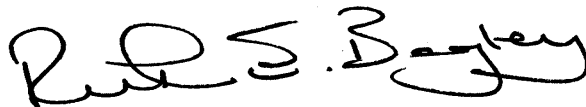


Date of issue: Friday, 20 March 2015

MEETING:	NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL (Councillors Plenty (Chair), Chahal, N Holledge, Malik, Mansoor, Shah, Sidhu, Sohal and Wright)
DATE AND TIME:	MONDAY, 30TH MARCH, 2015 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	MEETING ROOM 3, CHALVEY COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE GREEN, CHALVEY, SLOUGH, SL1 2SP
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	DAVE GORDON 01753 875411

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



RUTH BAGLEY
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
APOLOGIES			
1.	Declarations of Interest		
	<i>All Members who believe they have a disclosable pecuniary or other pecuniary or non pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that Interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 3 paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 3.28 of the Code.</i>		
	<i>Members are asked to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest.</i>		
	<i>All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.</i>		
CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS			
2.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 26th February 2015	1 - 6	
3.	Member Questions		
	<i>An opportunity for Panel Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated.</i>		
SCRUTINY ISSUES			
4.	Garage management	7 - 16	
5.	Review of allocation scheme 2013 – 18	17 - 54	

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 6. | A4 Brands Hill | 55 - 70 |
| 7. | Sub-letting fraud amnesty - to follow | |
| 8. | Forward work programme | 71 - 74 |
| 9. | Attendance record | 75 - 76 |
| 10. | Date of Next Meeting - 29th June 2015 | |

This meeting is the final meeting of the Municipal Year 2014 – 15.

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

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Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 26th February, 2015.

Present:- Councillors Plenty (Chair), N Holledge, Malik, Shah, Sidhu, Sohal and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Mansoor

PART 1

48. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were given.

49. Minutes of the last meeting held on 7th January 2015

Subject to Cllr Mansoor's declarations of interest being amended to state that they applied to Cllr Shah, the minutes of the meeting on 7th January 2015 were approved as a correct record.

50. Member Questions

No questions were submitted prior to the meeting.

51. The work of the Safer Slough Partnership

The report highlighted the current priorities of the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) and the impact of its work. The SSP had been established given the Crime and Disorder Act 1998's requirement for community safety partnerships and emphasised information sharing and partnership working. The SSP operated as a Priority Delivery Group (PDG) with the express intent of reducing both crime and the fear of crime.

For 2014 – 15, the priorities had been established as violent crime (with specific reference to domestic abuse), acquisitive crime (burglary) and anti-social behaviour (ASB). These priorities had been decided on the basis of an annual review; the next such review would be completed at the end of March 2015 and set priorities for 2015 – 16. In the year 2014 – 15, the overall level of reported crime had decreased by 7% although violent crime had risen. However, the rise in violent crime had not been as great as it had been in comparable authorities, and the overall fall in crime from 2003 – 2014 had been 40%. This meant that Slough now had lower crime rates than Reading and Oxford, and had also recently passed Milton Keynes. The work of the SSP was co-ordinated with the Police and Crime Commissioner, with programmes and funding agreed and joint working groups established. Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the SSP would then share resources and best practice in resolving local issues, with regular meetings held to collate the latest intelligence. Community protection work had been recognised by awards, with the emphasis placed on empowering communities to have

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 26.02.15

control of crime reduction work where appropriate. However, questions over the future funding of the SSP remained.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- The statistics contained in the report are based on police figures which have been verified. However, they do not currently include any reference to the British Crime Survey. The Survey data could be compared to the SSP's statistics, although TVP were unsure as to how much the Survey data could be broken down into geographical areas. TVP did investigate any issues as to why local residents may or may not be reporting crimes.
- Oxford and Reading had been chosen as other urban areas in TVP's area. In particular, Reading also had a similar demographic which made it very comparable for other reasons.
- The careline had taken 63,000 calls from Slough residents. This was a high figure, although did include multiple calls and any accidental calls which had been made to the service. Most of those who called were elderly; however, members did request a breakdown of these calls.

(At this point, Cllr Shah attended the meeting)

- Domestic violence had risen by 9% which could be broken down on ward lines. The 2014 SSP review had examined this data as would the 2015 review. The findings of this would be fed into the working group.
- The Violence Multi-Agency Panel (VMAP) was now at the pilot stage. The final report on the pilot would be produced in July 2015.
- Domestic violence was spread across all ethnicities in a manner which did not suggest a particular issue with one demographic. In terms of tackling the overall problem, a new strategy was being developed and would be out to consultation in March 2015.
- Violent crime also featured issues regarding youths operating in groups. Work with schools was being undertaken on this matter.
- The most successful local initiatives often involved Task and Finish Groups. Other improvements had been seen in local alcohol action areas and the initial stages of the VMAP project.
- Local residents had voiced concerns that calls to the 101 non-emergency service were not followed up, which was discouraging reporting. TVP would feed this information back, as all reports should receive a call back. It was intended for the future system to allow for cases to be tracked online.

Resolved:

- 1) That members receive a breakdown of the calls received by the careline service.
- 2) That the Panel receive a report on domestic abuse statistics and the VMAP pilot in September 2015.

52. Slough Borough Council support for Neighbourhood Action Groups

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 26.02.15

The report followed up from the information discussed by the Panel at its meeting on 4th September 2014. It contained feedback from the chairs of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) and ideas for future operations within the limited resources available, and examined this in the wider context of the Five Year Plan (FYP) and the review of policing.

The FYP emphasises community leadership and the empowerment of local residents, and an event was held on 10th February 2015 involving NAG chairs, forum chairs and Slough Councillors to discuss these themes. In particular, working patterns and community engagement; those present noted the energising effect of the presence of officers from TVP and Slough Borough Council (SBC).

The role of Councillors as community leaders could be used (in conjunction with TVP and SBC officers) to provide vital support to NAGs. This was particularly important in the context of reduced resources and the need to use them intelligently.

The Panel made the following points in discussion:

- The balance of wards which did or did not have NAGs remained unchanged since the September 2014 report. NAGs were supported by TVP whilst they were being established.

(Cllrs Malik and Sohal left the meeting at this point).

- NAGs were not necessarily the only solution to community engagement. In situations where an existing group served a similar role and was providing a good service they would continue.
- Some NAGs had started well but then faded. It was intended to restart these groups and ensure that they responded to local needs to ensure their continued momentum.
- It was vital to have a single point of contact at SBC, which would simplify matters for residents and also increase confidence that a response would be made to any queries. A dedicated telephone number and email address would be established and circulated.
- Councillors were looking to become more engaged in these efforts and would anticipate future involvement as NAGs developed.
- Local residents tended to engage with NAGs and similar groups when they had a particular issue. Communications outside of NAG meetings (e.g. SBC and TVP websites, social media) may help ensure that momentum is kept up.

(Cllr Sidhu left the meeting at this point).

- There was a community support fund; NAGs could submit applications to this for financing.

Resolved:

- That a members' Task & Finish Group is established to:

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 26.02.15

- a) Engage with existing NAGs and community groups and assess the need for specific support on a ward by ward basis. Including sustainability of groups, options for merging groups, extending or restarting groups and whether an area is best served by a NAG or other type of community group;
- b) Assess and promote the role of NAGS and other groups in increasing community engagement, helping to delivery the council's 5YP outcomes as part of the council's and members community leadership role and the council's reducing resources;
- c) That more research into how other local authorities support NAGs and in particular examples of good practice in development of Communications strategies, support packages and whether a single point of contact for NAG and other group chairs is feasible in Slough. Together with consideration of other partnership agency reviews, i.e. TVP neighbourhood Policing; and
- d) Propose next steps and agree future expectations and performance.

53. Prostitution update

Reports on prostitution had been produced by SBC since 2011 for the Panel. In that time the situation had changed, with greater partnership working taking place. Originally the problems had been in residential areas, with these hot spots now seeing reduced levels of activity whilst the Farnham Road business area now saw higher levels of prostitution. Action on the issue took place across TVP's area, with partnership action planning and meetings of the Sex Workers' Action Group (SWAG) helping to bolster efforts to resolve the issue.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- Complaints had decreased, although the movement of street activity to a less residential area could have contributed to this. However, there was evidence that some sex workers had left the area (either to return to their places of origin or to continue working in London). In addition SBC had worked on ending problematic tenancies and brothels.
- On Farnham Road, groups for workers were being organised, and TVP officers were undertaking overt and covert work.
- CCTV was being used to address the issue of kerb crawling. However, prosecutions were not the only concern for officers, with the safety and health of the workers also being tackled. Where possible, workers were also being redirected towards alternative employment.
- Kerb crawlers received letters once they had been detected soliciting. This often lead to them desisting in future, and also given the move from street work amongst sex workers this meant that very few of these cases subsequently lead to court appearances.
- Only 7 of the 15 brothels mentioned in the report were closed. Contributing factors in this included issues regarding landlords or problems with confirming the nature of the establishment with sufficient certainty to be in a position to prosecute.

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- Romanian workers were in a vulnerable position; they were being monitored given this. Photos were taken to avoid any difficulties tracking progress should false names be given in future, whilst there was also a check on their wellbeing undertaken by nurses in the outreach team.
- Public notices had been used to try and prevent street soliciting; however, its effectiveness had proved limited. It had been found that information from TVP had proved more effective in dissuading activity.

Resolved: that the Panel would take future updates on prostitution only should significant concerns arise.

54. Forward work programme**Resolved:**

- 1) That an item on the amnesty for fraud cases be added to the work programme.
- 2) That an item on the safety audit recommendations for the A4 Brands Hill road works be added to the work programme.
- 3) That an item regarding the contract with SSE electricity and delays in engineering work be added to the work programme.
- 4) That clarification be sought regarding a request for private landlords to be added to the work programme.

55. Attendance record

The attendance record was noted.

56. Date of Next Meeting - 30th March 2015

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.01 pm)

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 30th March 2015

CONTACT OFFICER: Trevor Costello – Estate Services Manager

CONTACT NUMBER: (01753) 875448

WARD(S) All

PORTFOLIOS**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES – GARAGE MANAGEMENT****1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To provide further information as requested by the Panel in relation to management of the council's garage stock.

2 Recommendations proposed/action

- 2.1 The Panel is requested to note the information contained within the report.

3 Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 This report contributes towards the delivery of the 2014/15 Service Plan for Neighbourhood Services.

This Service Plan relates to Slough Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2014/15 and the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 which includes the following objectives:

Objective 2: *'Seek opportunities and implement initiatives to optimise revenue through new income streams, partnership working and achieve natural efficiencies through streamlining the delivery of services.'*

Objective 4: *'Implement creative management to improve quality of service to create and maintain attractive neighbourhoods that customers are proud to live in.'*

And connects to the following Corporate priorities:

Corporate Plan

- Improve the customer experience
- Deliver high quality services that meet local needs
- Develop new ways of working
- Achieve value for money

Sustainable Communities Strategy

- Economy and Skills

- Housing
- Regeneration and the Environment

Other implications

3.2 (a) Financial (Compulsory section to be included in all reports)

A separate strategic review of garage management is underway and will implement processes aimed at reducing the number of unused spaces and therefore reduce lost income; address sites of low demand; scoping potential redevelopment where there is minimal likelihood of increasing interest/lettings; and prioritising investment in the garage stock to sustain those sites with long term letting potential.

The development of a Garage Strategy from 2015/16 will contain financial information covering:

- the cost of ensuring existing sites remain fit for purpose and are safe and secure;
- the process for carrying out health-check reviews, leading to redevelopment of outdated, unpopular or unsatisfactory garage sites that could help deliver other outcomes in relation to the provision of safer estates or new social housing;

3.3 (b) Risk Management

Risk and Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out when forming proposals for alterations to service.

In relation to the review itself, the following initial risks have been considered:

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	Undertake a review of the parking facilities licence agreement to ensure it is fit for purpose.	<p>Completed – October 2014 A review of the licence agreement used for parking facilities has ensured that the council is equipped with the necessary tools to manage parking facilities effectively.</p> <p>Proposal – April 2015 To terminate and reissue all parking facility licence agreements to harmonise various agreement types and ensure they are all covered by the same terms and conditions.</p>
Property	<p>Undertaking an inspection of all garage sites to rate their condition, facilities and overall suitability.</p> <p>To develop a rating process through which identified sites will be reviewed, prioritised for attention.</p>	<p>In progress – January 2015 An opportunity to create a stock condition database of existing garage sites.</p> <p>Enable the review of garage sites against a number of 'health-check' indicators leading to a borough-wide analysis of all parking facility</p>

		locations and their long term sustainability.
Human Rights	None	None
Health & Safety	Using the site inspections to identify areas of risk or concern for immediate attention.	To reduce the risk of any accident, injury or claim against the council in relation to defective stock and ensure obligations under the Defective Premises and Occupiers Liability Act are managed.
Employment issues	None	None
Equalities issues	None	None
Community Support	None	None
Communications	None	None
Community Safety	None at this stage	None
Financial	None at this stage	
Timetable for delivery		
Project capacity	Within existing staffing resources.	None.
Other	None	None

3.4 (c) Human Rights and other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or other legal implications in connection with this report.

