

Date of issue: Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL</b> (Councillors Plenty (Chair), Anderson, Davis, N Holledge, Rana, Rasib, Swindlehurst and Wright)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	TUESDAY, 4TH APRIL, 2017 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	VENUS SUITE 2, ST MARTINS PLACE, 51 BATH ROAD, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE, SL1 3UF
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	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.



**ROGER PARKIN**  
Interim Chief Executive

**AGENDA**

**PART 1**

**AGENDA  
ITEM**

**REPORT TITLE**

**PAGE**

**WARD**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

1. Declarations of Interest

*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.*

*The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest.*

*All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.*

- |    |  |        |
|----|--|--------|
| 2. | Minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd March 2017 | 1 - 6  |
| 3. | Action Progress Report                             | 7 - 10 |
| 4. | Member Questions                                   |        |

*(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.)*

### **SCRUTINY ISSUES**

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 5. | Football Pitch Hire - Verbal Update                   |         |
| 6. | Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2017 - 47       | 11 - 50 |
| 7. | Overview of Homelessness in the Borough               | 51 - 60 |
| 8. | Development Initiative Slough Housing - Verbal Update |         |

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- |     |                                       |         |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 9.  | Yellow Box Junctions                  | 61 - 64 |
| 10. | Attendance Record                     | 65 - 66 |
| 11. | Date of Next Meeting - 26th June 2017 |         |

#### **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.

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**Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 2nd March, 2017.**

**Present:-** Councillors Plenty (Chair), Anderson, Davis, N Holledge, Rana and Wright

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillor Bains

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Rasib and Swindlehurst

**PART 1**

**43. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were given in relation to the agenda items.

**44. Minutes of the last meeting held on 17th January 2017**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be approved as an accurate record.

**45. Action Progress Report**

The Panel sought further clarification as to the exact decision made by Cabinet regarding the road network in the Market Lane area on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

**Resolved:** That the update on actions arising be noted.

**46. Member Questions**

The answers received to the members' questions were circulated to the Panel. The information regarding the littering project would be sent to members once available. The Panel would then make a decision as to how to proceed.

Regarding the hire of football pitches, the Panel sought more granular information. They were concerned that increased rent prices had discouraged teams in the area, and may have caused them to move away from the Slough Borough Council (SBC) area.

As a result, the Panel requested that an agenda item be added to the work programme. This would address more detailed information, such as:

- Which teams have ceased hiring SBC pitches? Are they teams based in Slough, or were they from outside the area and had been using SBC premises as they had been cheaper?
- What has happened to the level of income raised by hiring pitches? Have any other savings (e.g. maintenance of pitches) been made?

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 02.03.17

- Are the facilities being used for free for training due to lax security?

**Resolved:** That an item on the hiring of football pitches be added to the agenda for 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### 47. Thames Valley Police Overview

Thames Valley Police (TVP) had identified five local police priorities: protecting children and vulnerable adults, reducing harm caused by domestic violence, investing in staff, disrupting organised crime groups and community engagement.

Regarding the concern raised by Council on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the number of rapes in Slough had declined by 4% (with a larger decline in non-domestic rape). However, other sexual offences had risen from 149 to 167, leading to an overall increase in all such offences of 5%. The reporting year would end in April 2017, and final figures would be available soon after this date. In terms of actions on sexual offences, the Parks and Open Spaces Task & Finish Group was specifically looking at assaults in public places. Meanwhile, the stated focus on domestic violence included domestic sexual assaults, and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults also include such crimes.

The Local Policing Area Commander was focusing traffic policing efforts on high casualty areas. In addition, travelling criminals were also being targeted; however, these priorities were not decided locally (although Slough Police Officers could make recommendations).

The balance of Police Constables and Police Community Support Officers had not changed drastically over the last 5 years. Slough would be receive an additional 12 new PCs by June 2017. Overall, Slough was often quoted as a an area of good practice for neighbouring authorities.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

- The Panel wished to note the publication of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's report into TVP's effectiveness. The rating of 'good' was noted and welcomed.
- The Council's motion on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017 had called for the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) to prioritise its response to counter serious sex crimes and reduce fear. In order to achieve this, Salt Hill Park had been identified as a key area for work. Although there were some concerns that geo-coding (e.g. an attack which took place outside the park, but saw the call made to report it made in Salt Hill Park, could be logged as having occurred in the Park) could have altered the statistics. Nevertheless, it was indisputable that high profile crimes had taken place there which had led to increased fear in the local population. However, as the number of rapes had decreased (and a local serial offender had been convicted), the situation was not considered to be at a crisis level. Patterns of crime were reviewed on a daily basis, and any patterns which raised concerns. However, the

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 02.03.17

Panel wanted sight of the 2013 – 2016 SSP report. This report was currently being updated.

- Other initiatives (e.g. bushes being kept low, parks team keeping floodlights on, fire brigade vehicles shining their lights as they pass, horses in the High Street and public parks) had further improved the level of safety in Salt Hill Park. However, it would take time for the perception of this improvement to become real, leading to Salt Hill Park still seeing reduced levels of footfall.
- Any work undertaken to prioritise sexual assault needed to be sustainable. Given this, a number of events were being held within local communities (e.g. poetry days in parks, sports events) to alter perceptions and offer greater community ownership of these spaces. These offered solutions which changed views over the long term, and also were not cost intensive at a time of budgetary pressure for police forces.
- In addition, TVP and SSP were working in other parks to ensure that offences in Salt Hill Park did not transfer to other public spaces.
- Organised crime and drug dealing were identified as corporate priorities for policing. A multi agency meeting would take place to discuss Kennedy House in Harrison Way; meanwhile, the Slough Local Safeguarding Children's Board had raised the issue of the trade in drugs. All agencies involved were committed to early intervention and a joint response involving parents for maximum impact. TVP were also aware of the role of gang affiliation in forming permanent habits and altering behaviour.
- CCTV had been identified as an effective deterrent in areas owned by SBC, and would be used as appropriate.
- Nitrous Oxide use had been discussed under the banner of anti-social behaviour. Whilst TVP could remove it from people's possession, and any littering it caused could be treated as an offence, the gas itself was not an illegal narcotic.
- Domestic abuse had risen; whilst TVP were confident that this had been caused by greater levels of reporting from the local community, they were also aware that not all cases were being relayed to them. However, concerted efforts had been made to be more receptive and welcoming to those seeking to report cases to TVP.
- Members reinforced their desire to see TVP representation at all meetings of local Neighbourhood Action Groups.
- TVP was undertaking a full review of street lighting, and would base its judgements on information received from a variety of agencies and its own professional verdict. However, its ability to enforce greater lighting was restricted in areas under private ownership. It also needed to evaluate the potential for lighting to attract, rather than discourage, anti-social behaviour in some areas.
- SBC had put 5 cameras at key junctions to enforce red light offences it is possible that these could also be used to monitor the correct use of yellow box junctions. Whilst SBC had installed the cameras, TVP are responsible for its operation and take any revenue raised.

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 02.03.17

- Bad driving was monitored by plain car road policing (although these were not dedicated to the matter), roving vehicles and other available resources. However, it was very difficult to identify the exact level of priority or expenditure given to this matter. Police were aware of 'hot spots' for poor driving (e.g. Tuns Lane Interchange).
- The SSP would soon be undertaking a perception survey, which would be used to support community engagement.

### Resolved:

1. That a report for information on the respective powers of TVP and SBC, proposals for cameras, progress made on their installation, the associated costs and the positive effects of cameras for yellow box junctions be taken by the Panel on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
2. That a report for information supplying detailed information on sexual assaults, criminal and non-recordable sexual violence, domestic abuse and the actions of TVP and the SSP be taken on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. This report will also include a summary of the work of the Parks and Public Spaces Task & Finish Group.
3. That the issue of sexual violence be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017, which will be attended by the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC)
4. That the executive summary of the 2016 strategic assessment by the Safer Slough Partnership be circulated to the Panel.

## 48. Safer Slough Partnership Update

The SSP is Slough's statutory community safety partnership. It has recently been the subject of a reshaping and refocusing to ensure it had greater agility and made the best use of its resources. In addition, the work on safeguarding was more clearly co-ordinated; the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and its adult equivalent had the same Chair (Nick Georgiou), who is now a member of the SSP. In terms of SBC officers, Ginny de Haan (Head of Consumer Protection) sits on the Adult Safeguarding Board, and Garry Tallett (Community Safety Partnership Manager) is a member of the Children's Safeguarding Board.

The SSP's priorities and focus are based on local data and reflected that of TVP, with a new Performance Management Group established and the creation of the SSP Performance Management Framework clarifying the body's work and the delineation of responsibilities. The previous strategic group were not ideally aligned with the operational groups, and reshape has now improved communication and outcomes.

The Strategy Map outlined the SSP's work in clear terms, with all areas now having lead officers identified. As a result, the SSP has greater confidence that the new structure, membership of the body and strategic focus were in line with its aims and objectives. Given this, there was optimism that 2017 – 18 would seem tangible outcomes.

The Panel raised the following points in discussion:

## Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel - 02.03.17

- Attendance from member organisations had previously been an issue; however, the last 2 meetings had seen much better engagement. The streamlining of meetings, with clear agendas and papers sent out well in advance, had significantly improved the meetings and had helped convince partners that outcomes would be achieved.
- Whilst the SSP had discussed sexual violence under different focuses specified by the partnership (e.g. domestic violence, crime prevention), the Panel argued that a specific focus explicitly targeted at sexual violence would be preferable. However, it was noted that , the Parks and Open Spaces Task & Finish Group was focused on the sexual violence which had led to the Council's motion on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016.
- Modern slavery was a specific focus, as it was an emerging risk. At present, the SSP suspected that there was a local issue but recognised the need for more work in this area to increase awareness and identify potential areas of concern.
- Female genital mutilation was part of the violence against women and girls (VAWG) partnership approach. The cases identified thus far were historic, and often discovered by maternity staff at hospital). Schools also reported, and were often erring on the side of reporting when confronted with cases where there concerns but no specific evidence. Schools staff and early years carers were also receiving training on the matter.
- The CSE Licensing Splinter Group specifically focusing on increasing awareness of child sexual exploitation had been nominated for a national award.

**Resolved:** That the Panel recommend that the Safer Slough Partnership create a specific focus dedicated solely to sexual violence.

