent months by succeeding reducing the number of B&B, from 46 in September 2015 to 21 a year later.

Many of these pressures are also being experienced by neighbouring areas, though the increase in Slough has been higher than the norm. However, one additional factor specific to Slough has reinforced the difficulty. That is the increasing tendency for households to move outwards from London into Slough and in many cases for homeless households to be placed in Slough by other councils. In the last 3 years, a total of 450 notifications have been made to the Council by authorities of households moved into the Borough. These have been made by 28 different councils, including 11 London Boroughs. It is believed by the Council's officers that this is a considerable underestimate and that the total number of placements is likely to be twice this level.

This is one more factor which serves to increase the difficulty for local households in the market. Competition from London Boroughs both makes it more difficult for Slough households to find accommodation in the market and more difficult for the Council to find housing for its homeless families.

The links between having a good, secure home and the overall quality of life are well-established. Equally, the relationship between homelessness and other forms of disadvantage are well known. Homeless people are more likely to have health problems, relating to both physical and mental health. Children within homeless families risk having their educational prospects severely damaged. Employment

prospects are affected by not having a permanent place to stay. These risks are amplified when families are forced to spend some time in unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation such as B&B. These linkages are highlighted in Slough's Wellbeing Strategy.

The movement of households from London, many of them placed by London Boroughs, has brought particular difficulties for local health and care services. Unfortunately, some of the households being placed in Slough are not being provided with sufficient support to allow them to settle properly to access local services, such as GPs, dentists or schools. The fact that in some cases the Council and other local services are not being notified of the placement is making matters worse. At worst, vulnerable people, for example those with mental health difficulties, are being placed in Slough without the support of the placing authority to allow them to find services and without local health and other services having access to records when the people concerned present themselves seeking services.

Although the Council's primary concern is improving the position on homelessness in the Borough in order to improve the life chances of the families concerned, there is a pressing financial reason to do so as well. Temporary accommodation, particularly B &B, is expensive for the council tax payer as well unsuitable for the families concerned. It is vital to protect the resources available for other services, such as Adults or Children's Social Care, by minimising homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.

Homelessness Pressure likely to Grow

Unfortunately, there are a number of reasons to believe that homelessness will continue to grow. The threat for Slough is that the levels of homelessness and usage of temporary accommodation seen in neighbouring London Boroughs will spread outwards to the Borough. All of the same pressures which led to this crisis in London are present in Slough.

The concern is that a number of factors will combine to increased levels of homelessness. These are;

- Continued population growth leading to overcrowding and further increases in house prices and rents;
- The 4 years freeze in welfare benefits, including Local Housing Allowance, announced by the Chancellor in the Budget for 2015;
- The reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap scheduled for late 2016;
- The further roll-out of Universal Credit to families and vulnerable groups and the associated risks of failure to claim, non-payment, rent arrears and debt.

The Council is developing a Strategy to mitigate these risks.

Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Slough is fortunate in having a network of voluntary agencies and support and advice services offering services to single homeless people and rough sleepers. In some cases their clients include those who do not come within the statutory obligations of the local authority to accommodate homeless people. Often, however, joint working between the voluntary sector and the council can bring the support which allows vulnerable client to access services.

The voluntary and statutory agencies working in this field meet regularly at the Slough Homelessness forum. A number of specific initiatives are coordinated through this group, including a Winter Nightshelter and the London and Slough Soup Run.

Although data are difficult to compile in this area, the general view of the voluntary sector is that Rough Sleeping in Slough is on the rise. Estimates vary between 30 and 60 people, with a significant proportion being of Polish origin. A new Rough Sleepers count is will take place in Autumn 2016.

The development of our Homelessness Prevention Strategy will fully involve our partners at the Slough Homelessness forum and our strategy will be scoped to include consideration of how we can help better coordinate services to Rough Sleepers and single homeless people. We will also carry out an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.

Our Local Response to Homelessness

The most effective way to deal with homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. Our focus will be on preventing homelessness now and in the future. We therefore intend to invite our partner agencies in the voluntary and statutory sectors to join us in developing a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy, changing and improving the way we collectively work with to prevent homelessness.

Working with Private Landlords

We understand that the private rented sector in Slough will continue to be the main housing option for many residents, but that it is very often problems arising with private sector tenancies which are the immediate trigger for homelessness. We therefore intend to develop a new strategic and positive working relationship with private sector landlords to improve affordability and preventing homelessness approaches to the council. We believe our current number of approaches can be stabilised if we can successfully work with private landlords to meet local needs of residents. We aim to allocate our resources to preventative approaches rather than providing unwanted Bed & Breakfast or Temporary Accommodation for homeless households. We aim to eliminate the use of B&B for families with children.