3.5 (e) Equalities Impact Assessment (*compulsory section to be included in all reports*)

There are no significant changes to policy or service provision at this stage that requires the completion of EIAs.

3.6 (f) Workforce

There are no workforce implications as the current Garage Officer role has been adopted into the new Estate Services Monitoring Officer role – a post created within the ongoing restructure of Neighbourhood Services.

4 **Previous Scrutiny and review**

4.1 In July 2014, the Panel was provided with answers to questions raised regarding the current approach to garages and efforts being taken to address lettability.

4.2 Panel requested further detailed information in the form of a report for consideration. The questions raised by the Panel are as follows:

1. What is the current garage strategy?
2. Where are there the most vacancies?
3. How many are earmarked for possible demolition for housing?
4. How many are earmarked for possible rebuilding to a larger size?
5. Where are there insufficient garages to meet demand? Can this be identified by street?
6. What pro-active repairs/inspections are carried out?
7. What is the policy of lighting within garage areas? Are unlit garages harder to let?

8. What percentage of retained garages are properly lit?
9. What is the schedule for providing additional lighting?
10. Who is responsible for repairs to garage lighting?

5. Responses to questions raised

Responses to questions 2 to 10 can be given in factual answers as follows:

5.1 Question 2 – Where are there the most vacancies?

The table below shows a breakdown of the current parking facilities (garages, garage bases and car ports) in debit on the Capita Housing system and their current occupancy status –

Ward	Property Type						Total	% Occupancy	
	Garage		Car Port		Garage Base			Let	Void
	Let	Void	Let	Void	Let	Void			
Baylis	13	11	0	0	0	2	26	50.0	50.0
Britwell	140	312	0	0	0	0	452	31.0	69.0
Central	17	50	0	0	0	0	67	25.4	74.6
Chalvey	88	124	35	5	2	0	254	49.2	50.8
Cippenham Green	24	27	0	0	16	18	85	47.1	52.9
Cippenham Meadow	12	12	0	0	16	12	52	53.8	46.2
Elliman	41	75	0	0	0	0	116	35.3	64.7
Farnham	4	20	0	0	0	0	24	16.7	83.3
Foxborough	73	94	0	0	0	3	170	42.9	57.1
Haymill	118	238	0	0	1	20	377	31.6	68.4
Kederminster	169	256	0	0	14	15	454	40.3	59.7
Langley	88	112	0	0	0	0	200	44.0	56.0
Upton	11	12	0	0	0	0	23	47.8	52.2
Wexham	49	94	0	0	30	97	270	29.3	70.7
Total	847	1437	35	5	79	167	2570	37.4	62.6

Breakdown of void levels (highest first) – Garages by Ward:

Ward	Garage		Total	% Occupancy	
	Let	Void		Let	Void
Farnham	4	20	24	16.7	83.3
Central	17	50	67	25.4	74.6
Britwell	140	312	452	31.0	69.0
Haymill	118	238	356	33.1	66.9
Wexham	49	94	143	34.3	65.7
Elliman	41	75	116	35.3	64.7
Kederminster	169	256	425	39.8	60.2
Chalvey	88	124	212	41.5	58.5
Foxborough	73	94	167	43.7	56.3
Langley	88	112	200	44.0	56.0
Cippenham Green	24	27	51	47.1	52.9
Upton	11	12	23	47.8	52.2
Cippenham Meadows	12	12	24	50.0	50.0
Baylis	13	11	24	54.2	45.8
Total	847	1437	2284	37.1	62.9

The areas of particular concern as shown by the above breakdown are the wards of:

- Britwell 69.0%
- Haymill 66.9%
- Wexham 65.7%
- Elliman 64.7%
- Kederminster 60.2%
- Chalvey 58.5%
- Foxborough 56.3%
- Langley 56.0%

Breakdown of void levels (highest first) – Garage Bases by Ward:

Ward	Garage Base		Total	% Occupancy	
	Let	Void		Let	Void
Baylis	0	2	2	0.0	100.0
Foxborough	0	3	3	0.0	100.0
Haymill	1	20	21	4.8	95.2
Wexham	30	97	127	23.6	76.4
Cippenham Green	16	18	34	47.1	52.9
Kederminster	14	15	29	48.3	51.7
Cippenham Meadows	16	12	28	57.1	42.9
Britwell	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Central	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Chalvey	2	0	2	100.0	0.0
Elliman	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Farnham	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Langley	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Upton	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	79	167	246	32.1	67.9

5.3 Question 3 - how many are earmarked for possible demolition for housing?

9 out of 28 sites have been considered for potential to develop new social housing. Of these sites, none have progressed to on site stage, but are in progress towards obtaining scheme approval.

5.4 Question 4 – how many are earmarked for possible rebuilding to a larger size?

7 out of 28 sites are being considered for redevelopment/reinvestment. With all these sites, consultation will determine whether larger sized garages is a priority for residents and will be a default consideration when considering scheme option appraisals.

5.5 Question 6 – what proactive repairs/inspections are carried out?

Estate inspections

Currently, garage areas are included in the estate inspection process, which are carried out on a timetabled basis by Neighbourhood Housing Officers.

Any visible repairs affecting the safety or aesthetic of the garage site are reported to Interserve and are typically carried out within a 5 week priority timescale unless

urgent.

The types of works raised from these inspections include:

- Removal of fly-tipping
- Removal of abandoned vehicles
- Securing of doors to void garages
- Replacement of damaged doors affecting security

It is not currently possible to detail the number of jobs raised as a result of these inspections as they are not recorded centrally; however, the estate inspection process is being reviewed so that work and/or management actions following an estate inspection are recorded so that this level of reporting information can be collated.

Caretaker attendance

Some garage sites within the borough are included within the Caretaking service attendance schedules.

The sites that are included have typically been added because of the following factors:

- History of rubbish accumulation/fly-tipping requiring regular weekly inspections and attention
- Their proximity to dwellings and the visual impact of rubbish accumulation and or damage to an estate or block
- Concentrated neighbourhood enforcement activity as identified by Neighbourhood Action Group/Area Panel requests.

Garage officer inspections

The former Garage Officer undertook visual inspections during the lettings process and identified any repairs or estate work noted during an offer visit.

Additionally, the Garage Officer and Neighbourhood Housing Officer would respond to concerns raised by garage tenants and would liaise with the neighbourhood housing and enforcement teams in addressing those issues of concern.

5.6 Question 7 – What is the policy on lighting for garage areas? Are unlit garages harder to let?

There is no current clear policy on lighting for garage areas. The garage stock has been developed over many years and consequently most garages sites do not have lighting.

A large number of garage sites sit on pockets of housing land surrounded by houses and flats. Traditionally, these sites were not provided with an additional supply for power or were in close proximity to communal power supplies to enable lighting to be provided. The garage strategy and redevelopment process will include assessments on the need for lighting including when and how it is provided.

Anecdotally, demand for garage sites is affected by a number of factors, one of which is lack of lighting. Reasons for refusal of all garage offers has not historically been collated; therefore it is not possible to evidence the numbers of offers refused because of lighting by each garage location.

The current approach to existing garages is that it is maintained where it is provided, but no new lighting installations will be made outside of a sustainability review of each garage site.

5.7 Question 8 – what percentage of retained garages are properly lit?

This information is in progress of being collated through a detailed revisit of all site inspections due for completion in January 2015.

5.8 Question 9 – what is the schedule for providing additional lighting?

As with question 8, the revisiting of garage inspections will impact on the future prioritisation of garage redevelopment works in accordance with the planned review of the garage strategy.

5.9 Question 10 – Who is responsible for repairs to garage lighting?

The Council is predominantly the responsible party for repairs to garage lighting. This is because garage sites/compounds are not adopted by Highways and therefore remain the responsibility of the Council.

Confusion in this area has been caused by the fact that SSE has on occasions been the specialist contractor chosen to repair lighting columns. This is because of their experience in managing/repairing public street lighting and these are not resources that Interserve can provide with their own staff.

There have been incidents of delayed repairs to garage lighting because of the low priority attributed by SSE to such repair requests.

Additionally, as older lighting columns become obsolete and availability of parts reduces, the cost of replacing lighting columns becomes prohibitive and has to be considered in the wider context of whether that repair investment can be justified for sites subject to low demand and possible redevelopment.

5.10 In response to additional Member questions, the Council acknowledges that over time a number of private residents have created vehicular access to rear gardens through council-owned sites. Some of these are with permission, some are not.

Through the ongoing garage site inspection process, all non-standard or traversing access locations are being identified and if a licence is not already in place, discussions with homeowners will take place so as to ensure appropriate legal arrangements for crossing council-owned land are in place.

The review of the garage strategy will include the annual fee paid for licences and will ensure that this is set at an appropriate level to ensure the council covers its expenditure and/or officer time in creating, managing and renewing licence agreements.

6 Improving the Customer Experience

6.1 Customer satisfaction with the management of garages is very low. This reflects the resources given to management of the garage stock over recent years.

6.2 Customers have also been frustrated in the length of time they wait to be allocated a

garage and an allocation process that does allocate at regular intervals to enable turnover of the waiting list.

6.3 In order to address these concerns, a number of initiatives have been implemented to improve customer experience with the garage application and letting process.

These include:

- A simplifying of the application process so that information about how the council manages applications for garages is more readily available
- Front line staff, including MyCouncil, have received guidance on how applications are processed, including refreshed customer service standards for application processing times and communication
- Review of forms to ensure they seek relevant information in a clearer and improved format

6.4 As of 6th November 2014, there were 185 active applications on the garage waiting list.

A review of all live applications was commenced to ensure only applications from customers still seeking a garage remained on the list. There is always natural wastage from such reviews (customers who have moved, who no longer require a garage, or have obtained one elsewhere) and it is envisaged that the number of live applications following the review will reduce.

This review will be completed in January 2015.

6.5 From October 2014, there are now three officers with responsibility for managing estate activities, including garages. This will ensure that staff are readily available to deal with customer concerns and contact and improve response times for resolving parking-related enquiries.

7 Development of a Garage Strategy

7.1 Management of parking facilities transferred into the new Estate Services team in October 2014.

Prior to transfer, a Garage Strategy group had been formed to oversee the co-ordination of solutions to low demand, poor condition, environmental and management issues to assess the future sustainability of identified sites.

The group assessed identified sites and applied key questions to identify whether existing sites warranted reinvestment or whether alternative uses could be considered.

- Is there a demand?
- Are the garages providing people what they want – size, location, what they can be used for etc.
- If there is no demand, what are the alternatives?
- If no future use, do we demolish – and then do what?
- Can we use the land for other things (housing, gardens, workshops, etc)?
- Are there planning restrictions preventing suitable future use?
- Should we demolish and replace with parking – is there a demand, will it be used?

- What are the costs compared to maintaining garages that are not used?
- Will demolishing reduce ASB, what are the cost benefits compared to not demolishing
- If we demolish and rebuild larger garages in fewer numbers on some sites – is there a demand/ what can we charge / when will full cost recovery happen?
- If we demolish and do nothing what are the cost benefits compared to maintenance and ASB?
- Do we need to gate as interim arrangement – what are the costs and benefits?

7.2 A review of the Neighbourhood Services Garage Strategy is current being undertaken with a view to proposing a revised strategy for parking facilities for the period 2015-2020.

7.3 The aim of the strategy will to implement processes that will ensure garages and parking facilities are maintained correctly and contribute to the sustainability of our estates and neighbourhoods and provide a well managed income stream for the council.

7.4 With closer links to the asset management strategy and with a greater focus on review, assessment, scheme development and delivery, the strategy will require evidence-based reviews leading to consistent and sensible prioritising on investment based on successful outcomes for residents and the council.

7.5 Key strategic objectives will include:

Ensure that parking products are attractive to customers, are provided only where evidence exists that they are needed and contribute to vibrant, well-managed estates and remain economically viable;

Contribute towards the environment and neighbourhoods in a safe manner and do not present unnecessary management situations that affect the quality of residents' lives;

Residents are involved in the process of review to give them opportunities to influence the choices made through redevelopment/reinvestment;

Provide value for money and supported by a well-run maintenance and repair service that ensure garages remain fit for purpose and attractive to existing and prospective residents.