### 49. Forward Work Programme

**Resolved:** That the work programme be noted.

### 50. Attendance Record

**Resolved:** That the attendance record be noted.

### 51. Date of Next Meeting - 4th April 2017

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.23 pm)

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**Action Progress Report – Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel**

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016**

<b>Minute:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>For:</b>	<b>Report Back To: Date:</b>
23	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the specification for the new contract be circulated to members before Christmas 2016.</li> </ol>	Transport	NCS Scrutiny Panel Christmas 2016
24	<p>An Annual Review would be compiled to capture this information and analyse its implications for the service. The gap analysis was also being modified to bolster the work of SBC's housing service, and it was recommended that this be presented on a yearly basis to the Panel.</p>	Housing	NCS Scrutiny Panel 2017 - 18
26	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved for consideration by the Residents Board and other residents' groups.</li> </ol>	Housing	Councillors March 2017
26	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. That SBC seek alternative methods of raising funds for the Housing Revenue Account.</li> </ol>	Housing	NCS Scrutiny Panel Ongoing
27	<p>A Members' Briefing would be held on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to advise on the evaluation of bidders. This would be followed by presentations on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 by the final 3 bidders. The preferred bidder would then be nominated in April 2017, with due diligence to be undertaken and a transitional period negotiated to allow the new service provider to take over on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.</p>	Housing	NCS Scrutiny Panel Dates as outlined in minute

## 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Minute:	Action:	For:	Report Back To: Date:
35	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Panel recommend, given the fact that only permanent counters are currently collecting data relating to the impact of the bridge closure, Cabinet ends the experimental scheme at the first opportunity.</li> </ol>	Cabinet	NCS Scrutiny Panel 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2017
35	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. That the Panel recommend Slough Borough Council (SBC) develop a package based on the reopening of Market Lane and a realigned bridge (as offered by HS2).</li> </ol>	Transport	NCS Scrutiny Panel Upon HS2's offer
36	<p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Panel would support a one-off request for additional funding for the allotment service.</p>	Allotments Service	NCS Scrutiny Panel As appropriate
39	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Panel stress the importance of ensuring that any successor system works before the new contract is offered.</li> </ol>	Transport	NCS Scrutiny Panel As appropriate
39	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. That the specification return to the Panel when suitable.</li> </ol>	Transport	NCS Scrutiny Panel As appropriate

## 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

Minute:	Action:	For:	Report Back To: Date:
47	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That a report for information supplying detailed information on sexual assaults, criminal and non-recordable sexual violence, domestic abuse and the actions of TVP and the SSP be taken on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. This report will also include a summary of the work of the Parks and Public Spaces Task &amp; Finish Group.</li> </ul>	Thames Valley Police / Safer Slough Partnership	NCS Scrutiny Panel 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
47	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the issue of sexual violence be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017.</li> </ul>	Cllr Plenty / Cllr Nazir	OSC 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
47	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the 2013 – 16 report by the Safer Slough Partnership be circulated to the Panel.</li> </ul>	Safer Slough Partnership	NCS Scrutiny Panel 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
48	<p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That the Panel recommend that the Safer Slough Partnership create a specific focus dedicated solely to sexual violence.</li> </ul>	Safer Slough Partnership	NCS Scrutiny Panel As appropriate

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhood and Community Services Scrutiny Panel  
**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Mike England, Interim Strategic Director  
**(For all enquiries)** Regeneration, Housing, and Resources  
(01753) 875300  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2017-2047**

1 **Purpose of Report**

Council housing in the Borough is managed through a separate financial account – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.) This report presents an update on the HRA Business Plan published in October 2016. It is a requirement for local authority landlords to publish a HRA Business Plan setting out its financial commitments and spend priorities for the following 30 years.

2 **Recommendations**

The Panel is requested to consider and comment on the updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

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

Good quality homes are integral to the wellbeing of everyone. The provision of low cost, affordable social (council) housing therefore plays a fundamental role in supporting the delivery of Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy. The new Housing Strategy will set out how the Council sees its role in improving housing conditions and opportunities in the borough, including in social housing.

Housing and Neighbourhood Services have a wide range of skills, knowledge and legal powers available to officers to take action to address anti-social behaviour and work in partnership with Thames Valley Police to tackle crime and domestic abuse. The Tenancy Sustainment Team work closely with council colleagues to support vulnerable residents, offering a free handyman service aimed at carryout DIY work to prevent falls and other risks of injury within residents' homes. The service takes a holistic approach to responding to the needs of the borough's neighbourhoods and the communities that live in them. Access and customer care are key principles underpinning the Regulatory Framework which applies to the Council's landlord services, requiring Neighbourhood Services to ensure that services are open and accessible to all.

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

The HRA Business Plan links to the following Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Health – the links between decent housing and health are well documented
- Regeneration and Environment – the HRA Business Plan sets out how the service will contribute to regenerating and investing in improvements to the built environment
- Housing – The repair, maintenance and investment in the Council's housing assets is funded directly by the HRA
- Safer Communities – The HRA funds the Council's anti-social behaviour service to manage problems that is caused or suffered by the Council's tenants or leaseholders

#### **Cross-Cutting themes:**

The Council's approach to managing its housing assets is based on encouraging and supporting its tenants and leaseholders to be accountable and responsible for their actions and take civic responsibility for their homes, their neighbourhoods and the communities they live in. Residents are supported and encouraged to maintain their neighbourhood and their home which, in turn, contributes towards improving the image of the town,

### 3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The HRA Business Plan will help to deliver all of the Five Year Plan outcomes, but in particular:

- Outcome 1; Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives;
- Outcome 2; Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs;
- Outcome 4; Our residents will have access to good quality homes

### 4 **Other Implications**

#### a) **Financial**

At the core of the HRA Business Plan is a series of 30 year financial projections. The key financial issues are therefore dealt with in the Business Plan itself.

#### b) **Risk Management**

Risk management issues are set out in Section 11 of the Business Plan.

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

There are no Human Rights Act implications relating to this Business Plan. There may be legal implications as the details of emerging Government policy are made clear. For this reason the Business Plan will be reviewed again in March 2018 to fully understand any legal implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments are routinely carried out as part of operational service delivery and reviews. There are no equality related issues in relation to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

(e) Property

The HRA Business Plan supports the Council's ambition to maintain and invest in its current housing assets whilst continuing to deliver a development programme to build new, affordable homes in Slough. Detailed descriptions of the implications on property are included in the body of the Plan.

(f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

The re-commissioning of the repairs, maintenance and investment contract will provide opportunities to reduce carbon emissions in Council owned homes.

## 5 Supporting Information

### **Background to the HRA Business Plan**

- 5.1 Slough Borough Council owns and manages over 7,100 rented and leasehold homes. This is the Council's most valuable physical asset. A wide and diverse range of residents are accommodated in council homes across a range of income groups. However, they are a particularly important resource for households on low or modest incomes who cannot afford to house themselves in homes available on the private market. Its significance is increasing as house prices and private sector rents escalate. Demand for council homes is high and far outstrips supply. Council housing is also vital for the economic future of Slough in that it provides affordable accommodation for people who work in the borough.
- 5.2 The Council's ambition is to retain ownership of its good quality housing stock, regenerate areas where this is necessary, build new homes and offer homes to residents at affordable rents. The Your Homes, Our Homes Project is seeing the re-commissioning of repairs, maintenance and investment services which will offer opportunities to invest in Slough's neighbourhoods and communities further and to provide truly customer focussed services to residents. It will also provide the opportunity to build a local, in-house capacity to undertake maintenance work. The Council remains committed to realising its vision of ensuring that neighbourhoods provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents and visitors.
- 5.3 The management and maintenance of council homes is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA.) It is a requirement for local authority landlords to publish a HRA Business Plan setting out its financial commitments and spend priorities for the following 30 years. Slough's draft HRA Business Plan 2017- 2047 can be found at the Appendix to this report. This is an update on the version of the Business Plan published in October 2016. At that stage there was considerable uncertainty surrounding the Business Plan and it was agreed to provide an update in March 2017 when it was hoped these uncertainties would have been resolved.

## Key Points from the Business Plan

- 5.4 In the short term the HRA is strong and this will allow the Council to continue to invest £100 million over the next 7 years to repair, maintain and invest in its current stock, whilst realising its ambition to invest £40 million in developing new, affordable, homes over the next 4 years. However, there are significant uncertainties and threats in the near future, including:
- The long term impact on income of the Government taking control of rent setting. Council rents will fall by 1% in each of the 4 years from 2016/17 and the Government's intentions beyond this are unknown.
  - The impact of the forced sale of some 'higher value' Council homes as they become empty to fund the discounts offered to housing association tenants under the Voluntary Right to Buy.
  - The effect on HRA income of welfare reforms and, in particular, the introduction of Universal Credit and further caps on the total amount of benefits that a household can receive.
- 5.5 The plan shows that if the impact of these, operating either singly or in combination, is significant, this could threaten existing investment plans and lead to the Council being faced with difficult choices on how to prioritise investment.

## Significant Updates since the October 2016 Plan

- 5.6 A number of significant amendments and updates have been made to the Business Plan since the publication of the October 2016 version;
- **Pay to Stay;** The Plan has been updated to take account of the welcome decision by the Government not to proceed on a compulsory basis with its proposals to charge higher rents to households with a gross household income of over £31,000 per year.
  - **RMI/Stock Condition;** Within the RMI project the Council now has the benefit of headline data from the Stock Condition Survey, estimating investment needs over the life of the Plan. This has shown that broadly speaking budgets for works within the Plan should be sufficient and this has helped remove one area of uncertainty that was discussed in detail in the October 2016 Plan.
  - **Financial Modelling;** The financial modelling and sensitivity analysis in Section 9 has been updated to roll budgets forward one year and to take account of other changes, such as data arising from the RMI project;
  - **Rents on new developments;** Section 8 of the Plan has been amended to reflect the work that is currently in train to update the Council's policies on Affordable Housing, including the idea of a "Slough Living Rent" based around average local incomes.
  - **Options Appraisal;** The Options Appraisal into the future of the Council's housing stock is now well underway, overseen by a Consultative Group chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal. The Group includes residents, an Independent Residents' Adviser, members, officers and external experts who are supporting the process. An interim report on the Appraisal was received by Cabinet on 20 March 2017. In approving the recommendations, Cabinet agreed that in the light of the projected loss of housing stock over the life of the Business Plan, "doing nothing" was not an option. However, Cabinet also formally ruled out the possibility of a large scale transfer of the housing stock to a Registered Provider (Housing



Association) as this was not financially viable. The Options Appraisal is due to report in December 2017.

## **Outstanding Uncertainties arising from Government Policy**

- 5.7 There are two areas in particular where emerging Government policy, or rather the delayed clarification of it, is prolonging major uncertainty within the HRA Business Plan;
- **Rents Policy;** The Business Plan already takes account of the Government's decision to reduce council rents in each of the 4 years from 2016/17. However, Government is yet to announce its plans for rents after 2020. This is affecting the business plans of all social landlords, including housing associations and all local authorities which still own their housing stock. In the Housing White Paper published in February 2017 the Government said it still intended to produce guidance but did not give a date. This is a major uncertainty for the HRA Business Plan in Slough and is discussed in detail in the sensitivity analysis.
  - **Sale of High Value Voids;** Government has legislated to allow it to require local authorities to pay a levy to Government reflecting the local authority's ability to generate receipts from the sale of High Value Void property. Government has confirmed that a levy will not be made in 2017/18 and details of how this provision will work have not yet been published. However, this has the potential to have a major impact on the Business Plan over the next few years.

## **6 Comments of Other Committees**

The October 2016 version of the Business Plan was considered by this Panel on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 and by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017. This updated Plan will be considered by Cabinet on 18 April 2017.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 In the medium and longer term the Council may need to make some tough decisions about priorities for investment and how to mitigate risks to the HRA. Careful management of the HRA up to this point means that the Council is in a position to manage this change successfully and to ensure the Council's housing finances are sustainable in the long-term. The challenge will be to establish whether it can do this without losing its ambition both to maintain existing homes to a high standard and to build new affordable homes for the residents of Slough.
- 7.2 Emerging Government policy, legislative changes, a crucial upgrading in the Council's data around the condition of its housing stock and the potentially transformational impact of a new repairs, maintenance and investment contract, will all take their course during the year following the publication of this Plan. It is hoped that some of the remaining uncertainties about the Plan, particularly Government policy on rents and High Value Voids, will be resolved over the next few months and can be considered within the next update of the Plan in March 2018.
- 7.3 In addition to this, the Council's Options Appraisal on the future of its housing stock is well underway. This will take a long-term view on how the Council can both sustain the existing housing stock in good condition and maximise the delivery of new affordable homes. The Appraisal will report in December 2017 and will be fed into the new HRA Business Plan in March 2018.