Subsidiary Housing Company

In addition to a fresh partnership with private landlords we intend to intervene directly in the market to provide a greater supply of affordable accommodation for homeless families or as a preventative alternative to homelessness. We will establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire existing housing for use for households threatened with homelessness. The new company will act as an exemplar private landlord and help promote good standards in the sector. Alongside the new Subsidiary Company the Council will put in place improved management arrangements to bring together landlords and tenants to make the most effective use of the accommodation available. We hope to increase the quality and choice of accommodation available to homeless and potentially homeless households.

Support for Households in Temporary Accommodation

We also understand the need for additional support for some of the homeless individuals and families who approach us and those who are temporarily housed or placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation. A key need is to enable households to develop the relevant skills for independent living or to take advantage of work opportunities to be able to sustain their tenancies longer term. At a management level we are looking to increase debt/money management advice and at closer working and mediation with landlords to prevent evictions.

Review of Allocations Policy

Although many homeless households will continue to be accommodated in the private sector, it is a key aim of this Strategy to increase the supply of permanent affordable housing. We intend to undertake a review of the Housing Allocation Policy, which governs which categories of household are allocated social housing. Amongst other matters this review will look at the priority which should be given to homeless households.

Placements in Slough by other Local Authorities

We have also recognised the vulnerability of households placed in Slough by other authorities and the urgent need to address their access to local services. We will work with our local partners, particularly in the Health sector to better co-ordinate the sharing of information about these individual and families and to insist upon better data sharing and cooperation by the "exporting " authorities.

Action Plan

- Develop and adopt a Preventing Homelessness strategy in collaboration with clients, landlords, the voluntary sector and other partner agencies.
- Develop new partnerships with private and third sector landlords to maximise opportunities for tenancies for homeless families and individuals.
- Establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire homes to alleviate the pressures on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast provision.
- End the use of Bed & Breakfast for families with children.
- Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme.
- Work with the Health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough by other Local Authorities and require those authorities to review their placement and notification policies.
- Undertake an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.

Theme 5 : Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable Groups

Ensuring that specialist accommodation is available for vulnerable people and those with special housing needs, for example, young people, older people and people, people with disabilities.

Evidence Base - Key Points

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) estimates that that the number of people over the age of 65 in Slough will increase by 40% in the next 10 years. The SHMA estimates that between 2013 and 2036 the number of people aged over 85 will increase by 120%.
- The JSNA also estimates that in 2012, 9,322 residents between the ages of 16 and 65 had a physical disability.
- The SHMA reports that the number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will increase by over 50% by 2036.
- The SHMA projects that between 2013 and 2036 there is a net additional requirement of 957 units of older persons accommodation, (including specialist housing), or 42 per annum, predominantly market housing.

Objectives

Our objectives in relation to people with special housing needs and vulnerabilities are to ensure that ;

- People with long term conditions are supported by suitable housing which is safe, warm and resource efficient allowing access to appropriate prevention services including adaptations to stay well and maintain their independence.
- People with mental health, learning or physical vulnerabilities, whether in childhood, adulthood, or in older age have choice of access to suitable or specialist accommodation, maintain their independence and report a better quality of life.
- Children leaving care have available to them a range of accommodation which is suitable to their needs;
- The best use is made of existing housing resources, for example the existing stock of social housing.

Background

The Need for Specialist Accommodation

There is already a range of accommodation and housing options for people who require specialist accommodation or who are vulnerable. This includes sheltered accommodation and a range of supported housing. However the available evidence suggests that more will be required over the life of this Strategy and beyond. This is closely to increasing life expectancy and the projections that there will be more older people in the future.

The Borough is fortunate in having two up to date assessments of requirements in this area – the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the SHMA. The JSNA estimates that that the number of people over the age of 65 in Slough will increase by 40% in the next 10 years. The SHMA estimates that between 2013 and 2036 the number of people aged over 85 will increase by 120%.

Amongst older people, they are disproportionately likely to own their homes outright or to live in social housing. There are also significant degrees of under- occupancy – that is, people occupying homes where they have at least 2 more rooms than they would normally require. Again, the SHMA suggests this is disproportionately the case for people owning their homes outright or living in social housing (the numbers of such households are 2,533 and 336 respectively.)

On disability, the JSNA estimates that in 2012, 9,322 residents between the ages of 16 and 65 had a physical disability. Looking forward, the SHMA projects that the number of people with long-term health problems or a disability will increase by over 50% by 2036. Again, people with a disability are more likely to be outright owners or to live in social housing.