7.6 The Garage Strategy group is being retained. The Estate Services Manager will lead on the development of a revised garage strategy document by the end of January 2015.

8 Timetable for updates

8.1 It is intended to provide an update report to Panel in March 2015 including the revised Garage Strategy and outcomes of the ongoing garage site condition surveys.

9 Appendices Attached (if any)

9.1 None

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood & Community
Services Scrutiny Panel

Date: 30th March 2015

CONTACT OFFICER: Neil Aves, AD Housing & Environment
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875527

WARD(S): ALL

PART I**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION****REVIEW OF HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME 2013- 2018**1. **Purpose of Report**

This report requests comment and consideration from the Panel in relation to amendments to the Council's Allocation Policy proposed in the light of an officer review and experience of operation over the last twelve months.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

At the meeting on 7th January 2015, the Panel commented on the proposed amendments to the policy (paragraphs 6.3 to 6.8). At this meeting, the Panel is requested to consider and comment on the implications of the policy with regards to the rehousing of residents affected by new housing benefits rules, the provision of incentives to encourage residents to move and the allocation of property for vulnerable residents.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan**3.1 **Slough Joint Wellbeing Community Strategy Priorities**

The quality of and access to housing is a key priority for the council. Slough's Wellbeing Strategy names housing as one of five priorities with the vision that:

"By 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth."

A review of the first 12 months of operation of the new Allocation Policy demonstrate positive benefits but also a need to enhance the policy with some relatively minor amendments. Those who have contributed in Slough for five years or more, are in employment, education or training, will continue to be rewarded with additional priority to access social housing, while those who have a history of anti social behaviour or poor financial management will be required to demonstrate a track record of behavioural change before they will be allocated housing. Those who commit fraud will not be given access to social housing.

3.2 Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy: Cross-Cutting themes

The Allocation Scheme will continue to reward civic responsibility by recognising applicants' community contribution in terms of employment, education, training. Anti social behaviour and failure to be financially responsible will not be tolerated in council housing. The scheme will prevent those who demonstrate this behaviour becoming eligible, thus contributing to community safety.

3.3 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Housing is a contributory factor to the wellbeing of Slough residents, and the Allocation Scheme supports the priorities in the JSNA. It contributes to reducing inequalities in health through access to high quality housing, increasing skills and employment opportunities by rewarding those who take steps to improve their own circumstances and contribute positively to the town, and early intervention to reduce child poverty and improve child safety through supporting initiatives around fostering and adoption, those leaving care and young people moving on.

By linking applicants behaviour to an allocation of housing the council is taking steps to protect the quality of housing, while allocating to those in greatest need will ensure greater availability of housing.

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The review has been carried out from within existing resources and the original implementation of the policy has been successful in reducing un-necessary administration by reducing the waiting list significantly. In the current financial climate it is not realistic to sustain the administrative burden associated with a waiting list in excess of 7,000 households when in reality the vast majority of applicants would never receive an offer of accommodation.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
<u>Legal</u> Risk of legal challenge to the council for a policy which does not accord with statute.	Policy scrutinised by legal Counsel to ensure statutory compliance and case law compliance.	
<u>Human Rights</u> To ensure compatibility with Article 8.	Policy and any significant changes are scrutinised by legal Counsel to ensure statutory compliance.	
<u>Equalities Issues</u> Groups may be disproportionately disadvantaged by the	A full EIA was conducted prior to adoption of the policy and these relatively	Applicants have confidence in fair and transparent scheme.

scheme.	minor amendments will be checked against the framework but are unlikely to trigger a full EIA.	
<u>Communications</u> Adverse publicity in relation to proposed changes.	the wholesale changes introduced last year were broadly welcomed by the public and these proposed amendments will help to include further households within the eligibility criteria.	
<u>Community Safety</u> Those committing ASB, crime and disorder will not be eligible to join the register.	The Policy continues to promote and encourage positive behaviours.	
<u>Financial</u> Administration costs of housing register increase as demand increases. Increase in temporary accommodation costs.	The new policy has reduced administration of 7,000+ applications to a list below 2,000. Housing units will be allocated to the most deserving cases and homes will be cherished, over time, reducing management and maintenance costs for the stock.	

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The full Scheme has been thoroughly reviewed by legal Counsel, a prominent QC who originally suggested a number of changes, mainly operational in nature regarding the procedural aspects of how to run the scheme. Caselaw continues to develop as more new policies are adopted and challenges made and prior to implementation of these proposals further Counsel's opinion will be sought.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Council has a public sector duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to promote equality of opportunity to all persons and to those who share a protected characteristic under the legislation. An Equalities Impact Assessment was conducted prior to adoption of the scheme and a report produced that had no highlighted areas of concern. The policy has undergone rigorous testing on actual 'live' cases and different scenarios, with outcomes measured against key equality

characteristics. The proposed amendments will make minor changes to eligibility but with the effect of broadening eligibility rather than reducing it.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Under the Housing Act 1996 all local housing authorities are required to have a Housing Allocation Scheme which governs how social housing is allocated to those who are eligible. The scope of allocation schemes was amended by the Localism Act 2011, giving greater local freedom for housing authorities in allocating available accommodation
- 5.2 Members will recall that the Allocation Policy adopted last year looked to build on the flexibilities and freedoms allowed in the Localism Act 2011. The Council's new approach to allocating affordable housing is designed to be fairer, simpler and more realistic. When the council allocates a home and hands over the keys of an asset worth, on average £150,000 it should do so safe in the knowledge that the home will be cherished and maintained rather than taken for granted. It therefore follows that the allocation of a home should be seen as a reward for contributing to the community and the economy
- 5.3 Housing is a scarce resource nationally and in Slough, demand continues to outstrip supply even after the waiting list was reduced in size and therefore the allocation scheme will continue to offer homes to those who are eligible, in greatest housing needs, who have a track record of being good tenants, and who contribute positively to their neighbourhoods or the community.
- 5.4 The council introduced its Housing Allocations Scheme on January 1st 2014 and immediately prior to that date there were 7,974 applications on the register. While applicants perceived that they were in a queue, albeit a long one, the reality was that the vast majority of these applicants would not have received an offer of social housing at any time in the future.

Housing Register as at 31st December 2013

BAND A	108
BAND B	3983
BAND C	2919
BAND D	964

- 5.5 After adopting the new policy, all persons on the register were invited to make a new application which was re-assessed under the new criteria. After assessment the register holds a far more manageable 1,614 applications from households who can realistically expect to receive an offer of housing at some point.
- 5.6 5,000 applications may have been removed from the register but it would be incorrect to give the impression that these were from households who were ever going to receive an offer of housing. the 'old' register simply served to raise unrealistic expectations and it is worth noting that despite a number of communications, reminders and general publicity, some 2,877 applicants did not even return the application form for reassessment these have of course been cancelled.
- 5.7 3,483 applications were assessed as no longer meeting the eligibility criteria and were also cancelled. These were primarily homeowners, those who had moved to

Slough only recently, those living outside Slough and those living adequately in the private rented sector. In September the list stood at

Housing Register as at September 2014

BAND A (urgent need for re-housing)	15
BAND B (reasonable and additional priority)	508
BAND C (reasonable priority)	1091

While the original cases were reviewed, all new applications were stockpiled but have now been assessed under the same criteria with the result that current, live system contains records of 1,824 cases.

Housing Register as at 1.12.2014

BAND A (urgent need for re-housing)	16
BAND B (reasonable and additional priority)	554
BAND C (reasonable priority)	1254

6.0 Proposed changes to existing scheme

- 6.1 Taking into account the first twelve months of operation, there is a demonstrable benefit from the adoption of the new policies. For all applicants who are eligible, there is more clarity about the policy and with a much smaller list, greater expectation that an offer of accommodation will be forthcoming. The council is able to now give priority to working households on low incomes and where the lower rents associated to council houses make a real difference to the quality of life for households.
- 6.2 That said, there are minor amendments which officers wish to propose to provide greater clarity and certainty in terms of applications and to streamline the process to reduce void turn round times and get prospective tenants into homes quicker.
- 6.3 Additional priority for working households – when the Allocation Policy was introduced, it gave additional preference to applicants who met the statutory, reasonable preference criteria, namely
- Eligible homeless cases
 - Medical or welfare needs
 - Currently living in unsatisfactory conditions

and who were working full time. Government guidelines say that full time work is 35 hours or more per week however officers now feel that this does not adequately reflect the current economic climate and also potentially disadvantages working parents who are required or choose to only work part time.

- 6.4 Therefore the first recommendation is that in future, additional preference will be granted to households who have the statutory reasonable preference if they are working either in full or part time employment. For the purposes of this scheme (and in line with Welfare Benefit entitlement, part-time work is defined as;
- Single Applicants working 16 hours or more per week
 - Joint applicants working 24 hours or more per week
- 6.5 Training and volunteering – the second proposal is to clarify and thereby reduce the additional preference currently linked to training and volunteering. The government’s original intentions were to assist those who were seeking training in order to gain employment or who were undertaking voluntary work in lieu of paid employment which benefitted their community. In practice applicants have sought to gain additional preference for their housing application through the listing of many and various forms of training and qualification many of which are short term or even self taught and with no realistic effect on the ability to seek work. Similarly many applications have listed parental activities such as helping with a son or daughter’s sports team as opposed to a genuine long term commitment to undertaking voluntary work with a registered charity.
- 6.6 This report is not meant to be critical of residents efforts in any way and while all are welcomed, it has lead to an impossible situation in which officers are asked to determine the relative merits of a whole variety of training or ‘volunteering’ events to potentially award greater priority to an application. The recommendation therefore is that in future training or volunteering will only be considered if it is undertaken over the same timeframe as full or part time work and for a sustained period. This will not have a significant effect on the size of the waiting list but will improve the efficiency of its administration by giving a much clearer steer as to how additional preference is allocation. To date such assessments have only been credited to 4 persons undertaking volunteering and 27 in full time training but have required staff to expend many hours in assessing applications.
- 6.7 Applicants who own alternative properties available for their occupation – the current policy excludes those with savings or assets valued in excess of £20,000 from the waiting list. Officers are recommending that further clarification is provided so that prospective applicants are aware that property ownership is an automatic exclusion from the register, regardless of the level of equity in the property.
- 6.8 Applicants requiring move on accommodation from Young People’s accommodation – the current policy gives additional preference to those within this category and while there is always a need to provide independent accommodation for single persons currently in Young People’s accommodation, such a broad classification covers a multitude of cases and officers recommend that a further clarification is introduced. Former looked after children and care leavers are covered by a separate classification which ensures their eligibility for housing as would those in young persons accommodation who are in employment or vocational training or with on-going support needs. However there appears no over-riding reason why a young person, hypothetically, excluded from the family home due to unreasonable behaviour and then not engaged in training or employment should be rewarded with the offer of a council home. They will of course continue to be assisted into a private rented unit which meets their needs but it would seem perverse to reward such behaviour and non engagement.

6.9 Local lettings policies for new build council housing – the adopted policy states that new affordable and social housing developments (both housing association and Council) and some existing estates or communities, may be subject to a local lettings policy adopted by the Council. The key objective will be to help build and sustain diverse balanced communities. Any such schemes will be in response to local circumstances and will specify clear objectives, duration of the scheme, review mechanisms and commitment to equal opportunities.

Such schemes may involve elements of the following:

- Allocate properties to non priority applicants
- Allocate properties to Slough Borough Council or Housing Association tenants holding secure or assured tenancies
- Allocate properties to those tenants who demonstrate a good track record, having paid rent and kept their current home in good order
- Disregard of household type/property type matching rules

6.10 For the first time in a generation the Council is again able to build council houses and officers would propose that in allocating such a valuable resource, it would be appropriate to allocate such houses to existing tenants with a proven track record of rental payments, no ASB or wilful damage to their existing properties.

For each development across the borough and any unexpected relets within the first 12 months, the following lettings criteria and eligibility will be applied to each scheme

- Applications will be invited from SBC or RSL transfer applicants with priority given based upon
- geographic proximity to the new development
- working a minimum 16 (single) or 24 (couple) hours per week
- with a minimum of 5 year tenancy
- living in flats
- families with young children
- in schemes where 1 bed units are offered, further priority will be for those tenants wishing to downsize to release family sized units for re-allocation.

6.11 Other households on the waiting list would not be prejudiced by such a policy as they would simply become eligible for the resultant void when an existing tenant is allocated to a new property.