8 **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2017-2047

# Slough Borough Council Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2017-2047



# Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016-2046

<b>Index</b>	<b>Page No</b>
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	6
3. Governance and Resident Involvement	7
4. Neighbourhood and Housing Stock Profile	7
5. External Operating Environment	9
6. Landlord Services	10
7. Repair, Maintenance and Investment Priorities	12
8. Development and Regeneration Programme	14
9. Financial Modelling and Projections	19
10. Looking Forward	24
11. Risk Management	26
Appendix 1. Action Plan	
Appendix 2: Budget	

# 1. Executive Summary

Slough Borough Council owns and manages over 7,100 rented and leasehold homes funded within a separate financial account – the Housing Revenue Account ('the HRA'). Its ambition is to retain ownership of its good quality housing stock, regenerate areas where this is necessary, build new homes and offer homes to residents at affordable, but realistic, rents.

In the short term the HRA remains financially strong and will allow the council to continue to invest £100 million over the next 7 years to repair, maintain and invest in its current stock, whilst investing £40 million in directly developing new, affordable, homes over the next 4 years.

This follows the regeneration of Britwell, which saw the Council investing significantly in improving the infrastructure and safety of the area as well as delivering a new community hub and 258 new homes.

The Your Homes, Our Homes Project will see the re-commissioning of repairs, maintenance and investment services which will offer opportunities to invest in Slough's neighbourhoods and communities further and to provide truly customer focussed services to residents. It will also provide the opportunity to build a local, in-house capacity to undertake maintenance work. The Council remains committed to realising its vision of ensuring that neighbourhoods provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents and visitors.

The Council's priorities for service delivery will be to:

- Design and commission an innovative repairs, maintenance and investment service;
- Engage and empower residents to influence decisions that affect them, their home or their neighbourhood;
- Deliver efficiencies to maximise income and commercial opportunities to generate additional income to invest in the Council's housing stock and contribute to the development of new, affordable, homes;
- Achieve value for money through the rigorous management of contractors and other agencies;
- Take prompt, effective action to tackle anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime to ensure that all neighbourhoods provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents and visitors

## Case Study: 'Milestone'

'Milestone' is the first resident-led development project to be delivered by Slough Urban Renewal, which is a 50:50 joint venture company that is owned by the Council and Morgan Sindall Investment Ltd.

The development, which started on site in Spring 2015, is located between Ledgers Road and Montem Lane. It includes a mix of private properties and 23 affordable homes for rent (a mix of apartments and houses), acquired by the Council upon completion.

With a high quality internal and external specification and impressive landscaping, Milestone is the first of a pipeline of projects to be delivered on the Council's behalf by Slough Urban Renewal that will increase the supply of modern, energy efficient and affordable homes for rent.

- Deliver a focussed landlord service that meets the Council's statutory housing duties and complies with current legislation and which is accessible to all of the Council's current and potential tenants and leaseholders
- Review the Tenancy Strategy and the Allocations Policy to reflect the Council's aims and ambitions as well as residents' needs and expectations.

Priorities for investment of HRA resources will be:

- Repairs, maintenance and investment programmes for Council owned homes
- £40 million developing new homes for residents in need of affordable homes.
- Compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements in relation to services delivered
- Shifting the money spent on works to property away from reactive day to day repairs and towards planned and cyclical maintenance and investment works
- Modernising and maximising the use of IT systems to achieve efficiency savings

The Council has taken an ambitious but responsible approach to the management of its housing finances. An important part of this is its approach to borrowing and debt. The Government has set a limit of £177 million on the total amount of debt the council can use for the HRA. None of the current commitments will trigger borrowing up to this level. Our Treasury management is responsible and prudent and focussed on lowering the amount of debt in order to reduce interest payments. The Council is committed to repaying as much of its debt as possible but acknowledges that we are not in a position to pay off debt in its entirety at the present time. This treasury management policy will be reviewed as part of the comprehensive Options Appraisal currently underway.

Over the next 4 years the Council is committed to using its reserves to fund the programme to build new homes whilst maintaining at least £1 million in reserves to protect the HRA from unexpected fluctuations in income and expenditure. Beyond this the Council will need to decide on the right balance between investing in new and existing homes in the short and medium term, which will increase liabilities, and containing or reducing debt. One factor in this decision will be the rent levels to charge on newly-built homes.

Although the HRA is strong in the short term, there are significant uncertainties and threats in the future, including:

- The long term impact on income of the Government taking control of rent setting;
- The impact of Government policy to forced the sale of 'higher value' Council homes as they become empty
- The effect on HRA income of welfare reforms and, in particular, the introduction of Universal Credit and further caps on the total amount of benefits that a household can receive

The Business Plan shows that if the impact of these, operating either singly or in combination, is significant, they could threaten existing investment plans and lead to the council being faced with difficult choices on how to prioritise investment. Together these uncertainties and threats represent the endpoint of what had previously been regarded as a long-term agreement with the Government over the self-financing of the HRA.

This Plan is an update on that produced in October 2016 and takes account of the work within the

RMI project, informed by the headline results from the new Stock Condition Survey. This shows that broadly speaking the budgets provided for works to property in the Business Plan are sufficient. There will be a further update of the Business Plan in March 2018, by which time it is hoped that some of the remaining uncertainties, particularly around rents policy, will have been resolved.

As agreed as part of the October 2016 Plan the Council has now brought together residents, councillors, officer and external experts to undertake a comprehensive Options Appraisal of the future of the Council's housing stock over the next 20 years. This is due to report in December 2017 and the results will be fed into the next update of this Business Plan in March 2018.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 Slough Borough Council owns and manages 7,100 rented and leasehold homes across the borough. This is the Council's most valuable physical asset. A wide and diverse range of residents are accommodated in council homes across a range of income groups. However, they are a particularly important resource for households on low or modest incomes who cannot afford to house themselves in homes available on the private market. Its significance is increasing as house prices and private sector rents escalate. Demand for council homes is high and far outstrips supply. Council housing is also vital for the economic future of Slough in that it provides affordable accommodation for people who work in the borough.
- 2.2 Council homes are financed through a special account – the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - which is separate from the rest of the Council's finances. The Council is required to produce a plan setting how it intends to manage and utilise its homes in the long term. This HRA Business Plan provides the Council's forecasts for utilising HRA funds over a 30 year period to effectively manage and maintain the Council's housing stock and contribute towards the development of new affordable homes in the borough.
- 2.3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy states that “by 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth”. This HRA Business Plan contributes to how the Council will achieve this ambition. The 5 Year Plan defines the Council's ambitions, opportunities and challenges together with the priorities and resources available to achieve the Council's vision. Homes and housing are one of its key themes. The Housing Strategy describes how the 5 Year Plan outcomes will be achieved and should be read in conjunction with this Business Plan.
- 2.4. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a “Self-Financing” regime for council homes whereby local authorities were able to retain HRA funds and have the ability to decide locally how this money is spent. Slough Borough Council has grasped these freedoms and flexibilities and embarked upon an ambitious programme of development, regeneration and improvement. However, the opportunities introduced through self-financing have been undermined since the summer of 2015 by emerging government policy, which has effectively taken control of council rents and will require councils to sell some of their higher value homes.
- 2.5. These fundamental changes at a national level are being accompanied locally in Slough by a major drive to improve the Council's capacity and ability to manage its assets effectively. A full stock condition survey has updated information about the Council's homes. In parallel the Your Homes, Our Homes Project is recommissioning the repairs, maintenance and investment contract so as to deliver these services more comprehensively and effectively over the next 7 to 10 years.
- 2.6 The Plan contains a number of sections which start out by describing the homes within the HRA in Slough and how they are managed and go on to set out the external operating environment within which this Plan has been developed. The report describes current



investment priorities and the ambitious development programme currently underway. The core of the Business Plan is a set of 30 year financial projections and sensitivity analyses which serve to summarise the overall financial outlook for the HRA and the risks which it faces over the life of the Plan. It concludes with an Action Plan setting out the Council's priorities for action.

### **3. Governance and Resident Involvement**

- 3.1 Slough consists of 15 wards governed by 42 elected Councillors. The Council's Cabinet is responsible for strategic decisions and comprises 7 Commissioners, including a Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal.
- 3.2 Housing and Neighbourhood Services are overseen by the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources through the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Housing Services.
- 3.3 The Council's landlord function is regulated by the Homes & Communities Agency who set out their required outcomes and specific expectations in the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England. The framework contains specific requirements and expectations relating to resident involvement in the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard. Delivery of the Consumer Standards that apply to local authority landlords is underpinned by the principles of co-regulation and resident led scrutiny.
- 3.4 In Slough the Resident Board ('the Board') is the principal resident-led group responsible for co-regulating and scrutinising the Council's landlord function. The Board delegates the day-to-day co-regulatory and scrutiny functions to the Repairs & Maintenance Panel and the Neighbourhood & Complaints Panel who are able to commission scrutiny activities from the wider resident community.
- 3.5 The current re-commissioning of the repairs, maintenance and investment services presents an opportunity to modernise and enhance resident involvement and engagement at a local level to offer residents, Councillors and key stakeholders an opportunity to influence priorities to reflect local needs and aspirations. The Resident Board, Panels and Neighbourhood Forums will form an integral part of the governance of these services, allowing residents to monitor and scrutinise service delivery.

### **4. Neighbourhood and Housing Stock Profile**

- 4.1 Slough has a fast growing population and its proximity to London contributes to the high demand for affordable housing across all tenures. The Right to Buy means that the Council no longer manages large, purely Council owned estates, however there continues to be a higher density of Council owned homes in Britwell, Langley, Foxborough and Chalvey.
- 4.2 The borough has a high number of properties built between 1930 and 1939 (18%) and from 1955 onwards (20%). These homes are often smaller on average than the norm with an average 4.7 rooms per household. The average household size in Slough is 2.8 people (the

second highest in England) with 20% of households being overcrowded compared to 8% across England.

- 4.3 Slough is one of 162 English Councils (around half of the total) still owning housing stock. Slough Borough Council owns and manages 6,093 rented properties and a further 1,091 leasehold properties across the borough. Demand for affordable housing in Slough remains high with over 300<sup>1</sup> households being housed in temporary accommodation at the time of writing this plan. The implementation of a new allocations scheme in January 2014 resulted in a reduction of over 5,000 applicants on the Housing Register. Of the applicants currently on the waiting list, 30% require a one bedroom property, 31% require 2 bedrooms and 33% require 3 or more bedrooms. The average waiting time for a council property ranges from 74 weeks for over-50s accommodation to 234 weeks for a 4/5 bedroom home.
- 4.4 The Council's housing stock comprises a mix of flats, houses, maisonettes, bungalows and mobile home bases. The teams also manage 1,946 garages on 161 garage sites and a further 28 garages scattered across the borough. There is a programme of redevelopment to regenerate garage sites that are no longer fit for purpose. The stock also consists of 9 ex-sheltered complexes situated almost entirely (7 out of the 9 complexes) in the East of the borough.

#### **North Neighbourhood**

- 4.5 The North Team manage 2,669 council owned, rented properties in the North of the borough, including 50.6% of homes in Britwell which is the second most deprived ward in Slough. The most common type of housing is terraced and semi-detached houses. However, there are a significant number of blocks of flats within the council's housing stock.

#### **South Neighbourhood**

- 4.6 The South Team manage 1,188 council owned rented properties in the South of the borough, including Central Slough and Chalvey which is the most deprived ward in Slough. Whilst the South contains the lowest number of council owned properties in the borough, it has the greatest number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

#### **East Neighbourhood**

- 4.7 The East Team manage 2,407 council owned, rented properties in the East of the borough, including 50% of Council owned blocks of flats. Wards in the East of the borough show the lowest levels of deprivation.