In estimating the need for additional specialist accommodation the SHMA concentrates on the needs of older people with dementia or mobility problems. The table below, drawn from the SHMA, compares the estimated need for older person’s accommodation (including specialst housing), with the existing supply of sheltered and extra care housing. It concludes that an additional 987 units are required in the period up to 2036, or 42 per annum. Although 200 of these are in the affordable sector, the majority of the requirement is for market accommodation.

Need for Units of Older Person’s Accommodation 2013 – 2036 (SHMA, 2016)			
	Market	Affordable	Total
Overall Need	817	725	1,542
Existing Supply	60	525	585
Net Need	757	200	957

This analysis points to a number of long-term strategic issues in relation to housing for older people;

- How to deliver additional accommodation at a scale to meet projected demand over the next 20 years. This strategy already recognises the need for additional extra care housing but overall requirements stretch considerable beyond this;
- The need to find market options, particularly for older owner-occupiers who would wish to move from their existing accommodation;
- How to address the scale of under-occupation, in both the under-occupied and social sectors. This could involve providing better alternative options for people to move to and assistance in doing so. Reducing under-occupation would also help to release valuable housing resources.

These questions sit alongside those already being addressed by Adult Social Care and the Health services in seeking to allow older people to continue to live independently. This will be one of the key Housing issues for Slough over the next 20 years. It is therefore proposed that the agencies concerned come together to develop a long-term term strategy for older person’s housing in the Borough. This would include looking at the suitability and future use of the Council’s existing stock of sheltered accommodation.

Housing and Health

Adequate and appropriate housing is widely acknowledged to be a crucial underpinning of health and wellbeing. In general, poor housing and home conditions can be associated with both physical and mental effects on residents’ health. It is

associated with asthma, skin allergies and respiratory diseases and is linked to physical accidents and injuries. Poor housing can also lead to depression, isolation, anxiety or aggression. Noise related stress from poor sound insulation is associated with lack of sleep, mental stress and depression.

Through this Strategy we are therefore committed to a closer alignment of services provided by Housing, Health and Adult Social Care, aimed at early intervention and promotion to improve the quality of life; promoting independence and choice; reducing health inequalities by focusing on groups most affected by poor housing; and integrating services where this is appropriate.

Joint Working between Housing, Health and Adult Social Care

In addition to the strategic requirement for the alignment of work between Housing, Health and Adult Social Care, there are a number of more specific initiatives to be pursued during the life of this Strategy;

- There are 2 Extra Care Schemes already in Slough for residents over the age of 55 who have some care and support needs. However, more provision is required and the Housing and Adult Social Care services are working together to develop up to 3 additional extra care schemes on a mixed tenure basis including flats for sale. Extra Care Schemes will help residents to continue to live in self-contained accommodation which allows them to maintain their independence, dignity and personal choice. We will also look at other options for providing accommodation with care;
- Exploring further options for supporting people to live in their own homes, if appropriate with equipment and adaptations, potentially with a revised plan for the use of Disabled Facilities Grant;
- Slough already has a considerable resource for people with a disability in its stock of social housing which has already been adapted or is capable of being adapted. However, the monitoring of adaptations which have been carried out and the matching of vacancies to the requirements of individual residents needs to be improved;
- Within the direct new build programme on council land, the Council has made provision for new units for people with learning difficulties;
- Promoting measures to prevent illness such as improving energy efficiency and installing aids and adaptations to reduce the likelihood of accidents in the home. This will be pursued alongside the greater use of digital technology to enhance the delivery of person-centred care in the home;
- Ensuring timely housing advice is provided to all people with long-term mental health issues on admission to hospital and working towards a consistent approach to the assessment of priority for re-housing;
- A review of Housing Related Support services in the borough, which provide a range of supported accommodation to groups such as young homeless people or those with mental health problems;
- As noted above the development of a long-term strategy for older person's housing in the Borough.
- Supporting the needs of family carers in order to support their role as carers.

Joint Working with Children's Service and the Children's Trust – Care Leavers

It is a major priority of this Housing Strategy to enable children leaving care to access a range of suitable accommodation. The Housing service will work closely with the Children's Trust and Adult Social Care to help deliver effective pathways to support vulnerable children addressing both specific housing and care needs.

Joint protocols are already in place between the homeless team and the Children's Trust to ensure that Looked After Children (LAC) do not fall between gaps in services and receive an additional preference on the Housing Register. Many receive an offer of council housing as soon as they are legally able to sign a tenancy agreement at 18 years of age. However, we understand that taking on the full responsibilities of a secure tenancy may not be the best outcome for many care leavers and some may prefer shared accommodation with a degree of on-going support. The lack of this and other housing options has been raised by young people in the Ofsted Report. The Council is committed to exploring how this would work and putting such arrangements in place.