7 **Conclusion**

7.1 The 'new' Housing Allocation Scheme has reduced the onerous administration of the function for the council, provided greater clarity and certainty for eligible residents and the inclusion of the above amendments will further the aims of the policy and assist in ensuring that council assets are allocated to the most deserving.

8 **Appendices Attached**

- A - Allocations Policy
- B - Allocation Policy guidebook

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Slough Borough Council

Housing Allocation Scheme

2013 - 2018

Foreword

Good quality housing is fundamental to supporting people in living enriching and fulfilling lives. It has a profound effect on people's health and wellbeing, their ability to live independently, or with support, children's ability to learn and flourish, and a family's ability to live in safe, secure and stable surroundings.

The current housing landscape means that people are waiting longer to own their own homes, if indeed at all. At the same time rents in the private sector are increasing, making them increasingly unaffordable even for those in work. In this environment housing which is managed by the council, and its partners, Housing Associations, remains the most significant provider of properties available to those on lower incomes.

Housing managed by the council is funded by tenants and it therefore only fair that local residents who have lived and contributed to Slough get first call, and that is why this scheme now includes a criteria that applicants must have lived in Slough for five years before they qualify to receive housing.

I want to make sure that people who are in low paid work have the same ability to access good quality housing as those who earn more, because I want everybody to live decently and contribute to our community. The scheme also recognises those who make a positive contribution to our town, whether that be through active involvement in community projects, providing a stable Forever Family for fostered and adopted children, or by serving our country in the Armed Forces.

As social housing is such a scarce commodity, it should be preserved for those who have the highest need, who will treat this commodity with respect, and who will contribute to sustainable communities. This is why this policy goes further in linking rights and responsibilities. Households who pay their rent on time, who look after their properties, who contribute positively to their community and who are good tenants will be recognised with an allocation of housing. Those who are not will not be, until they can demonstrate that they are good tenants.

I don't want social housing to be simply the option of last resort. I want to ensure all our neighbourhoods are well maintained places, with a sense of community and shared purpose where our residents thrive. This scheme, in addition to the suite of refreshed policies across the housing service, will make the best use of the scarce resource of social housing, allocating it to those qualifying applicants who have the highest need, play by the rules and demonstrate that the council's offer of housing results in a positive change in their lives.

Councillor James Swindlehurst
Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Renewal

Introduction

Under the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 all local housing authorities are required to have a Housing Allocation Scheme which governs how social housing is allocated to those who are eligible and what priorities different applicants have. The scope of Allocation Schemes has been amended by the Localism Act 2011, giving greater local freedom for housing authorities in allocating available accommodation.

Housing is a scarce resource nationally and in Slough, and demand far outstrips supply. This scheme therefore sets out how Slough Borough Council will allocate housing within the borough to those who are eligible.

The quality of and access to housing is a key priority for the council.

Slough's Wellbeing Strategy names housing as one of five priorities with the vision that:

“By 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth.”

Local people tell us that they want to see the availability of social housing increase, especially larger family homes. However without being able to deliver large quantities of new housing stock the council has to make best use of what already exists. At the same time the council also wishes to promote other tenures of accommodation, offering sustainable housing options which meet the needs of Slough residents and prevent the risk of homelessness.

There are also two crosscutting themes in the Wellbeing Strategy; civic responsibility and the image of the town. These are represented in this scheme through the behaviour of council tenants, and the link between rights and responsibilities.

The Corporate Plan 2013/14 complements the priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and demonstrates the council's commitment to improving the quality and availability of housing for Slough residents, while striving to improve the level of service customers can expect from the council.

Slough's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) further highlights the demand for social housing in Slough and the requirement to prevent the risk of homelessness, especially where the provision of temporary accommodation for households homeless or at the risk of homelessness negatively affects family stability and the education of children.

In preparing the Housing Allocation Scheme there has been regard to other policy documents related specifically to the provision and management of housing, and the prevention of homelessness in the borough. These are:

- Housing Strategy, which sets out overall objectives for the department

- Tenancy Strategy, which sets out the range of tenancies offered by the council, and the circumstances under which these will be offered
- Homelessness Strategy, which seeks to prevent the risk of homelessness in the borough

The Scheme has also been prepared with regard to the Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England (2012)

The objectives of Slough’s Housing Allocation Scheme are to:

1. Provide housing to those in greatest need and preventing the risk of homelessness.
2. Reward responsible behaviour
3. Encourage mixed, strong and sustainable communities
4. Promote choice and control for applicants
5. Make the most effective use of the limited social housing stock in the borough
6. Make social housing a tenure of choice for applicants who;
 - a. make a community contribution
 - b. take a personal responsibility for their actions and behaviour
 - c. can demonstrate a proven track record to manage their tenancy or home

Housing context in Slough

Local Authority Housing

Slough Borough Council has a stock of around 6,500 council properties, with a further 1,000 leasehold properties sold through the Right to Buy process. There are just under 4,000 properties owned or managed by other Housing Associations, which the council can nominate to. The council cannot allocate to leasehold properties, and therefore the operational number of properties which can be allocated to applicants on the register is around 10,000.

The council allocates to this stock of properties from the Housing Register, governed by the criteria set out in this Housing Allocation Scheme.

As of 3rd September 2013, there were 7,313 households on the housing register. The economic situation is resulting in an increasing number of applications to the Housing Register. The council has limited ability to deliver new council properties due to the small number of available building plots in

the borough, though it does seek to provide housing where possible. The council has worked to deliver additional homes on former garage sites through partnerships with Housing Associations. This has successfully delivered over one hundred homes but has had limited impact within the context of the growing demand. The council has therefore taken steps to ensure that the scarce resource of social housing is allocated to those qualifying applicants with greatest need.

The Tenancy Strategy adopted by the council in April 2013, for example, includes measures to match applicants with the most suitable properties, and reassessing this periodically to ensure the property continues to meet their needs. Housing management and benefits team figures indicate that around 750 social properties (including council and Housing Associations) are under-occupied by the housing benefit criteria. This represents roughly 7% of the entire affordable stock. Making better use of existing stock can therefore help to alleviate pressure created by growing demand.

Changes to admission to the Housing Register

The Localism Act 2011 has given local housing authorities the option to determine who does, and who does not qualify for an allocation of housing. This will enable the Council to make decisions on who will qualify for the Scheme. By only including those on the waiting list who are eligible, applicants will have more realistic expectations of the likelihood of them securing social accommodation within a reasonable time frame.

The changes also enable local housing authorities more freedom to support those applying for a housing transfer, by giving greater flexibility. This will support the council's objectives of making the best use of the scarce resource of social housing.

Lettings Plan

The council currently allocates to around four hundred properties each year across council and Housing Association stock. Currently, the larger the property, the longer the wait. Each year the council creates a Lettings Plan which sets out an estimation of the number of properties of each size to be allocated to each band.

The Council through evidence from previous lettings and the priority qualifying groups from the Scheme will allocate a quota of properties to each band in the Allocations Scheme. Each band will have a variety of properties included so that the priority applicants in that band will eventually receive an offer of a home.

The Council will regularly review that quota of properties available to each band and will publish the Lettings Plan Annually

Private Housing Market

The average residential property price in Slough is £204,381. This is lower than both the South East average of £260,030 and also lower than the national average of £226, 887 (see detailed table below). Despite this, a Slough family, wishing to buy a terraced or semi-detached home would have to find around £43,000 for the deposit and have a household income of over £49,000 per annum assuming they can get an 80% mortgage from a lender prepared to lend at 3¹/₂ times their annual income.

Slough residential property sales figures based on period January – March 2012 (land registry)				
Type	Detached	Flat	Semi	Terraced
Price	£334,111	£137,227	£244,080	£198,563
N° sold in period	25	75	61	108
Change in last year	-1.3%	2.3%	3.2%	1.1%
Change in last quarter	-7.6%	3.4%	0.3%	0.4%

Over the past four years, nationally home ownership has peaked and the percentage of owner occupiers has started to fall. Nationally, new social housing development has all but stopped since 2008 and in 2011 was still at the lowest level for 60 years. Slough has lower rates of owner occupation than regional or national averages, reflecting its relative deprivation. Slough does have a significantly larger privately rented sector than national or regional averages. Nationally this sector is growing, with both professional and amateur landlords looking to expand their role. The private rented sector is soon expected to become larger than the social rented sector.

Welfare reforms

At the same time as changes to tenancy types brought about by the Localism Act, there are a number of changes to the welfare system which have the potential to affect tenants and householders in Slough. These include both reductions in the total amount of benefit paid and changes to eligibility based on personal circumstances, as well as changes to housing benefit specifically for those in the social sector.

A cap on total benefits paid will be introduced from 1st April 2013 covering combined income from the main out of work benefits, housing benefit, child benefit and child tax credit. The cap will be £500 per week for couples and

lone parents, and £350 per week for single adults. Households in receipt of certain benefits will be exempted from the cap.

Social sector under occupancy rules will be introduced which will reduce housing benefit paid to a household by 14% of eligible rent if under occupancy is by one bedroom and 25% reduction for under occupancy of two bedrooms or more. A new set of criteria have been established to identify which members of a household are entitled to a bedroom.

In January 2013 households where one member earns £50,000 or more per year lost automatic entitlement to child benefit.

There will also be changes to council tax benefit, which will now be called 'council tax reduction'. From April 2013 local authorities will have to set their own criteria for council tax support, and the total budget allowed under the previous system will be reduced by 10%, requiring local authorities to make savings through changes to eligibility.

Local Housing Allowance rates are also changing; being frozen for a year from April 2012 and in future will be re-calculated on an annual, rather than monthly basis. In addition the definition of a young individual has been changed to mean anyone under 35, and said single young individuals will only be eligible for the shared rate of LHA regardless of the accommodation they occupy.

Changes linked to the Universal Credit mean that a range of benefit payments will be combined into one single monthly payment (rather than weekly) and will be paid to the claimant. This will pose a significant risk to landlords who previously received housing benefit directly, and will now need to collect rent. A move to monthly payments in arrears will also represent a significant departure from what many tenants are used to.

In light of these changes the council has a responsibility to ensure that tenancies granted are financially sustainable for the tenant in the long term, and that the council does not place tenants in properties which would cause them to be out of pocket due to the welfare reforms.

Housing Options

Regardless of whether an applicant and their household qualify to join the Housing Register, the council will provide housing options advice and support for all applicants. This advice is also available to all residents in Slough.

The Housing Register

This section includes information on the operation of the Housing Register.

Slough Borough Council will operate a managed Housing Register and will accept onto the Housing Register only those applicants:

- who meet **eligibility** criteria and

- who **qualify** by meeting the **Reasonable Preference** criteria, *and*
- do not fall into an **ineligible non-qualifying category**.

Applicants who meet these criteria and are accepted onto the Housing Register will be placed into one of three bands.

The band they will be placed in will be determined by their circumstances.

Additional Preference will be awarded to applicants who meet the criteria set out within this scheme.

Within bands, housing will be allocated based upon the length of time an applicant has been on the register. For qualifying applicants, it is the length of time in your relevant band that is relevant.

Our Policy on Choice

1. When making an application to join the Housing Register and if they are qualifying persons, applicants and the members of their household will be making an application to be housed:
 - a. Anywhere within the borough of Slough.
 - b. In any tenure or tenancy type which meets their needs, whether council managed accommodation or Housing Association.
 - c. In any size and type of property which meets the needs of the qualifying applicant and their household, as determined in this Allocation Scheme.

All eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed on the Register but when the Council comes to decide what size or type of property the applicant is to be considered for it will take account of whether other members of the applicant's household are eligible or qualifying persons. The Council will also take into account a number of factors in making a decision on allocation.

(Please see – 'How This Scheme Works')

Even if the applicant's household includes only eligible and qualifying members, due to the high demand for large properties, the council may not include certain members of the household such as non-dependent adult children, other adult relatives, non-relatives or lodgers, when determining what size or type of accommodation the applicant will be considered for in this Scheme.

In the case of large households which may therefore not be accommodated together under this Scheme the council may discuss with the applicant how best the other members of the household may obtain accommodation, whether from the council or otherwise.

Eligibility

Eligibility to join the Housing Register is determined nationally by law. The categories that are not eligible are set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 section 160ZA (as amended) and in regulations made under that section. Applicants covered by those categories below will not be registered.

Section 160ZA reads:

Allocation only to eligible and qualifying persons: England

- (1) A local housing authority in England shall not allocate housing accommodation—
 - a. to a person from abroad who is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by virtue of subsection (2) or (4), or
 - b. to two or more persons jointly if any of them is a person mentioned in paragraph (a).
- (2) A person subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 is ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation by a local housing authority in England unless he is of a class prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (3) No person who is excluded from entitlement to housing benefit by section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (exclusion from benefits) shall be included in any class prescribed under subsection (2).
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe other classes of persons from abroad who are ineligible to be allocated housing accommodation by local housing authorities in England.