## 5. External Operating Environment

- 5.1 The social housing sector has been through a period of unprecedented change in recent years. The changes have presented some challenges and opportunities for the Council and will continue to do so throughout the lifespan of this Business Plan. Under the self-financing regime (introduced by the Localism Act 2011) the Council particularly welcomed the freedom to develop new homes in the borough and aims to expand its development programme in response to the growing demand for affordable homes in Slough.
- 5.2 The Housing & Planning Act 2016 and the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 will have a significant impact on the Council's housing services over the coming years. Whilst much of the detail is yet to be issued, the legislation contains the following provisions that will present challenges for the Council:
- Local authorities will be required to **pay a levy based on an estimate of the high value homes that they own**. The Council awaits clarity from the Government on the definition of 'high value', however the surplus generated by these sales will be used to compensate housing associations for the discounts offered to their tenants under the Voluntary Right to Buy. It is expected that homes that are sold for this purpose will be replaced on a 'one for one' basis.
  - The **reduction of council rents by 1%** in each of the 4 years beginning with 2016/17. The impact of this is discussed in detail in Section 9 of this Plan.
  - The impact of the **end of lifetime tenancies** means that the Council need to review its Tenancy Strategy and this is included in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Slough's proximity to London makes it an attractive alternative to households that are unable to afford the capital's high property prices and rents. The borough's excellent travel links and plans for HS2 and Crossrail have driven significant increases in local house prices and market rents over the past 2 years. The opportunity for private landlords to charge higher rents mean that the cost of renting privately is increasingly exceeding the Local Housing Allowance, making them out of reach for many low income households. This, combined with the London Boroughs' capacity to pay the higher rents plus additional incentives to private landlords to encourage them to accept homeless households from their areas has had a significant impact on the Council's capacity to discharge its homelessness duties to private rented accommodation.
- 5.4 The introduction of the Under-Occupation Penalty introduced by the Localism Act 2011 impacted on an estimated 485 households in Slough. The current number is 472, with 202 of this households claiming Discretionary Housing Payments to help with the shortfall.
- 5.5 A total of 307 households in Slough are subject to benefit cap after the cap itself was reduced in 2016. At the time of writing this plan the latest indication is that the rollout of Universal

Credit for new claims will be completed by February 2018. It is currently anticipated that all existing claims will have been transferred to Universal Credit by 2022. The impact of these reforms is being closely monitored.

## 6. Landlord Services

6.1 Housing and Neighbourhood Services deliver the Council's responsibilities as a social housing landlord. The services sit within the Regeneration, Housing and Resources directorate and are managed by the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Housing Services.

6.2 A number of major contracts and agreements are in place to deliver services, including:

- The **Interserve plc** contract extension to deliver the responsive repair, void property works, planned maintenance, external decorations and out-of-hours repairs services. Interserve also provide a free Handyman Service for vulnerable residents. These services are currently being re-commissioned pending the end of the contract extension with Interserve in November 2017.
- The **Amey contract** delivers a range of grounds maintenance services, including street cleaning, grounds maintenance, waste collection, graffiti removal and fly-tipping disposal. The contract is due to end in 2017 and an alternative form of contract provision is now being put in place.
- The contract with **Arvato plc** is a 10 year contract which commenced in 2012 for the delivery of a range of front and back-office functions on behalf of the Council. Service delivered on behalf of Housing and Neighbourhood Services, includes the assessment of Housing Benefit claims, a Digital Image Processing service, invoice payments, administration of Discretionary Housing Payments and local welfare provision, rent accounting and the Cashiers Service. In 2013 the Customer Service Centre (MyCouncil) and IT functions were added to the Arvato contract.

6.3 Housing management services are delivered by three Neighbourhood Teams with patches aligned to the Thames Valley Policing Sectors in the North, South and East of Slough. The Leasehold Services Team manage service charges and major works billing as well as Right to Buy applications. The day to day management of leasehold properties is carried out by the Neighbourhood Teams in liaison with the Leasehold Services Team.

6.4 Service priorities and improvements are designed and delivered in collaboration with the Resident Board and Panels. Resident led scrutiny activities, customer insight and market research are used to enhance the decision making process. In recognition of the financial impact of repairs, maintenance and investment works on leaseholders, the Council will continue to meet its legal obligations to consult leaseholders on these works and offer a range of payment options to allow them to spread the costs.

6.5 The Neighbourhood Teams combine the Council's Housing and Enforcement Officers who work collaboratively to tackle anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime. Together they are able to

use the range of powers available to the Council to take action to tackle problems regardless of the cause or location where they occur.

6.6 Over the coming year the following areas will be prioritised for service development and improvement;

- Design and commission an innovative repairs, maintenance and investment service that embraces the use of new technology and digital media to enhance residents' experience of these services and improve the quality of their homes.
- Engage and empower residents to co-regulate the Council's landlord function and to influence decisions that affect them, their home or their neighbourhood to enhance their experience
- Identify and deliver efficiencies to maximise income and commercial opportunities to generate additional income to invest in the Council's housing stock and contribute to the development of new, affordable, homes for Slough's residents
- Monitor and manage contractors, partners, external agencies and services provided internally to achieve Value for Money and to improve residents' experience of services
- Make full use of all of the powers available to the Council to take prompt, effective action to tackle anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime to ensure that all neighbourhoods provide a safe and healthy environment for all residents and visitors
- Deliver a focussed landlord service that meets the Council's statutory housing duties and complies with current legislation and which is accessible to all of the Council's current and potential tenants and leaseholders
- Review the Tenancy Strategy and the Allocations Policy to reflect the Council's aims and ambitions as well as residents' needs and expectations.

6.8 The service also manages over 1,100 leasehold properties sold under the Right to Buy. The Government's increase in the discounts available under the Right to Buy have seen applications increasing to 31 completions so far this financial year compared to a total of 51 in 2015/16. Fluctuations in house values will impact on residents' ability to afford to buy their home, however it is anticipated that there may be a slight increase in sales as the Government continues to incentivise home ownership. Right to Buy sales will be closely monitored and adjustments will be made to the HRA, as appropriate over the lifetime of this Plan.

## 7. Priorities for Repairs, Maintenance and Investment

- 7.1 The Council has successfully delivered a fully funded Decent Homes programme of works since 2005/06 that has had a significant impact on the quality of the Council's housing stock and the built environment. The Council aims to maintain the quality of its housing stock and ensure that any future investment is effectively planned and managed.
- 7.2 The Council currently spends around £12.5 million per year on repairing, maintaining and investing in its housing stock and associated HRA assets, broadly broken down into the following service areas:
- Day to day (routine) repairs, gas servicing, empty properties, planned preventative maintenance £5.7 m
  - Capital investment works £5m
  - Statutory compliance testing and maintenance (eg Fire, Water and electrical safety) £0.6m
  - Pre-paint repairs and cyclical decorations £0.32m
  - Estate and window cleaning £0.85m
- 7.3 The capital programme for 2016/17 totals around £4.8 million. In anticipation of the re-commissioning of the repairs, maintenance and investment services (RMI) contract due to commence on 1 December 2017, the Council has naturally exited most of its capital investment contracts in the run up to the new contract going live, leaving only 3 contracts in place for the:
- renewal of central heating and boiler upgrades
  - replacement of external doors and windows
  - renewal of roofs, soffits, rainwater goods and associated works
- 7.4 Other planned works programmed for 2016/17 include external lighting upgrades, garage improvements and external environmental improvements.
- 7.5 During the commissioning and procurement of the RMI contract the Council identified that a comprehensive Stock Condition Survey was required. In addition to assessing the condition of the dwelling and its components, the surveyors undertaking the worked also considered the following;
- Category 1 Health and safety issues under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating system (these were notified and remedial works undertaken immediately);
  - The general condition of the home to see if terms and conditions of the tenancy were being complied with;
  - The identification of frail and vulnerable households;
  - Evidence of hoarding;
  - Safeguarding issues relevant to Adults and Children's Services;
  - Pets/Nuisance and evidence of sub-letting.

- 7.6 The access rate within the survey was 86% and the intention is to continue to seek to gain access to other properties by 31 December 2017.
- 7.7 The results of the Stock Condition Survey have been reviewed by Savills. They have advised that the budget set aside for the RMI contract of £140m over the 10 year life of the contract should be sufficient but that there is little room for manoeuvre should there be changes in legislation or other pressures on income to the HRA. The findings of the Stock Condition Survey will;
- Feed into the development of the Capital Investment Programme (first two years of the RMI contract.);
  - Enable the development of investment profiles;
  - Feed into the development of the Asset Performance Evaluation (part of the Options Appraisal.)
- 7.8 Looking forward, the current HRA RMI spend profile is as follows:

Programme	Year 1-5 2018-2023	Year 6-10 2023-2028
Capital	£24.95m	£32.9m
Revenue	£45.05m	£37.1m

- 7.9 Through the new repairs, maintenance and investment contract the Council is looking to develop a programme of works that reflects the changing needs of residents and the housing stock. The Council will ensure that resources are focussed in the correct areas and that it delivers its promises to residents in accordance with the Slough Standard and the 'Lettable Void Standard.' The Council will undertake to categorise repairs appropriately, empower officers to order discretionary repairs where appropriate and seek to achieve an appropriate balance between emergency, urgent and routine repairs.
- 7.10 In line with best practice, the Council is seeking, wherever possible, to ensure that repair orders are carried out as planned works rather than reactive tasks. The aim is to benefit residents by reducing the number of repairs they have to report and, over time, to improve and streamline delivery of the programme.
- 7.11 The nature, location and frequency of repairs will be continuously monitored to identify measures that can be taken to reduce the overall volume of repairs and to identify appropriate programmes of planned capital investment works and cyclical maintenance to maintain and enhance the housing stock.

## 8. Development and Regeneration

- 8.1 The Council has for a number of years proactively been looking for opportunities to build more affordable homes and to regenerate areas of the Borough.
- 8.2 Work began on the regeneration of Britwell in March 2011 with the demolition of bedsit bungalows and the unpopular Wentworth block of flats. Work started on the development of the Community Hub in February 2012 and the Hub, which includes a library, café, MyCouncil offices and community meeting rooms, was opened by Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh in April 2013.
- 8.3 Around 300 new homes and shops have now been built on Kennedy Park, Marunden Green, Wentworth Avenue and the site of an old nursing home on Long Readings Lane. The regeneration project has significantly improved safety and security for residents living in Britwell as well as delivering more, much needed, affordable homes.