There are a number of issues to be taken forward in the joint work between the services;

- Working with the Trust and the young people themselves to understand in detail the range and types of accommodation that care leavers would prefer;
- Developing new models of accommodation and support, including shared accommodation, using the vehicle of the Council's new Subsidiary Housing Company (see below);
- As part of the review Housing Related Support services reviewing the current range of supported accommodation available to care leavers;
- Ensuring the existing protocols and pathway into social housing is working effectively.

Review of the Scheme of Allocation

As outlined elsewhere in this Strategy will Council will be reviewing its Scheme of Allocation, which governs the flow of residents in social housing in the Borough and the priority to be given to different groups. This review will include in particular the priority afforded to care leavers and to people with a disability and who are unlikely to be able to work.

Subsidiary Housing Company

The Council intends to set up 2 wholly-owned subsidiary housing companies to acquire existing or newly-built properties. One of these companies will target its activity at securing accommodation for specific groups within the community, primarily households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The intention is also to use this vehicle to look to secure accommodation tailored to the needs of particular groups and which may not be available through existing mainstream housing provision. This will entail joint working between Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's services and the Children's Trust to identify the model of provision required and the support necessary to the occupiers and to build a sustainable business plan for each project. The potential for this model will need to be explored as the new company grows but the intention is to start with modelling and if possible implementing new forms of accommodation for groups of care leavers.

Staff Trained to Safeguard Vulnerable People

All front line Housing staff are trained in safeguarding protocols for children and adults. The Council is working with partner agencies to identify specific roles that housing staff can play in safeguarding in the borough.

Action Plan

- Build on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health and

disability housing needs and undertake further detailed work with partners and stakeholders to examine what housing options are required to best meet current and future demand and changing needs.

- Through our new Subsidiary Housing Company, develop new partnerships with the Children's Trust, Health and Adult Social Care to maximise opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost effectively.
- In collaboration with the Children's Trust, ensure there is an adequate supply of accommodation for care leavers.
- Undertake a review of Housing- Related Support services in the borough.
- Deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough during the life of this strategy where there is established local need.
- Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Slough.
- Within the review of the Scheme of Allocation, ensure full account is taken of the needs of people with a disability.
- Improve the recording and matching of adapted properties to ensure the best use of existing council stock.

Implementation of the Strategy

Actions already in hand/underway

This section is to be completed closer to Strategy Release day to capture what has already been delivered this year and projects commenced.

Implementation and monitoring

The high level outcomes of the Housing Strategy can be monitored through the mechanisms of the 5 Year Plan under Outcome 2 and the Overarching Wellbeing Strategy.

The Strategy will be monitored by members through reports to Cabinet and progress scrutinised by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Action Plans and outcomes can be monitored through existing mechanisms such as the Tenants Panel or the homelessness forum. The Council will consider whether to hold an annual conference to assess progress against the Strategy.

Links with Other Strategies

Slough's Wellbeing Strategy

The council intends to take the unique opportunity that housing offers to engage, change and improve the way housing works within the delivery of better health outcomes for the borough in partnership with Public Health.

We recognise that as well as building new and "healthy homes" there needs to be a clear "read across" to any changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme.

We intend to create more inclusive processes to engage health and social care professions alongside residents in delivering better housing, health, education, and work outcomes for homeless and vulnerable people with housing needs.

Links to the council's Five Year Plan

We are specifically aiming to deliver Outcome 2 of the council's overarching Five Year Plan: "There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough"

However, there are strong links with several other outcomes, particularly;

Outcome 1; Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay.

Outcome 5: Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient, and have positive life chances.

Outcome 6: More people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs.

Outcome 7: The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximized.