Persons who fall into these categories will not be considered by the Council to be part of the household of an applicant, even if the applicant is themselves eligible.

If a person who has been admitted to the Register ceases to be eligible, applying the above criteria, he or she will be removed from the Register.

Qualification: Reasonable Preference

Eligible applicants on the Register will be those who (either by themselves or by the inclusion of a household member on their application form) fall within the persons accorded a statutory reasonable preference category. For these purposes, the Council will apply the national categories of Reasonable Preference set out in the legislation. Those categories are:

(see Housing Act 1996, 166A (3))

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996 Part 7);
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under Housing Act 1996 section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section

- 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
 - (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
 - (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

If a person who has been admitted to the Register ceases to qualify, applying the above criteria, he or she will be removed from the Register.

Qualification: other requirements

Even if an applicant is eligible and would have satisfied the Reasonable Preference criteria, they will not be admitted to the Housing Register (and therefore will not qualify for an allocation) if they come within one of the following class of person which the Council has decided are classes of non-qualifying persons for the purposes of this Scheme.

The following 1 – 13 are the classes that the Council has adopted as non qualifying persons. Any person(s) who falls within one of those classes cannot join the Register and will be **removed** if they enter that class.

1. Applicants, or those who reasonably be expected to reside as part of their household, who have been convicted of housing or welfare benefits related fraud, where that conviction is unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Any person caught by this may re-apply once this conviction is spent
2. Applicant(s) who have a joint gross household income exceeding £55,000
3. Applicants or members of their household that have over £20,000 in savings, investments or equity
4. Applicants or members of their household who have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour which makes them unsuitable to be a tenant. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. persistent failure to pay rent and/or service charges;
 - b. anti social behaviour perpetrated by the applicant or a member of his or her household which has caused a nuisance;
 - c. illegal or nuisance behaviour that has required Police or legal intervention;
 - d. threats of and/or actual violence to any persons or members of their household

- e. racial harassment or hate crime
 - f. obtaining a tenancy by deception and/or attempting to obtain a tenancy by fraud or deception.
5. Applicants who have been made two suitable offers by Slough Borough Council of a secure (or introductory), or assured tenancy anywhere within the borough of Slough, who have failed to accept the offer. Applicants and the members of their household who have failed to accept a suitable and reasonable offer will be cancelled from the Register for a period of no less than 24 months
 6. Applicants, or members of their household, that have any housing related debt, including rent arrears or mortgage arrears, in respect of their current property or previous accommodation. (This may be waived if agreement has been reached to clear the debt through a payment plan and this has been adhered to for a reasonable period.) The Council will consider a period of up to 10 years prior to applying to the Register and consideration will be given to applicants with mitigating circumstances
 7. Transfer tenants (from social housing) who have failed to maintain their homes, have caused damage to their home or have breached the terms of their tenancy.
 8. In the case of private accommodation, references may be sought from previous landlords/mortgage companies to assess applicants tenant's record.
 9. Applicants who have continuously lived in Slough for less than **five years** (this does not apply to Armed Forces applicants. For applicants placed out of borough by the Council time spent out of borough will contribute to the accumulation of five years).
 10. Applicants who reside in Slough, but have been placed in
 - a. statutory temporary accommodation by another Council,
 - b. residential accommodation by another Council or Health provider,
 - c. other temporary accommodation, or assured short hold accommodation by another Council or Housing Association or agents acting on their behalf
 - d. institutional accommodation, by any other local authority, housing provider, health service or specialist provider.
 - e. who have refused a suitable offer of an Assured Short hold Tenancy made through the Council's Social Lettings Agency or Rent Deposit Scheme.
 11. Any applicant who has committed acts of violence and/or aggression against any employee of the Council. Any person using threats (verbal or other) or actual violence towards council staff will be removed from the register or will not be allowed to join the register.

12. Applicants or any members of their household who have previously purchased their home through Right to Buy (in the last 10 years) will also not be allowed to join the Register

13. An applicant who has a person in one of the above classes included in his or her application

Additional Preference

The Scheme allows the Council to give additional preference to particular descriptions of people who are already within the reasonable preference categories. Taking into account local priorities and circumstances the Council have identified the following descriptions of people to give additional preference.

1. Applicants making a community contribution as defined below;

A. Working Households

Applicants where at least one adult household member is in employment. For the purposes of this Allocations Scheme 'employment' means having a full time contract, full time as a temporary member of staff or being self-employed. Employment must be in the UK. Applicants will only qualify if the worker has been employed for the last 12 months. Verification will be sought at point of application to join the Register as well as at the point of offer under the same terms. Applicants must provide payslips, a P60, bank statements, company accounts and returns to HRMC or a verifying letter on employer's headed paper in order to qualify.

B. Recognised Training and Education

This may be achieved by attending higher or further education or by accessing a vocational course of study or engaging in a programme of work-related training courses. In all cases the course of study must lead to achieving accredited qualifications and / or certification by a registered awarding body. Study or training may be undertaken at a range of recognised institutions and organisations such as: Further Education College; registered Private Training Provider; registered Voluntary Sector Organisation or University.

A person must have been studying or training against the eligible criteria and definition outlined, for a continuous period of at least 6 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer. Training must be in addition to, or supplementary to any mandatory training required by the employer and may be undertaken in conjunction with volunteering, as long as the volunteering contributes to the Council's Priorities of Safer Communities, Regeneration and Environment, Housing, Health and Wellbeing, to gain further knowledge and experience. Training must be a minimum of 10 hours a month.

Further/higher education candidates must supply evidence of:

- letter from college or university confirming participation in course of study for period of 6 months

For vocational training award the following evidence must be provided:

- an agreed employment action plan developed through a recognised employer/recognised training provider/college plus verification of steps taken towards achievement of action plan targets
- certificate or letter from a registered awarding body for the course or by a recognised training provider as evidence of gaining a recognised vocational qualification or successfully completing accredited work-related training (over a continuous period of at least 6 months)

C. **Volunteering**

Volunteers must have been volunteering for a continuous period of at least 12 months up to the point of application and the same at point of offer. Volunteering must be for a not-for profit organisation that is recognised by the Council or a charity that is registered with the Charity Commission or is funded by the Council or another local authority or housing association. It is essential the volunteering directly contributes to the well being of **Slough residents and contributes to the Council's Priorities** (Safer Communities, Regeneration and Environment, Housing, Health and Wellbeing)

The following evidence will be required to qualify for this contribution. A letter on the relevant organisations headed paper from the manager/chair/registered trustee responsible for volunteers confirming the applicant's involvement in a minimum of 20 hours per month of voluntary work for at least 12 months. This person must not be related to the applicant in any way.

2. Applicants leaving care (children), single, over the age of 18.
3. Single applicants leaving residential care
4. Applicants requiring move on accommodation from Young People's Accommodation
5. Applicants who have been approved by Slough Borough Council to foster or adopt and have an existing track record of fostering or adopting for not less than 2 years
6. Armed forces applicants with urgent housing needs who fall within the criteria for additional preference set out in section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended. This is applicable to a person who:

- a. is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from serious a injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service;
 - b. formerly served in the regular armed forces
 - c. has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where the spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces; and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
 - d. Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.
7. Households who have actively and positively engaged with the Council's Family First programme and have shown real progression within the programme.
8. Applicants who are under occupying a secure or assured tenancy who require a move to smaller accommodation

Banding

Applicants on the Housing Register will be placed into one of three Bands.

Which is the appropriate Band will be decided by council officers and will depend upon:

- (1) Whether the need for accommodation is "urgent"
- (2) Whether the applicant (or member of his/her household) Is in an Additional Preference category
- (3) Whether the applicant (or member of his/her household) is in a Community Contribution category

The three Bands are:

Band A	Urgent requirement to move
Band B	Requirement to move due to Reasonable Preference AND Additional Preference
Band C	Requirement to move due to Reasonable Preference

Older Persons Accommodation

In order to qualify for older persons accommodation all applicants must meet the qualifying criteria as set out in the Scheme.

In addition the applicant(s) must meet the following qualifying criteria;

1. Be a minimum age of 50

Slough Tenants Wishing to Move

Any existing tenant wishing to move must fulfil the qualifying criteria as set out in this scheme

In the first instance all tenants must approach their Housing Officer if they wish to be transferred and will be advised of the options available to them to transfer.

If tenants meet the criteria as set out in 'How the Scheme Works' of this Policy, then they will join the Housing Register and be banded accordingly to facilitate a transfer. This process will be similar for Housing Association assured tenants who wish to transfer.

Local Lettings Plans

New affordable and social housing developments, (both housing association and Council and through an agreed partnering arrangement) and some existing estates or communities, may be subject to a local lettings policy adopted by the Council.

A local lettings policy will set criteria for nominations or allocations (including transfers, beneficial transfers and moves due to best use of stock) to homes in the relevant area, aimed at achieving or maintaining balanced and sustainable communities, or to address or prevent management problems and/or antisocial behaviour.

For new affordable and social housing developments, local lettings policies will dictate that a percentage of allocations will be made to applicants who meet the qualifying criteria as set out in this Scheme seeking transfers(and on the Housing Register) who have demonstrated the ability to maintain a satisfactory tenancy in both financial and conduct terms.

Priority will also be given in a local lettings policy to households opting to downsize.

Section 166A(6)(b) of the Housing Act 1996 enables local housing authorities to allocate a particular accommodation to people of a particular description whether or not they fall into the reasonable preference category. This section enables the council to set aside homes on a particular estate, or certain types

of properties across the housing stock, for applicants who meet specific criteria as set out in a Local Lettings Plan applicable to those properties.

Allocating Properties

Properties becoming available for allocation under this Scheme will be treated as available to letting to qualifying applicants in a particular band or bands. Such a property will be allocated to the applicant who has waited longest in the relevant band, unless there are exceptional circumstances

For example, occasionally when a property becomes available which is particularly suitable for an individual applicant who has specific needs. It may be allocated to them even if they are not at the top of the Housing Register. This is to support the objective of effectively matching available housing stock to suitable applicants and making best use of the council's housing stock, especially of adapted properties. In these or similar circumstances a senior officer will need to agree that the applicant may be allocated the property ahead of applicants who have waited longer.

The council will produce an Annual Lettings Plan to show the projected allocations of properties by bedroom size and area to particular Bands.

Size, Type and Suitability of housing offers

Those accepted onto the Housing Register will be given two offers of suitable accommodation

Properties will be allocated which are suitable in size, type and location based upon the size of the qualifying household, and any medical or other relevant requirements. 'Size' will be calculated using the guidelines as defined in **Appendix A.**

Operation of this scheme and Applications

'How the Scheme Works' will outline all the procedural elements for the Scheme

Following receipt and processing of an application, applicants will be informed in writing as to whether or not:

- (1) they have met the Eligibility criteria
- (2) they have met the Reasonable Preference criteria
- (3) they are in a Non-Qualifying class
- (4) they have been registered on the Housing Register (if so, with the date of registration)
- (5) any Additional Preference has been awarded;
- (6) any Community Contribution Preference has been awarded

and which Band (if any) their application has been placed into.

If any of these matters are decided against the applicant's interests, the written notice will give reasons for the council's decision.

If requested by applicants, the council will provide in writing:

(1) information relating to decisions taken based upon the facts of the case which determine whether or not to allocate particular housing or (2) information providing, and as far as is possible the predicted wait time until accommodation is likely to become available. The time period an applicant on the Housing Register is likely to have to await is difficult to predict due to the unpredictable availability of suitable properties and varying volume of applications.

Requesting a review

1. An applicant may request a review of the decision:
 - a. whether or not the offer made to them is suitable and reasonable
 - b. that they are ineligible to join the Housing Register for an allocation due to them being subject to immigration control (160ZA (2))
 - c. that they are not a person qualifying to join the Housing Register
 - d. that any particular facts are or are not going to be taken into account in considering whether to allocate them accommodation.
2. The applicant shall be notified in writing of the decision of the review, and the grounds for that decision.
3. An applicant found not be eligible or to be non-qualifying may make a fresh application if they feel that they should be treated as an eligible or qualifying applicant.

The categories of decisions made by the Council which applicants can request a review are set out with a review procedure as explained in 'How the Scheme Works'

Fraud Prevention

Housing Act 1996 Section 171 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from a housing authority under Part 6 of the 1996 Act to:

- Knowingly or recklessly give false information, or
- Knowingly withhold information which the housing authority has reasonably required the applicant to give.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by section 146 of the 1996 Act) enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenants or a person acting as the tenant's instigation.