### Current Development Programme

- 8.4 The council has established an ambitious development programme on small, underused, HRA sites. This was assisted by an agreement with the Government which enabled the Council to retain Right to Buy receipts on the condition that they are used for the provision of new affordable housing. Up until March 2016, £12m of Right to Buy receipts have been retained for the provision of new affordable homes.
- 8.5 The indicative development programme is part funded through:
- Retained Right to Buy receipts
  - The Council's Housing Development Fund
  - Section 106 funding
  - Borrowing



- 8.6 The total potential commitments from the development pipeline below are estimated to be £40m, excluding the cost of redeveloping the Tower and Ashbourne Houses site in central Slough (see below).
- 8.7 The table below shows the indicative affordable housing development programme:

Site	£m	Units	Ward	Anticipated final completion date
Former Wexham nurseries	7.2	34	Wexham	2018/19
Milestone/Ledgers Rd	3.6	23	Chalvey	2017/18
94-102 Stoke Rd -	0.8	6	Central	2018/19



acquisition				
Britwell Regeneration	0.4			completed
Eschle Court Pilot	2.1	11	Elliman	2017/18
93 Bryant Ave –Phase 1	0.2	1	Baylis & Stoke	2017/18
23 Mansel CI –Phase 1	0.4	2	Wexham Lea	2017/18
116 The Frithe – Phase 1	0.2	1	Wexham Lea	2017/18
1 The Cherries – Phase 1	0.2	1	Wexham Lea	2017/18
Rochfords Hostel	3.8	20	Wexham Lea	2018/19
r/o 40 Pemberton –Phase 2	1.9	1	Britwell & Northborough	2017/18
r/o 14 Gasgons – Phase 2	Incl ab	2	Britwell & Northborough	2017/18
r/o 8 Egerton – Phase 2	Ince ab	2	Britwell & Northborough	2017/18
Thirlmere – Phase 2	Incl ab	4	Haymill & Lynch Hill	2017/18
Wordsworth – Phase 2	Incl ab	1	Haymill & Lynch Hill	2017/18
Lynch Pin – Phase 2	1.1	6	Haymill & Lynch Hill	2017/18
Brook Path – Phase 3	0.6	3	Cippenham Gr	2018/19
324 Trelawney Ave – Phase 3	0.6	3	Langley Kedermister	2018/19
Fox Rd – Phase 3	1.1	6	Langley Kerdermister	2018/19
r/o 7-9 Mansel CI – Phase 3	0.8	4	Wexham Lea	2018/19
Adj 7 Moreton – Phase 3	0.8	4	Cippenham Green	2018/19
Bowyer Rd – Phase 3	0.6	3	Cippenham Green	2018/19
Sheehy Way car park – phase 4	1.3	7	Wexham	2019/20
Blandford CI - phase 4	4.3	23	Langley	2019/20
Turton Way garage site SL1 2ST - phase 4	1.1	6	Chalvey	2019/20
Newport Rd - phase 4	0.4	2		2019/20
adj 35 Layburn Cres - phase 4	0.4	2		2019/20

Merrymakers – pipeline	1.9	7	Langley	2019/20
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Buybacks-indicative	3	12	various	N/A
<b>Total</b>		<b>c 180-200</b>		

## Future Programme

- 8.8 The Tower House and Ashbourne House tower blocks are already being decanted prior to the site being redeveloped, a total of 120 flats. The majority of tenants and leaseholders have now been resettled in Council or other suitable accommodation of their choice and the tower blocks are at the demolition planning stage. An Options Appraisal is being carried out to determine which is the most economically viable option for the HRA in the longer term, whilst maximising the number of replacement units on the site.
- 8.9 The current development programme is focussed on derelict or underused sites so is subject to available HRA land supply. The delivery of new homes is projected for 2017 to 2019. However, in addition, work is underway for more ambitious regeneration programmes through stock rationalisation and densification of existing assets, open market land acquisitions and partnership working. The Stock Condition Survey and further Options Appraisals will yield a potential development programme beyond 2019. Initial high-level analysis has suggested that over the next 15 years and including the existing development programme, it may be possible to achieve a net gain of up to 1,000 homes on existing HRA land. This is subject to detailed further analysis.

## Options Appraisal

- 8.10 As a result of the Business Plan published in October 2016 the Council has begun a comprehensive Asset Management Review/Options Appraisal looking at the future of its housing stock. This is being undertaken with the full involvement of residents. The project is overseen by a Consultative Group chaired by the Cabinet member for Housing and Urban Renewal and including other councillors, residents, an Independent Residents' Adviser, officers of the Council and technical experts supporting the process. The Options Appraisal is due to report in December 2017.
- 8.11 The core objectives of the Options Appraisal are to look at the long term future of council homes in Slough. In the light of the financial position set out in the Business Plan, new information about the condition of the housing stock and emerging Government policy the Appraisal will look at how best to sustain existing homes in good condition while achieving the Council's ambition to provide more and better homes for the benefit of the people of Slough. A key focus of the study will be how to maximise the delivery of high quality new homes on HRA land.
- 8.12 The Options Appraisal has already made good progress and an interim report was made to the Council's Cabinet on 20 March. This highlighted in particular that given the projections about future Right to Buy sales, "doing nothing" was not an option as over time this would leave the HRA with a seriously diminished stock of dwellings. Equally, Cabinet has ruled out the large

scale transfer of the housing stock to a Registered Provider. This proved financially unviable, largely because the “valuation” of the property under the specific rules applied to these transfers was far less than the outstanding debt on the property held by the Council. Unlike in previous years, no Government funding is available to make up the shortfall. The Appraisal will therefore proceed by looking at other options to deliver a sustainable future for existing council homes and the additional affordable housing which is required.

### **Case Study – Eschle Court**

The fabric of the building of the old block of flats at Eschle Court was identified as being in very poor condition. The block was becoming hard to let and it would have taken a significant amount of Decent Homes budget to remedy the defects.

With the introduction of the new HRA freedoms and flexibilities it made sense for the Council to retain its asset and develop the site itself rather than involve private developers.

Works on the new development are underway and will provide a mix of affordable homes for rent, ranging from one and two bedroom apartments as well as a much needed three bedroom, wheelchair accessible, apartment. The block of 11 apartments with a parking courtyard is anticipated to complete in August 2018.



## **Rents Policy**

8.13 The Council is reviewing its policy on the rents to be charged on its newly-built homes. This does not affect the rents of existing tenants. By preference, the Council would wish to charge rents on new properties which are at the same level as those for existing tenants. However, it is reviewing this position for the following reasons;

- First, there is now no significant national Government funding for affordable rented homes and the Council is therefore dependent on generating its own resources to fund a development programme. While there is funding within the HRA for the existing development programme, these funds are a one-off. Charging a higher level of rent may allow for an extension of the existing programme;

- Second, the financial analysis which follows in Section 9 demonstrates that on certain assumptions, the HRA is unstable over the 30 year span of the Business Plan. Furthermore, given that the Government has effectively taken control of the rents charged on existing homes, rents to be charged on new homes are the only significant respect in which the Council can increase its income go the HRA. This income may be required not only for extending the development programme but for funding essential works to *existing* homes;

8.14 As part of the development of the Council's overall Housing Strategy, consideration is being given to the introduction of a *Slough Living Rent*. This would be a sub-market rental based on median local incomes. When this finalised, later in 2017, this may form the basis of rent levels on a proportion of the Council's new build programme.

## 9. Financial Modelling, Assumptions and Projections

- 9.1 In preparing this Business Plan the Council has produced detailed financial projections for the HRA over the 30 year period 2017 to 2047.
- 9.2 The budget set for 2017/18 has already included the effect of a major change in Government policy on council rents. Until recently rents have been determined under Government guidance with annual increases around the level of inflation plus 0.5%. However under the recent Welfare Reform and Work Act, rents are subject to a 1% reduction each year until 2019/20. the Government's intentions beyond 2020 are unknown. This policy change has already been assumed to have reduced rental income over the 30 year Business Plan by a total of £36m.
- 9.3 The Table below summarises two scenarios for the 30 year Business Plan updated as at March 2017.
- The first scenario - the "Base Case " - shows the Business Plan as it stood at March 2017, just as the 2017/18 budget have been set; and
  - The second scenario shows the integrated effect of sensitivity analysis undertaken based on a number of assumptions on a number of key variables as at March 2017.

HRA 30 Year Financial Projections 2017-2047 (£m)		
	Base Case (March 2017)	Integrated Sensitivity Analysis (March 17)
Income	(1168.4)	(1077.3)
Expenditure	897.0	917.6
Net Cost/(Surplus)	(271.4)	(159.7)
Cumulative Balance	(10.5)	88.4
Note; Capital Expenditure	157.3	157.3
Note; Debt Repayment	104.3	104.3

### The Base Case

- 9.4 A number of points form important background to the Base Case projections:
- As part of the "Self-financing agreement with the Government in 2012 the Council agreed to "buy" out of its housing debt and it's pre-2012 debt. Current borrowing is around £157m and will have to be repaid as the various loans become due or over time as funding permits;

- Revenue Contributions to Capital are "surplus" income which is used to fund the capital programme, including new building;
- The more that can be paid off as loans mature or as funding permits, the lower the annual interest costs will be;
- The HRA currently has £14m in the Housing Development Fund, which has been earmarked for building new council homes.

9.5 The Base Case assumes that:

- After the 4 years of 1% rent reductions from 2016/17, rents increase at 0.9% per annum
- The Council undertakes a programme of capital works (decent homes and planned works) to existing homes totalling £157.3m over the 30 year period;
- Debt repayment of £104.3m takes place over the 30 year period.

9.6 On this basis the HRA avoids a deficit in each of the years of the Plan and a cumulative balance of £10.5m is available. It is assumed that this sum is available to fund a programme of new building.

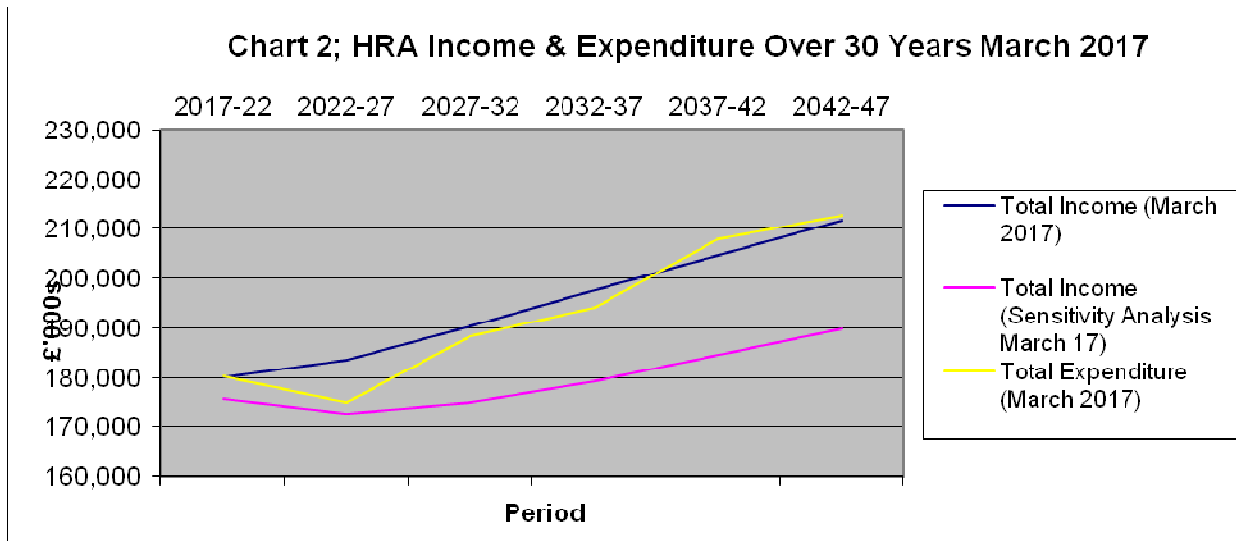
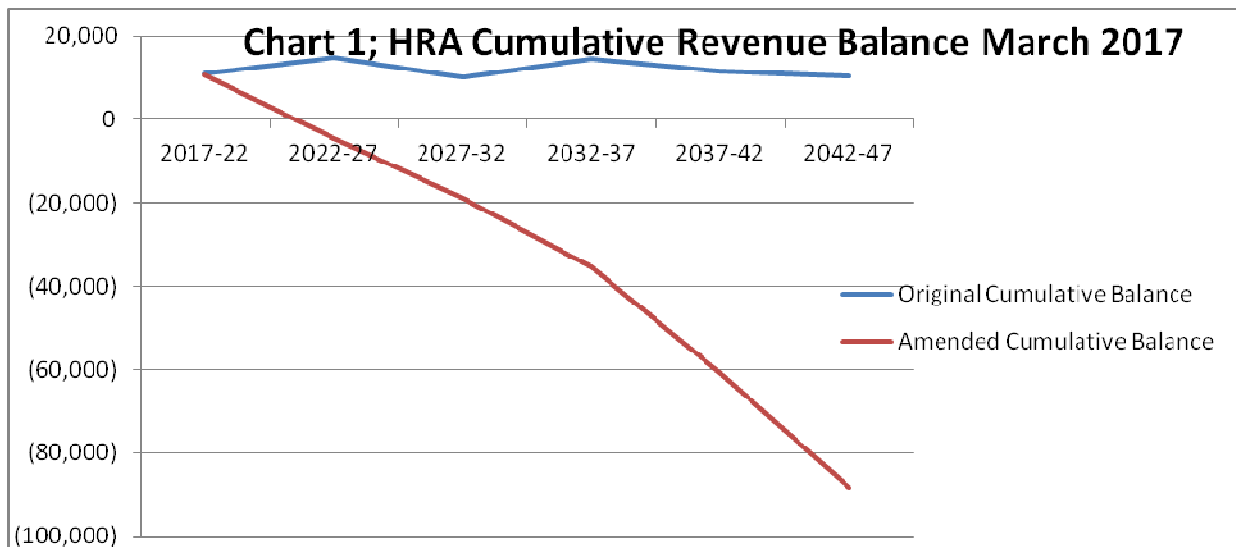
### **Integrated Sensitivity Analysis**