Links with other relevant strategies and plans

- **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy-2013-2016**
- **Learning Disability Plan 2016-2019**
- **Community Safety plans**

- **Children and Young People's Plan-2015-2016**
- **Centre of Slough Strategy-2015 onwards**
- **Sustainable Community Strategy -2007-2027**
- **Economic Development Plan for Growth 2014-2018**
- **Asset Management Plan-2014-2017**
- **Get Active Leisure Strategy**
- **Climate Change Strategy -2011-2014**

Action Plan				
Action	Who	Target Date	Progress	RAG
Theme 1: New Housing Supply				
Seek to enable the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the SHMA.				
The Council will directly deliver or facilitate a programme 200 units per year of new housing over the life of this Strategy and beyond, including affordable housing.				
Maximize the provision of affordable housing on Council-owned land through infill development and estate renewal, including the net gain of 1,000 units on HRA land over the period 2016 to 2031.				
Prioritise available funds and council assets to provide for the delivery of affordable housing schemes in partnership with SUR and Housing Associations.				
Work with private and public sector partners to acquire and assemble sites to facilitate the delivery of new housing.				
Improve partnership arrangements with housing associations to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes				
Extend our programme of Council mortgage lending through our existing LAPP scheme.				
Produce a plan to improve housing opportunities for key workers.				
Provide new homes for particular groups within the community where required, for example those needing extra care or care leavers.				
Use our Subsidiary Housing Companies to assist in providing homes for vulnerable groups within the community.				
Pro-actively use powers to increase the supply of homes by bringing long-term empty homes back into use.				
Theme 2: Private Sector Housing				
Create two wholly-owned Subsidiary Housing Companies to act as exemplar private landlords in the borough and to assist homeless households and others on low or modest incomes to access affordable private sector homes.				
Undertake a feasibility study for				

introducing a borough-wide Landlord Registration Scheme. This is to protect good landlords and drive our rogue or criminal landlords from Slough.				
Following the announcement of the expansion of mandatory HMO licensing we will implement the scheme once the commencement date has been announced.				
Undertake rigorous enforcement and prosecution against rogue landlords who have a history of breaking the law.				
Support responsible landlords and work with them to become professional and grow their business.				
Use the new RMI contract to provide support and services to private landlords.				
Use all available powers to bring empty properties back into use. Work with our partner agencies to tackle the problem of illegally-occupied outbuildings.				
Create and operate a professional, ethical and effective social letting scheme to help good landlords as well residents who are being exploited by rogue landlords and agents.				
Work with utility companies and other agencies to insulate homes and improve the energy ratings of older buildings.				
Through partnership working, particularly with Adult Services, Public Health and the CCG, develop services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and reduce the impact of poor housing on the health of borough residents.				
Build a well-resourced and self-financing Private Sector Housing Service to support good landlords and carry out the Council's statutory responsibilities towards tenants and landlords.				
Theme 3: Council Homes				
Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account in the Autumn of 2016.				
Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council's housing stock, for completion by January 2017.				
In the light of the results of the				

condition survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing and Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan in March 2017.				
In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and option appraisal of the Council's housing stock for completion by December 2017.				
Complete the existing programme of 190 new homes on Housing-owned land and seek to continue the programme beyond 2020.				
Adopt the following priorities for improving the services to residents; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding a new Repairs, Maintenance and Investment contract for council homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of repair for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide maintenance services • Engaging and enabling residents so as to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services ; • Increasing resident satisfaction through greater responsiveness to customers and in particular through the greater use of digital technology. 				
Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for council tenancies in the light of the Housing and Planning Act.				
Undertake a formal review of the scheme for the Allocation of social housing in Slough.				
Develop proposals for the more effective use of council homes by increasing the number of tenants choosing to downsize when their family circumstances change.				
Monitor "right to buy sales" and adjust the HRA business plan accordingly.				
Theme 4: Homelessness and Housing Need				
Develop and adopt a Preventing Homelessness strategy in collaboration with clients, landlords,				

the voluntary sector and other partner agencies.				
Develop new partnerships with private and third sector landlords to maximise opportunities for tenancies for homeless families and individuals.				
Establish a Subsidiary Housing Company to acquire homes to alleviate the pressures on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast provision.				
End the use of Bed & Breakfast for families with children.				
Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme.				
Work with the Health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless people placed in Slough by other Local Authorities and require those authorities to review their placement and notification policies.				
Undertake an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.				
Theme 5: Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable People				
Build on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on health and disability housing needs and undertake further detailed work with partners and stakeholders to examine what housing options are required to best meet current and future demand and changing needs.				
Through our new Subsidiary Housing Company, develop new partnerships with the Children's Trust, Health and Adult Social Care to maximise opportunities for specialist and alternative accommodation to be delivered locally and more cost effectively.				
In collaboration with the Children's Trust, ensure there is an adequate supply of accommodation for care leavers.				
Undertake a review of Housing-Related Support services in the borough.				
Deliver up to 3 new mixed use extra care schemes in the borough during the life of this strategy where there is				

established local need.				
Develop an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Slough.				
Within the review of the Scheme of Allocation, ensure full account is taken of the needs of people with a disability.				
Improve the recording and matching of adapted properties to ensure the best use of existing council stock.				