It is important for Slough Borough Council to protect scarce housing resources and any applicant seeking to obtain housing by making a false or misleading statement or failing to inform the Council of a material fact relevant to the outcome of their application, or a change in circumstances, will have their application immediately cancelled.

The Council will not hesitate to prosecute any applicant(s) who have either been allocated a home or applied for a home by using false or fraudulent information.

Members of the Council, Staff Members and their Relations

In order to ensure that the Council is seen to be treating all applicants fairly, any application for housing or re-housing from Members of the Council, employees of the Council or associated persons must be disclosed.

These applications will be assessed in the normal way but any allocation of housing will require specific approval by the Director Resources, Housing and Regeneration.

Failure to disclose such matters as set out above will lead to the necessary disciplinary actions being taken as set out in the Council's Governance and Policies.

APPENDIX A: SIZE CRITERIA

The following is a **guide only**

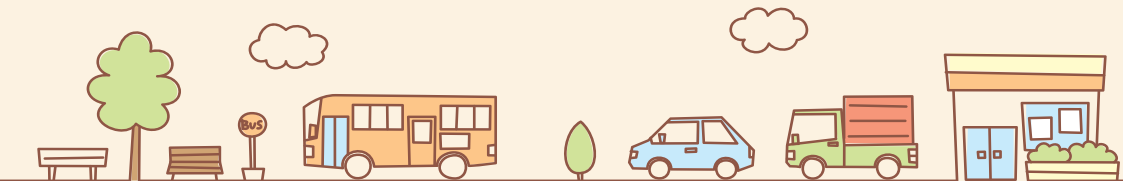
The property size that will be allocated for a particular household will be assessed according to the following guidelines and will be based only on the actual household composition. The council uses the Government's bedroom standard for housing benefit

Applicants are entitled to a bedroom each for the following groups:

- Single or co-habiting couple.
- Any child over the age of 16 years.
- Any two children of the same sex under the age of 16 years.
- Any two children any sex aged under 10.

Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018

How the scheme works





This booklet is a guide to making an application to join the housing register in Slough.

It explains what is needed to assess an application, who can and cannot apply and how offers of accommodation are made.

It is a summary of the Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018. The full version can be viewed on the website www.slough.gov.uk.

Fraud prevention

The Housing Act 1996 Section 171 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from a housing authority under Part 6 of the 1996 Act to:

- knowingly or recklessly give false information, or
- knowingly withhold information which the housing authority has reasonably required the applicant to give.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by section 146 of the 1996 Act) enables a housing authority to seek possession of a tenancy granted as a result of a false statement by the tenants or a person acting as the tenant's instigation.

The council will not hesitate to prosecute any applicant(s) who have either been allocated a home or applied for a home by using false or fraudulent information.

At any point during this process applicants may be required to attend council offices to have photographs taken for identification purposes.



Making an application

The application is to join the housing register for an allocation of social housing. The application must be completed in full to be accepted.

An offer of accommodation may be anywhere in the borough, with any social landlord and for any property that meets housing need.

Applicants must be over 16 years of age and eligible within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.

If you are a Slough Borough Council or housing association tenant you must contact your area housing officer for details of any other housing options that may be available.

Only main applicants and those persons that may reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant can be included on the application. Extended families must make separate applications. An unborn child does not count as part of the household.

The following supporting (photocopied) documents must be submitted with the application. These documents will be verified if an offer of accommodation is made:

- For each person listed on the application a birth certificate or valid passport.
- Proof of current and previous five years residence.
- Proof of current income and employment details.
- Proof of savings or equity.
- Evidence of training or volunteering.
- Proof of immigration status if subject to immigration control.



The council will inform the applicant in writing if the application has been successful and what priority has been awarded. Applicants will be given a unique reference number. This number must be given when making any enquiry to the council concerning their application.

If the application has not been successful the applicant will be notified in writing as to the reasons why.

Who can join the housing register

The law sets out groups of people who are considered to have reasonable preference or a need for the allocation of social housing.

People who are homeless (within the meaning of Housing Act 1996)

People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability)

People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

Unsatisfactory/overcrowded or insanitary housing conditions

If an applicant or any member of the household ceases to be eligible then the application will be removed from the register.

If an applicant or any member of the household has a change in circumstance then any extra priority may be removed/added and/or the application removed from the register.



Who cannot join the housing register

The council has decided that the following applicant(s) or any person included on the application do not qualify for an allocation of housing and cannot join the housing register:

Applicants or members of their household who have not had a fixed address in the borough of Slough for a minimum of five consecutive years

Those who do not have a reasonable preference

Those who have been found guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a council or housing association tenant at the time of the application

Applicant(s) who have a joint gross household income exceeding £55,000

Applicants or members of their household that have over £20,000 in savings, investments or equity

Applicants who have refused two suitable offers of a secure (or introductory), assured or one of an assured shorthold tenancy

Applicants, or members of their household, that have any housing related debt, including rent arrears or mortgage arrears, in respect of their current property or previous accommodation

Transfer tenants (from social housing) who have failed to maintain their homes, have caused damage to their home or have breached the terms of their tenancy

Applicants, or members of their household who own any property or have exercised a council Right to Buy scheme within the past 10 years

Applicants, or members of their household who have been placed into Slough by any other local authority



How priority is awarded

Applicants on the housing register will be placed into one of three bands.

Band A	Urgent requirement to move
Band B	Requirement to move due to reasonable preference and additional preference
Band C	Requirement to move due to reasonable preference

Access to Band A

- Exceptional medical, welfare or disability cases will be referred by housing officers to the housing needs panel. Senior officers from housing and health services will decide Band A status. In all cases this priority is not given solely on the existence of a health problem but when the problem is exacerbated by the current living accommodation. A move to other accommodation must greatly improve this situation. Information received from any health professional will be taken into consideration. The council will not make payment for any medical information unless it specifically requests it. The council may also take advice from an independent medical advisor.
- The housing needs panel will also consider Band A status on urgent cases of hardship. Each case will be considered on its own merit. An example of Band A status maybe an urgent need for a full time carer to live near to the person they care for.
- If the accommodation occupied has extreme insanitary housing conditions we will ask for an assessment by our private sector housing officer. Only if these conditions are urgent or cannot be remedied will Band A status be given. An example of Band A status may be if a prohibition notice has been served.



- Severe overcrowding means that the property occupied is insufficient by at least two bedrooms of the standard the council uses to allocate property. Applicants who are severely overcrowded must be able to demonstrate that all other housing options have been exhausted.

In all cases the panel may recommend a move to accommodation in the private rented sector as a solution to any urgent housing need.

Access to Band B

Applicants must first meet the reasonable preference criteria and then meet one or more of the following additional requirements to have Band B status:

- Social housing tenants in Slough occupying a home in demand and willing to accept a smaller or lower demand home.
- Young people requiring move on accommodation from young persons accommodation.
- Approved two year record of fostering/adoption by SBC.
- Armed forces applicants with housing need as set out in section 166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.
- Engagement with Family First programme.
- Leaving residential care.
- Relevant and eligible children leaving care.
- Working households - continuous full time employment for the past 12 months.
- Training or education - towards a recognised qualification.
- Volunteering - continuously for a registered charity for at least 12 months.

The information given in the application form, proof of circumstances or disclosure from any other council or other statutory agencies will be used to assess Band B status.



Access to Band C

Applicants must have a housing need as given in the reasonable preference criteria.

- Applicants who have been assessed as unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- Applicants who have some need to move due to medical/welfare/disability or hardship grounds. Slough Borough Council or other social housing tenants must have approval from their neighbourhood manager to meet this requirement. The lettings manager will consider if this need cannot be resolved by renting in the private sector.
- Overcrowding means the property is insufficient by one bedroom of the standard the council uses to allocate property.
- Applicants sharing kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities with a separate household. Applicants who choose to sublet their home will not be considered.
- Applicants with some need to move to a particular locality in Slough, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship. An example of this may be a frail older person needing designated housing and living outside of the borough with close family living in Slough. The lettings manager will consider if this need cannot be met by renting in the private sector.



Making an offer of housing

Offers are made to those who have been waiting the longest in each band and match an annual lettings plan. The plan will be an estimate of the number of vacancies expected each year. Occasionally when a property becomes available which is particularly suitable for an individual applicant who has specific needs it may be allocated to them even if they are not at the top of the housing register.

New affordable social housing developments may require a policy to enable a balanced and sustainable community. This local lettings policy will be aimed at social households opting to downsize.

Applicants well positioned for an offer of housing will be visited at home to confirm that the information given to the council is correct.

Original documents will be verified and suitability to be a council or housing association tenant will be confirmed. Staff will also make enquiries with third party organisations to verify the information on applications. References and/or credit checks may be sought. Applicants who are unable to provide any information requested or whose circumstances have changed will be removed from the housing register and/or placed in the relevant band. Applicants who give false information will be prosecuted.

If the council is unable to contact an applicant, using contact details provided, within 24 hours (excluding weekends) the application will be cancelled. Any potential offer that may have been made will be counted as a refusal.

Applicants nearing the top of the housing register may be invited to multiple viewings on vacancies. If the offer is declined by the first applicant then it will be offered to the next person on the list until the property is accepted.

If an applicant is unable to respond to any deadline in accepting an offer then it will count as a refusal. Second viewings are not normally considered.



The property size that will be allocated for a particular household will be assessed according to the following guidelines and will be based only on the actual household composition. The council uses the Government's bedroom standard for housing benefit. It is recommended that applicants confirm any housing benefit entitlement when accepting a property.

Applicants are entitled to a bedroom each for the following groups:

- Single or co-habiting couple.
- Any child over the age of 16 years.
- Any two children of the same sex under the age of 16 years.
- Any two children any sex aged under 10.

Any applicant who rejects two offers that would have reasonably met housing need will be removed from the housing register.

An applicant may re apply to join the register after a minimum period of 24 months. Any future application will be assessed according to the eligibility criteria.

Renewing applications

An application must be renewed every 12 months.

The application will be reassessed annually to ensure that the eligibility and qualification criteria are met and the correct priority band is awarded.

If a renewal request is not returned within one calendar month then the application will be cancelled. No reminder will be sent and any late responses will not be considered.

Changes in circumstance

The housing needs section must be notified if there are any household changes that may affect an application. A new application form must be completed.



The application will be reassessed and any extra priority may be removed and/or the application removed from the register.

Applicants who fail to notify the council of any changes may be prosecuted.

Cancelling an application

An application will be cancelled under the following circumstances:

- If an applicant is re-housed.
- If an applicant fails to respond to annual review letters or to officer contact requests.
- If an applicant is no longer eligible or qualifies.
- At an applicant's request.

Appeals and reviews

An applicant can request a review of the following:

- The assessment of an application.
- The priority awarded or decision to reduce priority.
- The cancellation of an application.
- The suitability of any offer made.
- The housing panel decision.

A senior officer will conduct any review relating to eligibility and qualification for the housing register.

A reviewing officer will conduct any review regarding the suitability of offers of accommodation.

The request for a review must be made within 21 days of the original decision.

Applicants may wish to take independent legal advice.

This document can be made available on audio tape, braille or in large print, and is also available on the website where it can easily be viewed in large print.

Housing Allocation Scheme 2013-2018 - How the scheme works

If you would like assistance with the translation of the information in this document, please ask an English speaking person to request this by calling 01753 475111.

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज में दी गई जानकारी के अनुवाद किए जाने की सहायता चाहते हैं तो कृपया किसी अंग्रेजी भाषी व्यक्ति से यह अनुरोध करने के लिए 01753 475111 पर बात करके कहें.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ 01753 475111 ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

Aby uzyskać pomoc odnośnie tłumaczenia instrukcji zawartych w niniejszym dokumencie, należy zwrócić się do osoby mówiącej po angielsku, aby zadzwoniła w tej sprawie pod numer 01753 475111.

Haddii aad doonayso caawinaad ah in lagu turjibaano warbixinta dukumeentigaan ku qoran, fadlan weydiiso in qof ku hadla Inriis uu ku Waco 01753 475111 si uu kugu codsado.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز میں دی گئی معلومات کے ترجمے کے سلسلے میں مدد چاہئے تو، براہ کرم ایک انگریزی بولنے والے شخص سے 01753 475111 پر کال کر کے اس کی درخواست کرنے کے لئے کہیں۔

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 30th March 2015

CONTACT OFFICER: Rudo Beremauro and Darren Gotch Assistant Engineers,
Regeneration Housing and Resources

(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875634

WARD(S): *Colnbrook with Poyle*

PART I

FOR INFORMATION

A4 Brands Hill

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the NCS Scrutiny Panel following the February meeting.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the progress the council is making on the service improvements associated with the No 78 service to Heathrow as a result of the Better Area Bus Fund.