9.7 The second scenario on the Table above illustrates the combined effect of a number of factors which could have a negative impact on the HRA over the life of the Business Plan. The assumptions are as follows:

- After the first 4 years of the rent reduction of 1%, there is no increase for the next 6 years, then a gradual increase of 0.6% per year for the next 10 years and 0.9% per year for the following 10 years. These assumptions take around £62m of income out of the HRA over the 30 year period. This is in addition to the loss of income already built into the Plan due to the 1% reduction. Since Government has given no indication so far of how the rent policy will proceed after 2020 these are not unreasonable assumptions;
- A reduction in income from shops and a 25% reduction in income from garages;
- A doubling in the provision for bad and doubtful debts arising from the non-payment of rent. This could arise from a number of factors, but principally difficulties in collecting higher rents and welfare reform policies, including the rollout of Universal Credit and the reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap.
- It is assumed that the capital programmes of £157.3m and debt repayment of £104.3m continue as in the Base Case.

9.8 As recorded elsewhere in this Plan, the project work on the new RMI contract, underpinned by information from the new Stock Condition Survey, has demonstrated that budgets for capital and revenue works to property are probably sufficient over the life of the Business Plan. For this reason it has been possible to remove the sensitivity analysis around increased repairs costs which featured in the Business Plan produced in October 2016.

9.8 The charts below illustrate the position in two different ways. Chart 1 shows the cumulative balance from the Table as it develops over the life of the 30 year Plan. Chart 2 shows total income and expenditure on the HRA assumed in the Business Plan as it was at March 2017 and compares this with total income from the sensitivity analysis.



9.9 The Table and charts show, that on the basis of this combined sensitivity analysis, the HRA would not be viable with a cumulative deficit of £88.4m over the 30 year period. On this basis there would be no resources available for a programme of new building. Chart 1 shows that on these assumptions the cumulative balance becomes negative in around 2021/22. Chart 2 shows a position in which on *existing* plans resources are depleted in the early years (as the reserves for the new build programme are used) while the position under the sensitivity analysis is unstable.

9.10 In reality, the HRA would never reach this position. By law the Council is not permitted to budget for a deficit in the HRA and remedial action would be required. The detail of the financial projections which have been made show that even on these very negative assumptions the HRA is "viable" over the first 5 years of the Business Plan. It is in the second 5 years, between 2022 and 2027 that the account runs into deficit.



9.11 However, what the projections show is, that if these assumptions turned out to be valid in the way assumed, the Council would be faced with a limited number of difficult alternatives in order to avoid a deficit on the account. Chief amongst these would be:

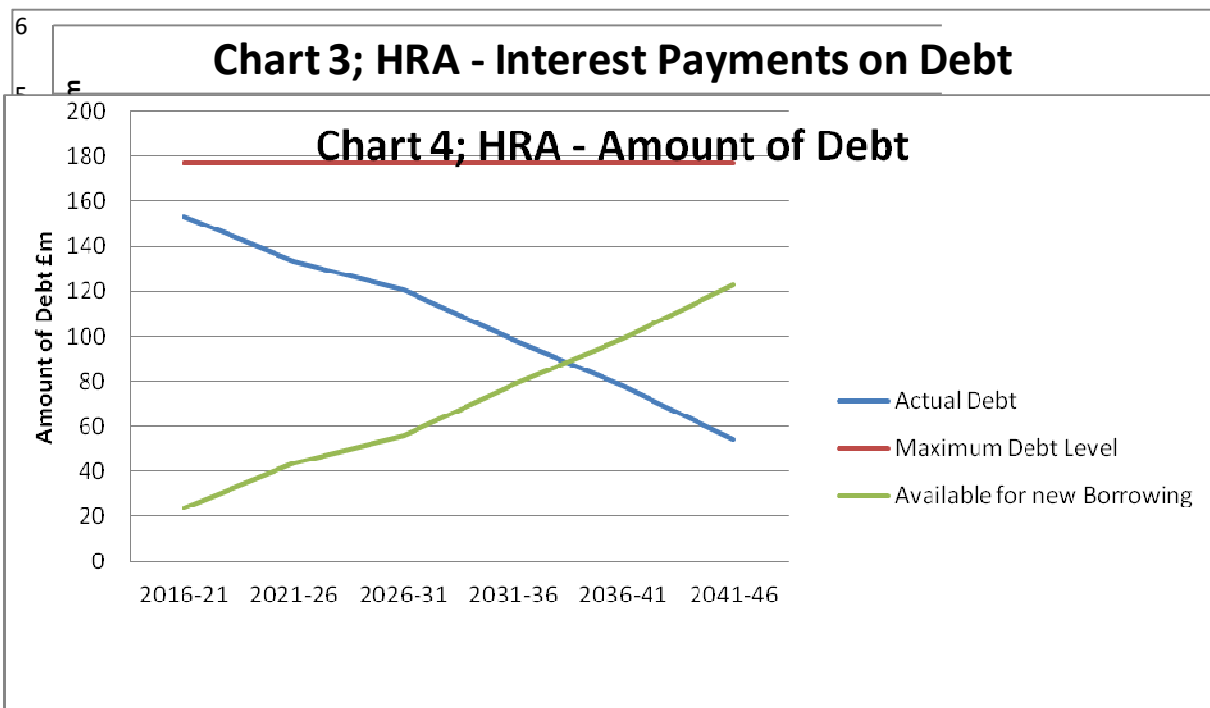
- Cutting back on the level of day to day repairs and staffing;
- Reducing the capital programme of works to existing homes;
- Slowing the level of debt repayment;
- Increasing income by other means;
- Disposing of property.

9.12 None of these assumptions are unduly pessimistic in their own right. However, it is probably unlikely that all of these negative factors would actually turn out to impact on the HRA in this way all at the same time. Nevertheless, this sensitivity analysis is useful in setting out the risks that the Council's housing finances face over the next few years, albeit they have been reduced by the preliminary results of the Stock Condition Survey. They also show that the HRA Business Plan is still in a period of considerable uncertainty.

9.13 The Government's Housing White Paper, issued in February 2017, stated that the Government would shortly be setting out its plans for rents for social housing landlords after 2020. At the time of writing this has still not emerged. Nor has Government issued guidance on the impact of payments relating to the sale of High Value Voids. For this reason considerable uncertainty about the HRA Business Plan will continue into 2017/18 and will be addressed again in the next iteration of the Plan in March 2018.

### Borrowing and Debt

9.14 In 2012, the Council had to borrow a substantial amount of money (£135.8m) in order to 'acquire' its homes from the Government; the debt is costing the HRA almost £5.5m every year in interest charges. By repaying this debt, the HRA's annual interest costs will reduce therefore 'releasing' more of the rental income to be spent on repairs, maintenance and investment etc. In the current Business Plan, certain assumptions have been made with regard to the repayment of the debt over the 30 years and this is illustrated in the charts below.



- 9.15 If the current planned debt repayments have to be delayed or cancelled, whilst it might allow those debt repayments to be used for other priorities instead, it will also mean that the annual interest charges will remain close to their current levels of almost £5.5m a year. Debt will therefore continue to be a financial 'burden' on the HRA for many decades to come, diverting rental income away from other priorities and needs.
- 9.16 By continuing to maintain a planned programme of debt repayment, should the Council need to make a substantial investment sometime in the future to address an unforeseen critical need, it could meet that need by undertaking new borrowing. The Council's Treasury Management policy as it relates to HRA borrowing and debt will be reviewed as part of the Options Appraisal due to report in December 2017.

## 10. Looking Forward

- 10.1 Over the last few years the Council has shown considerable ambition in managing its HRA, particularly in launching a programme of building new Council homes. In the short term the account remains strong, however the stress-testing within this Plan has shown that, under a number of scenarios, it is possible this stability could be threatened and that mitigating action might be required. The Housing & Planning Act, together with other legislation, will have a significant impact on the Council's landlord function and on tenancy policy. More detail on this should emerge during 2017/18.
- 10.2 The Government's decision to reduce rents in the 4 years from 2016/17 has already taken substantial sums from the 30 year Business Plan. Over the next few months the Government is likely to announce its intentions for the years beyond 2020.
- 10.3 During the coming months it will become clearer how the Government intends to define 'high value' properties, how much money the Council will need to pay to the Treasury under the terms of the Housing and Planning Act and how many homes it will need to sell and replace. This in turn will inform the impact of this policy on the Business Plan.
- 10.4 Welfare reform will place additional pressure on the HRA, mainly on rent collection performance. The reduction in the level of the overall Benefit Cap from Autumn 2016 will reduce the income of some Council tenants with the reduction being taken, initially, from Housing Benefit (or the housing element of Universal Credit). The roll out of Universal Credit will mean payments being made direct to tenants rather than the landlord. Data from other authorities has shown that this will affect rent collection levels

### One Public Estate

The Council has been considering how local services could be delivered in the future. In 2014/15 work commenced on a collaborative strategy between SBC, Slough Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs and NHS England to develop proposals for a community hub at Trelawney Avenue, Langley. The Council is the freeholder of the Merrymakers public house and the HRA acquired the leasehold in 2012 to assemble a site to provide affordable housing for rent. Whilst the site is designated for residential use, the Council is keen to take a more strategic view that would see the introduction of a mixed-use development that would introduce housing and a community hub. It is hoped this new facility will combine integrated health services with Housing Services, Library Services and Adult Social Care, as well as creating flexible space to deliver voluntary and community based services. The remainder of the site will accommodate up to 10 SBC properties for affordable rent

Looking forward, this proposal could shape the future delivery of Neighbourhood Services. It could provide the model for a flexible and integrated approach where front-line staff co-locate with public, private and voluntary sector providers in a neighbourhood setting and free up sites for additional affordable housing.

and, as a consequence, require higher provision for bad debts.