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

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

Priorities:

- Health: Providing transport facilities that ensure residents can access the health services they need.
- Economy and Skills – Continue to provide residents with access to essential services by improving connections and journey times between work, home, leisure, school and making alternatives to the car more attractive.
- Regeneration and Environment; Improving facilities and access to bus services to increase the use of sustainable form of transport.
- Housing: Improved public transport links to the area, with quicker journey times for the bus routes serving the area and giving greater choices for residents as to where they can live and access work facilities.
- Safer Communities: Reduced traffic congestion at the location to improve the environment for residents at the location. This should make a place where people feel safe to live and visit.

Cross-Cutting themes:

Improving the image of the town: By enhancing the sustainable transport links to Heathrow Airport and beyond, with the reduction in journey times of local bus services.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

- Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow, and stay. By improving access to Heathrow Airport from Slough Trading Estate through alternative forms of sustainable transport in this instance buses, with the journey times reduced to appeal to more commuters.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

The better area bus project was entirely supported from funds allocated by the Dept. for Transport as part of a national scheme and this amounts to £1.415m of ring-fenced capital.

There are no further financial implications.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no reported risks associated with the recommendations stipulated in section 2.

(c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

(d) **Equalities Impact Assessment**

There is no requirement for an EIA as this report is to provide members on an update on current services and projects within the passenger transport section.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Are we too willing to fill-in bus lay byes? What do the main 2 bus operators say on this issue? (First Bus and London buses)

Bus companies were consulted before the scheme was implemented and no objections were received from them. *Please see attached supporting letters from Bus companies.*

The scheme follows both national and local transport policies and directly serves to implement elements of Slough Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 3 with regard to access to transport services and also contribute to community cohesion by improving journey time and reliability of bus journeys in Slough for journeys to work, home and school.

5.2 Should the project have started without putting parking restrictions in place?

Historically there have not been any parking issues on the site therefore there was no reason for this to be raised prior to the introduction of the scheme. However, once the scheme was implemented it was obvious that there was an issue and the required works to introduce the waiting and loading restriction were undertaken. The public consultation for the parking restriction has taken place without any objections being received,

5.3 Are 3 lane roads safe if there is no solid white line to separate traffic from head on collisions?

A single solid white line is not used to separate opposing traffic, double white lines maybe used to prevent overtaking on roads with very limited visibility to oncoming traffic or on three lane hills. Neither which is the case here. The appropriate marking for this road will be a standard centre longitudinal line to highlight the lines dividing the opposing traffic streams. Vehicular Traffic on roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less should not cross or straddle the line unless it is safe to do so. (Traffic Signs and Regulations and General Directions 2002).

5.4 Was citing bus stops opposite each other an error that should have been identified at the design stage?

The design of the scheme did not move the location of the bus stops as they have always been opposite each other, however they were situated in lay-bys. Following concerns after the implementation and the delays that were resulting from this alteration, a new location was identified. The Council is currently waiting for TfL to carry out the permanent works. However, we are currently trialling the location of the new bus stop to see the impact on the network after concerns raised by local residents. To date the trial and impact has allowed vehicles to safely overtake the bus and has reduced the delays.

5.5 Why, once alternatives to the safety audit recommendations were decided upon, did the changes take so long to implement?

The reason for the delays to the works is due to the Council having to wait for third parties to carry out the works. We have been in contact several times with TfL to try and ask for the works to be carried out sooner but due to their work schedule we are still waiting for the works to be undertaken.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

Please refer to the O&S Panel recommendations in December 2012

7. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to note that progress is being made on service provision through the supported bus subsidies and improvements to bus service journey times through the investment of the Better Area Bus Fund.

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Consultation document and letters of support

'B' - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 4-12-12

9. **Background Papers**

None

Supporting Letters

Transport for London



Mr Joe Carter
Head of Transport
Slough Borough Council
St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough
SL1 3UF

21 February 2012

Dear Mr Carter

Slough Borough Council – DfT Better Area Bus Fund Bid

I am writing in support of your bid to the DfT Better Area Bus Fund to implement a number of measures to improve bus punctuality along the A355 Farnham Road and A4 London Road corridors. This will bring significant benefits to a number of bus services operating across the Slough / London border, which provide links between Slough and the Heathrow area.

Usage on route 81 (Slough – Heathrow North – Hounslow), which is provided by Transport for London has seen significant growth of around 20% over the past 5 years. Plans are already in place to increase the Sunday daytime frequency from every 20 minutes to every 15 minutes in April 2012 (where usage has increased by 74% on this day over the past five years), to be followed by the introduction of brand new double deck buses later in the summer.

The proposals to provide a bus lane on the eastbound approach to Blandford Road South, to update the control at three key junctions on the A4 London Road and to incorporate bus priority, and to widen the A4 between M4 Junction 5 and the Brands Hill junction to provide 2 lanes eastbound will be of particular benefit to passengers using route 81, by speeding up journey times and improving reliability.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'P Bradley'.

Peter Bradley
Head of Consultation Delivery
STEngagement@tfl.gov.uk
Surface Transport
Transport for London

Consultation Delivery
Surface Planning
Transport for London

11th Floor, Zone G8
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ

Peter.Bradley@tfl.gov.uk

020 3054 0133

MAYOR OF LONDON

Heathrow Airport Limited

The Compass Centre,
Nelson Road, Hounslow,
Middlesex TW6 2GW

T: +44 (0)844 335 1801
W: heathrow.com

Registered in England No: 1991017
Registered Office: The Compass Centre, Nelson Road,
Hounslow, Middlesex TW6 2GW

Date: 07 February 2012

Tel: 07818 014853

Email: theo_panayi@baa.com

Joe Carter,
Head of Transport,
Slough Borough Council,
St Martins Place,
51 Bath Road,
Slough,
SL1 3UF.

Dear Joe,

Re: Slough Borough Council - Better Area Bus Fund

I am writing to support the above bid for the Department of Transport Better Area Bus Fund.

The proposed enhancements will continue to support Heathrow's Surface Access Strategy in its target to increase public transport mode share and reduce car borne journeys to and from the airport. In the last 10 years, bus use at Heathrow has increased significantly with over 15% of both passengers and airport workers using bus services.

The reduction in delays to buses serving Heathrow will also help deliver improvements to local air quality and to reduce emissions around the airport and will support the airports Air Quality Strategy.

As part of our continued commitment to improving bus services serving the airport Heathrow Airport Limited will work with both the local authorities and the operator to ensure these proposed enhancements are sustainable after the initial DfT funding period has ended.

I therefore welcome this bid and look forward to a positive outcome

Yours sincerely



Theo Panayi
Sustainable Transport Manager
Surface Access Team
Technical Standards & Assurance

Tel: 0208 541 9375



Mr Joe Carter
Head of Transport
Slough Borough Council
St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough
SL1 3UF

Surrey County Council
Room 340
County Hall
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2DY

23 February 2012

Dear Joe

Better Bus Area Fund Bid

Surrey County Council is delighted to support Slough Borough Council's bid to the Department for Transport's Better Bus Area Fund to make improvements to bus priority on the Route 78. These improvements will benefit one of the "7-series" routes operated by First and provide links to Heathrow Airport.

First interchanges vehicles between the various 7-series routes. Improvements to punctuality on any one of these routes will help ensure that other 7-series routes operate reliably as vehicles are deployed on different routes. In Surrey, this means we will benefit on the Route 71, which connects Egham and Staines to Slough, and Heathrow.

We enjoy close working links through the Runnymede Quality Bus Partnership in which Surrey County Council and Slough Borough Council are key players along with First and Heathrow Airport Limited. We expect that this good working relationship will continue and be expanded if we are both successful in our Better Bus Area Fund bids.

Slough Borough Council's bid to the Better Bus Area Fund complements our own bid. Both seek to deliver quicker and more reliable journeys, creating conditions where bus market share to Heathrow Airport can grow further, for both work and leisure journeys. We look forward to a productive working relationship in the delivery of both these bids.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Iain Reeve".

Iain Reeve
Assistant Director, Strategy, Transport and Planning

5th February 2012

Joe Carter
Head of Transport
Slough Borough Council
St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough
SL1 3UF



Coldborough House
Market Street
Bracknell
Berkshire RG12 1JA
Tel: 01344 782200
Fax: 01344 868332

Dear Joe

Better Bus Area Fund Bid

First is delighted to offer its support towards a Better Bus Area Bid for the Slough area.

Our bus network in Slough has become an important part of First's portfolio of operations. Investment in new vehicles and improved services has been possible through close partnership working, and some clever service adjustments have helped maximise the benefits for residents and workers.

Unfortunately traffic congestion in the area can be very unpredictable and delays due to motorway closures or road works is becoming more frequent. Additional vehicles and increased journey times have enabled services to cope on most days, but customers experience slower, more arduous journeys and fares have increased to cope with the higher operating costs.

One of the worst affected services is route 78 (Britwell – Heathrow T5). Timetabled journey times in the peaks have increased by almost 50 per cent in the last ten years, and recovery time at the end of the route has also gone up. The morning peak running time from Britwell to Langley (Trelawney Avenue) has increased from 33 minutes to 48 minutes, and in the other direction from 33 minutes to 43 minutes (not including the saving made by a more direct route in this direction that was introduced in 2010 to save time). However, punctuality still does not always meet the required standards. Additionally, customers need to consult the timetable due to the lack of memorable times, compared with the regular clock-face departures throughout the day previously advertised along the same route in 2002.

First has plans to add another vehicle to the schedule for route 78 in order to provide even more running time and recovery time between the peaks. However, this additional resource could be much better utilised by increasing frequencies at peak times. To do this we would need consistently quicker journeys (at least 5 minutes in each direction) through greater priority at traffic light junctions and along roads where congestion is most disruptive.



First Eelink Buses Limited
Registered in England number 2173403
Moorhall House, Paddington Station, London W2 1TY

Introducing bus priority along the 78 route would also assist several other bus services that serve the same roads, including bus routes operated by Arriva and RATP Dev (on behalf of Transport for London).

Quicker journey times throughout the day would make buses more attractive and provide customers with a viable alternative to driving. Better fuel consumption would reduce our operating costs and additional passengers travelling with us would result in less pressure to increase fares.

An improved peak-time frequency would mean mileage operated on route 78 would increase by 46.8 miles per day (Monday to Friday). Other routes may also benefit from the ability to redeploy resource and increase mileage.

This is a great opportunity to reverse the process of increasing journey times due to the worsening traffic conditions regularly being encountered. Punctuality and frequency are two factors that new customers expect when considering bus travel, and by improving the performance of the bus network First can consider additional services and/or fare reductions to encourage further growth in patronage.

We look forward to working with Slough Borough Council to identify various improvements along the 78 route which will help cut bus journey times and reduce car dependency.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Wool', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Wool
Revenue & Marketing Manager

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November 2012

Dear Resident,

Re: Notification of Works to Bus Stops outside No 569 & 534 London Road

The council is writing to inform the residents of London Road about the proposed works due to be carried out on the bus stops outside No 569 & 534 London Road. Journey Time Surveys have identified that the current bus stop arrangements are causing operational problems for buses. It is envisaged that the new design will improve journey times for buses and create a safer environment that will particularly benefit bus passengers and pedestrians within the area.

As part of the Councils objective to improve public transport in Slough, the existing bus lay-by's outside No 569 & 534 London Road will be redesigned. A new pedestrian ramp outside no 565 London Road will be introduced as part of the scheme.

As part of the works we are also improving the road layout to provide 2 lanes eastbound towards Heathrow Airport and 1 lane travelling westbound towards Langley.

To assist you in understanding the scheme there are plans on the back of this letter showing the works.