- 10.5 As the management of the Council's housing stock becomes more complex, it will be vital that IT systems are fit-for-purpose and capable of supporting new ways of working. The mobilisation of the new repairs, maintenance and investment contract will prove an opportunity to review the multiple IT systems currently in use and consider whether a one-system solution might support efficiencies in the management of the Council's housing stock, whilst delivering a better customer service and achieving financial savings to strengthen the HRA.
- 10.6 The detailed analysis of the new Stock Condition Survey will enable the Council to establish the priorities and level of investment required to maintain the Council's current housing stock in the short and longer term. This will need to be balanced against the Council's ambitions to build new affordable homes. This is being fed into the new Options Appraisal, due to report in December 2017. The Appraisal will look at the scope for stock rationalisation; opportunities for regeneration and in-filling to deliver new affordable homes; and opportunities to acquire new sites for the development of new affordable homes.
- 10.7 In the medium and longer term the Council may need to make some tough decisions about priorities for investment and how to mitigate risks to the HRA. Careful management of the HRA up to this point means that the Council is in a position to manage this change successfully and to ensure the Council's housing finances are sustainable in the long-term. The challenge will be to establish whether it can do this without losing its ambition both to maintain existing homes to a high standard and to build new affordable homes for the residents of Slough.
- 10.8 These major developments, legislative changes, a crucial upgrading in the Council's data around the condition of its housing stock and the potentially transformational impact of a new repairs, maintenance and investment contract, will all take their course during 2017/18. A further review of the Business Plan will be completed in March 2018.
- 10.9 By that time, the Council will have completed its Options Appraisal and the results of this can be fed into the 2018 Business Plan. The Appraisal will map out how the Council can best achieve its objectives of sustaining existing homes to a high standard whilst increasing the supply of new affordable homes. This will include options for how this can be funded and how the Council should approach the question of borrowing levels within the HRA.

## 11. Risk Management

	Category	Risk	Mitigation	RAG
1.	Financial	Government rent policy threatens viability of the HRA and requires reductions in services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of the Business to take place in March 2018 when Government plans for rents should be known.</li> <li>- Option Appraisal for council homes to complete by December 2017.</li> <li>- Prudent approach to borrowing and debt allows scope for adjustment.</li> </ul>	
2.		Results of the Stock Condition Survey increase costs on the HRA and threaten viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RMI project is anticipating dealing with new data arising from the survey.</li> <li>- Review of the Business Plan in March 2017 records that works budgets should be sufficient.</li> </ul>	
3.		Provisions of the Housing & Planning Act, particularly sale of high-value voids, impact negatively on the HRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of the Business to take place in March 2018 when regulations on the implementation of the Act should have been issued.</li> <li>- Prudent approach to borrowing and debt allows scope for adjustment.</li> </ul>	
4.	Property	Overall condition of HRA property deteriorates and does not meet modern standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stock condition survey provides comprehensive update on the position.</li> <li>- Review of Business Plan in March 2018 will aim to resource works to existing homes over the life of the plan.</li> </ul>	
5.		Failure to make best use of HRA assets in the long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option Appraisal to look at the options for the future of the housing stock and report by December 2017.</li> </ul>	
6.		There are insufficient resources to continue a new build development programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Option Appraisal will look at scope for further new build.</li> <li>- Policy on rent levels in new build properties will partly determine scale of the future programme.</li> </ul>	
7.	Health & Safety	Insufficient resources are deployed on council homes to ensure compliance with statutory obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capital programme to adopt health &amp; safety works as a priority.</li> <li>- Corporate project on building compliance will ensure</li> </ul>	

			sufficient priority is afforded to Health & Safety issues.	
8.	Community Support	Tenants and leaseholders are not fully engaged and involved in the development of services and in decisions about the future of council homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme to widen engagement to start in November 2016</li> <li>- Asset Review/Option Appraisal to include full involvement of residents.</li> </ul>	

## Action Plan

	Action	Lead Officer	Target Deadline	RAG
1.	Publish a baseline 30 year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account	Strategic Director	Completed in October 2016	
2.	Undertake a comprehensive survey of the condition of the Council's housing stock	Head of Neighbourhood Services	Completed in 2017	
3.	In light of the results of the Stock Condition Survey and the implementation of the provisions of the Housing & Planning Act, produce an updated HRA Business Plan	Strategic Director	March 2017	
4.	In partnership with residents, undertake a formal asset management review and options appraisal of the Council's housing stock	Strategic Director	December 2017	
5.	Confirm the existing development programme to deliver 190 new homes on Housing owned land and plan an extended programme beyond 2020.	Strategic Director and Head of Housing Services	March 2018	
6.	<p>Adopt the following priorities for improving services to residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Award a new repairs, maintenance and investment contract for council owned homes to improve the quality and responsiveness of these services for residents and to act as a catalyst for the development of local and in-house capacity to provide</li> </ul>	Strategic Director and Head of Neighbourhood Services	New contract to start in December 2017.	

	<p>maintenance services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage and enable residents to create a culture of accountability and responsibility and to broaden opportunities for the Council's tenants and leaseholders to be involved in the development and monitoring of services</li> </ul>		Programme to begin in November 2016 and complete in December 2017.	
7.	Develop a new Tenancy Strategy for Council tenancies to reflect the provisions of the Housing & Planning Act. (To be actioned when the Government publishes regulations.)	Head of Housing Services	September 2017 (Provisional)	
8.	Undertake a formal review of the scheme for the allocation of social housing in Slough	Head of Housing Services	May 2017	
10.	Develop proposals for the more effective use of Council owned homes by increasing the number of tenants choosing to downsize when their family circumstances change	Head of Housing Services	March 2018	
11.	Review service charges and the value for money provided to leaseholders in the light of the stock condition survey and the new RMI contract.	Head of Housing Services	March 2018	
12.	Continue to offer leaseholders a range of payment options to recover the cost of major works, together with incentives for prompt payment.	Head of Housing Services	March 2017	





**Housing Revenue Account Business Plan - March 2017**

	Budget	Business Plan					
	2017/18	2017/2022	2022/2027	2027/2032	2032/2037	2037/2042	2042/2047
<b>Income</b>	-						
Rent Income - Dwellings	(32,513)	(159,834)	(162,401)	(167,443)	(172,338)	(176,696)	(180,734)
Rent / Other Income - Non Dwellings	(1,619)	(8,243)	(8,621)	(9,317)	(10,287)	(11,357)	(12,540)
Charges for Services & Facilities - Tenants	(1,651)	(8,406)	(8,791)	(9,422)	(10,285)	(11,339)	(12,519)
Charges for Services & Facilities - Leaseholder	(717)	(3,652)	(3,820)	(4,207)	(4,762)	(5,377)	(5,964)
	<b>(36,501)</b>	<b>(180,135)</b>	<b>(183,633)</b>	<b>(190,389)</b>	<b>(197,671)</b>	<b>(204,769)</b>	<b>(211,757)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	-						
Repairs & Maintenance	8,500	42,756	44,672	46,951	49,346	51,863	54,509
Supervision & Management	7,738	37,874	39,712	44,930	50,834	57,514	65,072
Special Services	2,137	11,230	12,706	14,376	16,265	18,313	20,719
Depreciation	5,560	27,800	27,800	27,800	27,800	27,800	27,800
Impairment (FARR)	1,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Increase/Decrease in Provision for Doubtful Debts	469	2,467	2,791	3,158	3,573	4,042	4,573
	<b>25,403</b>	<b>127,127</b>	<b>132,681</b>	<b>142,215</b>	<b>152,818</b>	<b>164,532</b>	<b>177,673</b>
<b>Net Cost of Service</b>	<b>(11,098)</b>	<b>(53,008)</b>	<b>(50,952)</b>	<b>(48,174)</b>	<b>(44,853)</b>	<b>(40,237)</b>	<b>(34,084)</b>
Capital Charges	5,800	28,305	24,256	21,572	18,396	14,070	10,144
Contribution to Housing Development Fund	- 5,000	10,000	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Contributions to Capital	4,000	12,000	10,000	4,000	10,000	3,500	8,000
<i>Compensation to tenants re: water commission</i>	1,500	1,500	-	-	-	-	0
<i>RMI Pension Liability</i>	1,500	1,500	-	-	-	-	0
<b>Net Operating Expenditure / (Income)</b>	<b>(3,298)</b>	<b>(19,703)</b>	<b>(16,695)</b>	<b>(22,602)</b>	<b>(16,457)</b>	<b>(22,666)</b>	<b>(15,940)</b>
<b>Reserves</b>							
Balance - Brought Forward	(10,932)	(11,376)	(6,123)	(7,946)	(11,245)	(14,703)	(11,528)
Housing Development Fund	(5,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debt Repayment	0	20,000	8,000	20,500	13,000	25,841	17,000
<b>Balance - Carried Forward</b>	<b>(19,230)</b>	<b>(11,079)</b>	<b>(14,818)</b>	<b>(10,048)</b>	<b>(14,703)</b>	<b>(11,528)</b>	<b>(10,468)</b>



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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 4th April 2017

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Paul Thomas Interim, Head of Housing 01753 (47) 4057  
Julie Render, Housing Demand Manager 01753 (47) 7372  
Debra Gilbert Arrears and Investigation Manager (78) 7857  
Anne Stavrou Allocations Manager (87) 5302

**WARD(S):** 'All'

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

**OVERVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS IN THE BOROUGH**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide members with an up to date overview of homelessness and the relevant homeless legislation and current trends including how the new Housing Strategy and proposed Homeless Prevention Strategy seeks to address some of these issues including a review of Slough Borough Council's Allocations Policy.

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

That the Panel considers and comments on the contents of this report.

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

3.1 Housing is one of the key priorities of Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) and there are clear and multiple links between homelessness and the JSNA priorities around improving health conditions, particularly mental health and protecting vulnerable children. Outcome 4 of our new Five Year Plan 2017-2021 states: "Our residents will have access to good quality homes". This outcome recognises the critical links between improved health and wellbeing and affordable good quality housing, which has been proven many times through independent national research and is widely accepted by our local partners.

3.2 Currently, Slough has over 54,000 dwellings and 28% of these are provided by the private rented sector (PRS). This is the main accommodation available for homeless households in this borough. Regulation therefore plays a key role in stemming the flow of people presenting as homeless and addressing wider public health concerns due to poor housing conditions and particularly in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

3.3 For example, the Council has a statutory duty to investigate and remove Category 1 Hazards from privately rented accommodation. This together with ensuring that any private rented accommodation is suitable and not overcrowded for the council to place homeless clients in is part of the Council's Homelessness

prevention activities at present and is essential to address public health issues as per the JSNA.

- 3.4 The current legal position in regard to Homelessness is that the Council has to ensure that people are entitled to housing in the first place and meet the criteria for “**statutory homeless**” as outlined in Section 4c. In effect, most homelessness services are reactive by design and not resourced to take on the full demands of a full prevention role and market intervention to prevent evictions. However, new legislation in the form of the Homeless Reduction Bill (2017) is set to place new duties on all local authorities to prevent homelessness at much earlier stages with a focus on homeless advice, early intervention to prevent evictions and provide temporary accommodation that is fully designed to meet household needs.
- 3.5 There also remains a common public misunderstanding and expectation nationally and locally that anyone who declares themselves homeless or vulnerable should be housed by the Council. The more usual pathway, once accepted as ‘*statutory homeless*’, is being housed via the private rented sector. There is a pressing need to manage expectations as well as homelessness demand regarding this issue.
- 3.6 Slough’s council housing stock of around 6000 units represents only 11% of all accommodation in the Borough and is therefore limited. The private rented sector is unaffordable for most and this makes complying with our statutory homelessness duties, and providing temporary accommodation in the PRS via paying market rents and landlord incentives increasingly unaffordable.
- 3.7 At the same time we have committed in the Housing Strategy to develop a new Preventing Homeless strategy by September 2017 to take account of the Homeless Reduction Bill and to a review our current policy of allocation to re-evaluate the priority which homeless people receive under the scheme. This will be undertaken with members initially and with due regard to vulnerabilities and to better meet the joined-up priorities of the Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan.