If you have any comments or questions about the scheme, please complete the attached questions and return to us. Alternatively please contact Rudo Beremauro, **Phone: 01753 475111 or Email: transportdevelopment@slough.gov.uk** or in writing to: **Transport, St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3UF.**

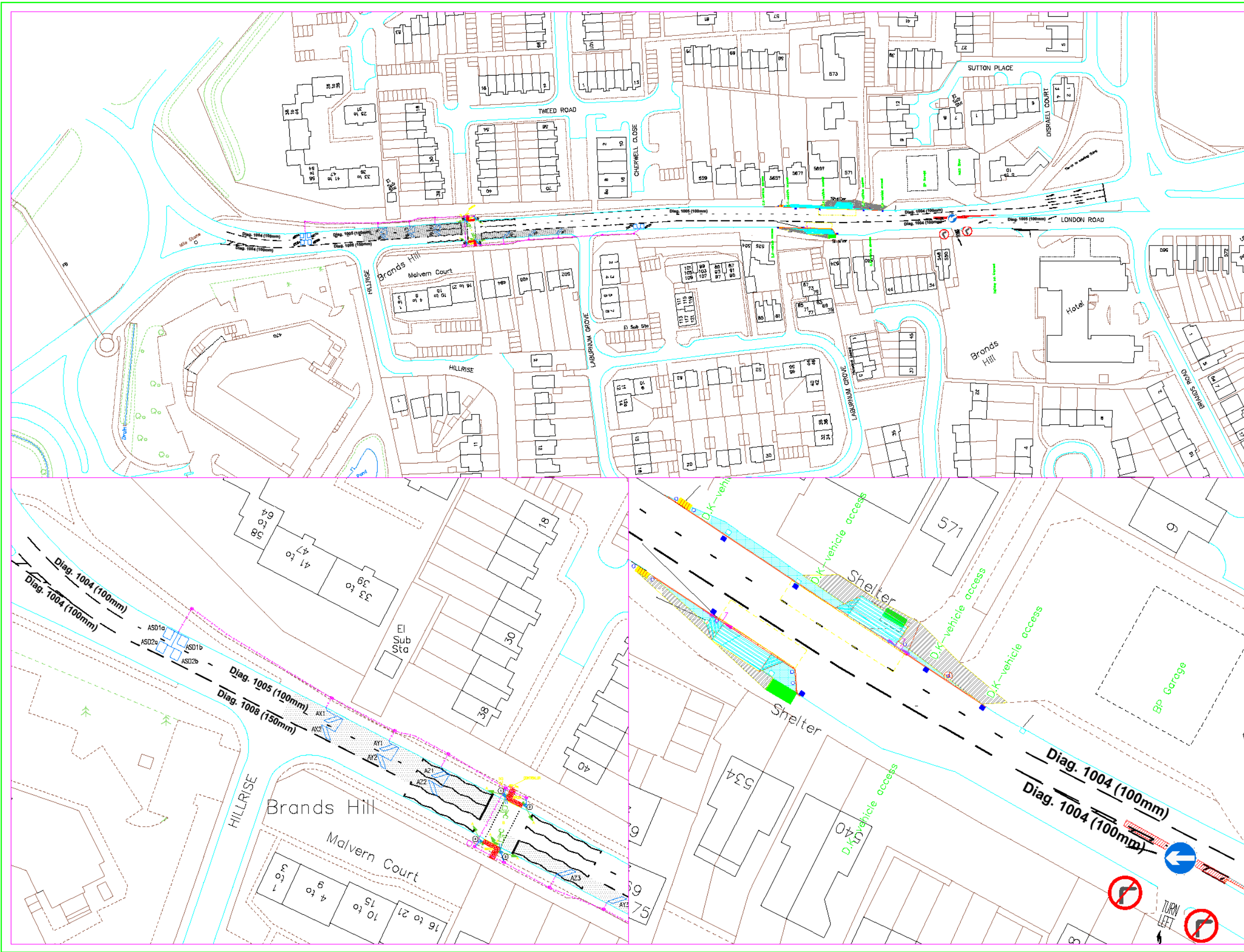
To view more details plans, please use the following link:

http://slough-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/sbc/transport/lay_bys_a4

Yours sincerely,



Rudo Beremauro
Assistant Engineer Integrated Transport



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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www.slough.gov.uk
Slough
 Borough Council

Department of Resources and Regeneration
 St. Martins Place,
 51 Bath Road,
 Slough, SL1 3PB

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Title
 A4/J5 to Sutton Lane
 Bus Stop &
 Layby Improvements
 Construction Layout

Scale 1:500 / 1:1000 Date 17/08/12
 Drawn/KM Checked

Drwg No. S9C/T1/T/00026

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: *Overview and Scrutiny*

DATE: **4th December 2012**

CONTACT OFFICER: Savio DeCruz – Team Leader Network Management and Matt Gamble Passenger Transport Officer
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875640

WARD(S): *All*

PART I

FOR INFORMATION

Better Bus Fund

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide an update on the £1.4m Better Area Bus Fund allocation and how it is being spent and an update for members on the current tendered bus services.

2. **Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to note the progress the council is making on the service improvements associated with the No 78 service to Heathrow and to note the council's position on the existing tendered bus services.

3. **Community Strategy Priorities**

- Economy and skills – Providing better access to Heathrow and jobs for Slough residents
- Health and wellbeing – Enabling all residents especially the vulnerable in Slough to have access to facilities in and around the town.
- Housing – Giving greater choices for residents as to where they can live and access work and/or facilities.
- Regeneration and environment – Improving the environment by providing better services to encourage local residents to use the bus rather than the private car.
- Safer communities – Regular services including evening provisions which will enable the more vulnerable from society to have freedom to travel in a secure environment.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The better area bus project, is entirely supported from funds allocated by the Dept. for Transport as part of a national scheme and this amounts to £1.415m of ring-fenced capital.

The council currently contributes approximately £391K/annum to supported bus services in the town with additional funding of £201K being also allocated to specific routes via S.106 contributions.

There are no further financial implications.

Risk Management

There are no reported risks associated with the recommendations stipulated in section 2.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EIA as this report is to provide members on an update on current services and projects within the passenger transport section.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Better Area Bus

Route 78 currently suffers from the effects of unpredictable traffic congestion. This manifests itself in a need to schedule buses to accommodate the effects of longer and less reliable journey times at peak, and even at times poor punctuality. The target for the Better Bus Area Fund bid is to improve journey time in each direction during peak periods. First in Berkshire, who operate this route have undertaken to keep the same number of buses on the route, but to use the saving in journey time to make the service more regular at peak. It is predicted that these improvements in regularity, punctuality and journey time will in turn attract more people to use the bus service instead of cars.

5.2 Summary of the Measures

The measures being implemented are designed to reduce delays primarily on route 78(between Britwell and Heathrow), but will benefit other bus routes both within Slough and between Slough, Heathrow Airport and High Wycombe. They will benefit not just services provided by First in Berkshire but also by Transport for London and Arriva the Shires who also operate services along this corridor . Many measures will also benefit general traffic and these consist of the following:

- Bus priority measures on congested approaches to key junctions on the A355 and A4 including bus lanes;

- Widening to 2 lanes eastbound the section of the A4 between M4 Junction 5 and Brands Hill (this can be accommodated within existing highway boundaries);
- Building on the success of Split cycle offset optimisation technique (SCOOT) traffic signal control on the A4 Bath Road by introducing SCOOT on the A355 Farnham Road with signalised bus priority;
- Updating key signalised junctions on the A4 London Road and in Langley;
- Infilling specific bus stop laybys on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph or less; and
- Some general bus stop improvements such real time (budget permitting)

5.3 Status of projects

These schemes are at various stages of preparation and officers envisage a phased implementation through to March 2014 to make the best use of available resource.

5.4 Supported Bus Services

Slough Borough Council's Local Transport Plan 3 Supplementary Document: Public Transport Strategy (November 2011) sets out the Council's powers and statutory responsibilities in an environment where most bus services are provided on a commercial basis. It describes the coverage that bus services provide in Slough and analyses the opportunities and constraints to further improving bus services. It puts forward a virtuous scenario in which faster, more frequent and more punctual bus journeys attract more passengers from car and help to reduce congestion on Slough's highway network while contributing to the town's economic prosperity.

5.5 Patronage

Overall patronage on bus services has been growing. In 2004/5 3,941,000 passenger journeys per year started on buses in Slough. By 2011/12, this had grown 32% to 5,217,000.

5.6 Subsidy

Slough Borough Council currently provides subsidy on certain routes or services to:

- Maintain some services where accessibility would otherwise be judged to be unacceptable. In practice there are at present 2 areas – Goldsworthy Way, and The Rochfords;
- Maintain a level of service provision during evenings and Sundays at times when these services carry insufficient passengers to be profitable. This constitutes the vast majority of Slough Borough Council's spend on supported bus services. A review conducted in 2008, in which passengers were interviewed, found that these were heavily used by workers;
- A service procured by Bracknell Forest Borough Council that provides a good level of access between Britwell and Wexham Park Hospital as part of a longer route (Route 53).
- We also currently procure a service using 'section 106' developer funding from Eton College (routes 3 and 4 between Slough and Cippenham Green).

5.7 These routes have been tendered for, and are on a 3 year, annually renewable contract. The contracts are in their second year. Given the extensive changes to

the network this year, including the Heart of Slough and Chalvey regeneration projects, we do not intend to retender these contracts until the end of 2013.

5.8 Heathrow Airport

Slough Borough Council has agreed a framework with First in Berkshire, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) with respect to First's bus routes serving the Airport, starting in 2011/12. This aims to keep the total payments to First (concessions and supported services) from all three bodies constant in cash terms through to 2014/15. With an increasing contribution from HAL, this means that the support provided both by Slough Borough Council and RBWM reduces. If current trends continue, contract payments on Heathrow services can be expected to fall to zero by 2014/2015.

5.9 Plans for the future

We will consider how the 'non-Heathrow' services can be secured whilst maintaining the current benefits (including timetable publicity and common ticketing) that arise from their current operation by First.

Members may wish to note that all bus operators currently receive Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG). This is a partial rebate of duty paid on fuel. Government intends to cease paying BSOG to operators for services procured by local transport authorities. Instead these funds will be paid directly to the local transport authority concerned. Government intends to do this from October 2013. This means that the cost of bus service contracts are likely to increase, while there is currently no clarity as to whether government funding to local authorities will increase in real terms.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

No comments to be added.

7. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to note that progress is being made on service provision through the supported bus subsidies and improvements to bus service journey times through the investment of the Better Area Bus Fund.

8. **Background Papers**

'1' Better Area Bus Fund Bid

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 30th March 2015

CONTACT OFFICER: Dave Gordon – Scrutiny Officer
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875411

WARDS: All

PART I

TO NOTE

**NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
 2014/15 WORK PROGRAMME**

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 For the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (NCS Panel) to discuss its current work programme.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

2.1 That the Panel note the current work programme for the 2014/15 municipal year.

3. **Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

- **Housing**
- **Regeneration and Environment**
- **Safer Communities**

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. The NCS Panel, along with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and other Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

3.2 In particular, the NCS Panel specifically takes responsibility for ensuring transparency and accountability for Council services relating to housing, regeneration and environment, and safer communities.

4. **Supporting Information**

4.1 The current work programme is based on the discussions of the NCS Panel at previous meetings, looking at requests for consideration of issues from officers and issues that have been brought to the attention of Members outside of the Panel's meetings.

4.2 The work programme is a flexible document which will be continually open to review throughout the municipal year.

5. **Conclusion**

5.1 This report is intended to provide the NCS Panel with the opportunity to review its upcoming work programme and make any amendments it feels are required.

6. **Appendices Attached**

A - Work Programme for 2014/15 Municipal Year

7. **Background Papers**

None.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

Meeting Date

Monday 30 March 2015

- Garages
- Housing Allocations Policy Implementation and Implications
 - Rehousing of residents affected by new housing benefits rules
 - Incentives to encourage residents to move
 - Allocations and Vulnerable residents
- A4 Brands Hill – rejection of safety audit recommendations
- Sub-letting fraud amnesty

Currently Un-programmed:

- SSE contract – waiting for engineers
- Waste strategy – June 2015
- Road Safety Strategy – was for 30th March, moved as delayed.
- Transport Working Group (now Transport Forum) – review of progress (to be taken in summer 2015)
- Update on Neighbourhood Services littering, fly tipping and enviro-crime pilot project – Summer 2015
- Update on Real Time Passenger Information – Cabinet Member – Summer 2015
- Environmental Services & waste management scorecard – 29th June 2015
- Domestic abuse and VMAP pilot findings – September 2015

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MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD
NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2014 – 15

	MEETING DATES						
COUNCILLOR	03/07/2014	04/09/2014	29/10/2014	02/12/2015	07/01/2015	26/02/2015	30/03/2015
Chahal						Ap	
Coad	P	P	P	Ap	P		
Holledge	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Malik	P	P	P	Ap	P	P	
Mansoor	P	P	P*	Ap	P*	Ap	
Plenty	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Shah	P	P	P	Ap	P	P	
Sohal	P*	P*	P	Ap	P	P	
Sidhu	Ap	Ab	Ab	Ap	Ab	P	
Wright	P	Ap	P	P	P	P	

P = Present for whole meeting
 Ap = Apologies given

P* = Present for part of meeting
 Ab = Absent, no apologies given

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