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

- 3a.1 As stated, Housing is a key priority of Slough’s Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) recognising the critical link between improved health and wellbeing and affordable good quality housing, and that the successful delivery of other key priorities have varied dependencies on the full range of housing provision and related activities being effectively provided.

These are:

1. Protecting vulnerable children
2. Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities
3. Improving mental health and wellbeing

- 3a.2 With particular regard to Homelessness, Councils up and down the country are facing increasing pressure on their own social housing stock through Right to Buy (RTB) and other government interventions. The ongoing changes within national Welfare Reform, coupled with the ever increasing housing costs continue to provide huge challenges for households and particular those on low

incomes at risk of becoming homeless. The outlined situation has dramatically increased the pressure on Slough as we deal with an increasing number of local working households who are finding themselves in increasing financial difficulty and at risk of homelessness whilst making an economic contribution to the borough.

- 3a.3 These pressures are magnified in Slough as it the town is “booming” with house prices increasing by over 40% in less than 2 years and the affordability ratio between local average incomes and house prices is currently 13:1 making private sale housing unaffordable for most. At the same time rents have increased at an even higher rate as the population is rapidly growing and there is a huge competition for housing of all tenures from migrating households from London and elsewhere.
- 3a.4 House prices are still lower than London, whilst the availability of skilled work and planned new transport links such as Crossrail and the expansion of Heathrow continue to drive rents and house prices upwards.
- 3a.5 Following the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which capped the level of Housing Benefit available, the “affordability gap” between the LHA and market rents, has grown; the table below illustrates the current gap faced by the majority of households on benefits seeking private rented accommodation in Slough.

<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Monthly LHA rate</b>	<b>Median rents</b>	<b>Gap</b>
<b>One Bedroom</b>	<b>£656.50</b>	<b>£950</b>	<b>£293.50</b>
<b>Two Bedrooms</b>	<b>£840.32</b>	<b>£1275</b>	<b>£434.68</b>
<b>Three Bedrooms</b>	<b>£1061.19</b>	<b>£1525</b>	<b>£463.81</b>
<b>Four Bedrooms</b>	<b>£1449.19</b>	<b>£1650</b>	<b>£200.81</b>

The LHA maximum rates (April 2016 to April 2017)

- 3a.6 As illustrated, the figures demonstrate the “affordability gap” for those on benefits is large and increasing as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate has been fixed for the next three years. We expect the market rents to rise and the “affordability gap” to widen during the life of this strategy given our housing market pressures. For example, the property types of our highest demand; namely 2 bed and 3 bed properties are significantly the ones with the largest current “affordability gap which continues to widen.
- 3a.7 In Slough, those households on low or modest incomes who cannot access home ownership or social housing are accommodated in the large and growing private rented sector. There is an emerging non traditional homeless household. Many residents who have traditionally worked and managed accessing their own accommodation are becoming increasingly vulnerable to homelessness. We understand that private rented is the least secure form of accommodation and that many thousands of tenancies are regularly accessed and renewed each year. However, many local households increasingly cannot afford to pay large increases in rent at each renewal of a six month tenancy.

- 3a.8 There are other national factors in regard to welfare reform and restrictions to benefits that are beginning to impact Slough including:
- The reduction in the Overall Benefit Cap which started in late 2016;
  - The further roll-out of Universal Credit to families and vulnerable groups and the associated risks of failure to claim, non-payment, rent arrears and debt.
- 3a.9 The Overall Benefit Cap, which restricts the total amount of benefit which can be received, acts as a further reduction on the financial help available to pay rent. We are already seeing the impacts of this policy in homeless presentations as it makes it ever more difficult for family households to sustain private rented accommodation.
- 3a.10 In regard to wellbeing, another impact of these restrictions is a further increase in overcrowding. Slough already has the eleventh highest incidence of overcrowding of all local authorities in England.
- 3a.11 An additional factor specific to Slough has exacerbated these pressures. That is the increasing tendency for homeless households to be placed in Slough by other councils. In the last 3 years, a total of 450 notifications have been made to the Council by authorities of homeless households they have moved into the Borough. These have been made by 28 different councils, including 11 London Boroughs.
- 3a.12 It is estimated by our Housing Demand Team, that this is a considerable underestimate and that the total number of placements is likely to be over 1000 new households placed in the last three years and it is London Borough's who are placing and not reporting in the main. The scale of this issue was flagged several months ago at the Wellbeing Board on behalf of local GPs, who were complaining of large numbers of patients from London with significant needs turning up to register with no prior warning or medical histories.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

- 3b.1 We are specifically aiming to deliver Outcome 4 of the Council's overarching Five Year Plan 2017 - 2021:

*"Our residents will have access to good quality homes"*

However, there are strong links with several other outcomes, particularly our "putting people first" outcomes;

*Outcome 1: Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives*

*Outcome 2: Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.*

- 3b.2 All these outcomes recognise the critical links between improved health including mental health and wellbeing and affordable good quality housing. As outlined, the Homeless Reduction Bill is set to place new duties on all local authorities to prevent homelessness at much earlier stages with a focus on homeless advice,



intervention at an early stage to prevent evictions and temporary accommodation and in particular, the needs of vulnerable people including:

- a) Persons released from prison or youth detention
- b) Care leavers
- c) Former members of the regular armed forces
- d) Victims of domestic abuse
- e) Persons leaving hospital
- f) Persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment, and
- g) Any other group that the authority identify as being vulnerable

- 3b.3 Our proposed wider interventions into the housing market for all special housing needs and vulnerable groups is captured in the Draft Housing Strategy, and for the purposes of this report the focus is on vulnerable rough sleepers as they “touch” both the strategic and operational services outlined and service provision for this group has been a “hot topic” over the last few months.
- 3b.4 Slough is fortunate in having an existing network of voluntary agencies and support and advice services offering services to single homeless people and rough sleepers. In some cases their clients include those who do not come within the statutory obligations of the local authority to accommodate homeless people. Often, however, joint working between the voluntary sector and the Council can bring the support which allows vulnerable client to access services.
- 3b.5 Whilst data is traditionally difficult to compile for Rough Sleepers, the general view of our voluntary sector is that rough sleeping (living on the streets) in Slough is on the rise. Estimates vary between 30 and 60 people, with a significant proportion being of Polish origin. The current official Rough Sleepers count for Slough is 25 and is undertaken every year on a Berkshire wide basis. This is the highest it has been over a number of years, but essentially the total has remained static despite the outlined homelessness pressures.
- 3b.6 We also know the scale of rough sleeping is greater than that captured and are aware of 39 individuals in total (including the 25 in the count) who rough sleep from time to time. The numbers vary because as for other homeless households most Rough Sleepers squat, ‘sofa surf’, stay with family and friends or anywhere else they can find temporary shelter for as long as possible (Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research study commissioned by Crisis 2011).
- 3b.7 The voluntary and statutory agencies working in this field already meet regularly at the Slough Homelessness Forum. A number of specific initiatives are coordinated through this group, including a Winter Nightshelter and the London and Slough Soup Run.
- 3b.8 In developing the new Homeless Prevention Strategy, we will be carrying out a sector wide review to consider how we can help better coordinate services for Rough Sleepers and achieve longer term solutions including jointly commissioning new services for the most vulnerable single homeless people. We are also carrying out an early review of arrangements for rough sleepers during periods of cold weather.
- 3b.9 We are also working in wider partnerships and have recently commissioned work through homeless link to deliver the Making Every Adult Matter” (MEAM) approach across our strengthening homeless prevention partnerships. This also

effectively to our Public Health colleagues agenda of “making every contact count” and offers an exciting opportunity for information sharing and development of joint solutions between health, Adult Social Care, Slough Children’s Services Trust and Housing to work in new strategic partnerships to support new service delivery models Within the priorities of the Five-Year Plan.

#### 4. Other Implications

##### (a) Financial

- 4a.1 There are potentially very significant financial implications for the Council giving the rising numbers of homeless families that are/will be seeking financial support from the Council in a variety of measures. For example, Luton as a comparator authority example have spent over £4 million on B&B and temporary accommodation alone in one year as it has lost control of its Homeless situation including a large rise in its rough sleeper count to over 50 each night. Our current spend on homelessness in total is just over £3.3 million of which we have recovered £2.6 million.
- 4a.2 The council’s legal duty to accommodate homeless households means that we are required to meet the gap in funding that was previously met through housing benefit. The average cost of placing a family in the private rented sector is £10,431. This figure is based on the majority 3 bed need and the requirement to top up the rent to guarantee the rent for 24 months to give security of tenure for a homeless household. Landlord incentives and full market rents are now the expectation for us to discharge our homeless duty in the private rented sector, which is expensive, but not as expensive as maintaining homeless households for in Temporary Accommodation, for a matter of months and years.
- 4a.3 Significant future investment in front-line services may be required to allow the Council to meet its new legal obligations in the absence of specific government funding to meet its future prevention duties as outlined. However, we are acutely aware that all of the same conditions that have caused major issues in Luton and contributed to the wider homelessness crisis in London are present here in Slough. It is a testament to the service to date that we have not yet experienced the levels of homelessness or temporary accommodation usage as that of comparator or London Boroughs.
- 4a.4 Success can be measured in delivering the challenging targets we have set including the continued non-use of Bed & Breakfast, reductions in temporary accommodation numbers and costs, and ensuring that housing solutions are income generating such as Temporary Accommodation provided by the Council or its subsidiary housing company James Elliman Homes. We are also aiming for a 50% reduction in the number of rough sleepers.

##### (b) Risk Management

There are no risk management implications to the content of this report

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

- 4c.1 In England '**statutory homeless**' people are entitled to housing.

This means they must:

- Be homeless or threatened within 28 days (soon to be 56 days under new legislation)
- Be 'eligible for public funds' (this will depend on immigration status)
- Have some sort of connection to the area covered by the local authority, known as a 'local connection'
- Can prove that you are 'unintentionally homeless' (that it is not your fault that you became homeless)
- Be in '[priority need](#),' broadly households with children, pregnant women and single people assessed as vulnerable.

Only once a person has passed these tests will can they be considered 'statutorily homeless' and only then, do local authorities have a duty to house, applicants. This is known as '*An Agreed homelessness duty*'.

Included in the Homeless Code of Guidance, for Local Authorities - Homeless Legislation is Part 7, of the Housing Act 1996, amended by the Homeless Act 2002, updated July 2006.

- 4c.2 The [2011 Localism Act](#) made significant changes to the homelessness duty in England and Wales. Local authorities are able to fully discharge their duty by offering a private rented sector (PRS) tenancy of 12 months, without the consent of the tenant. Previously the local authority had to offer a social home unless the tenant opted for a private tenancy
- 4c.3 16/17 year olds – Housing have a protocol with the Trust – ‘Getting it right for 16 and 17 year olds approaching as homeless’ This protocol sets out how Slough Borough Council will comply with relevant Children Act 1989 and Housing Act 1996 legislation, as well as the House of Lords Southwark judgement. This protocol takes account of the statutory guidance issued on the 1st April 2010 to local authorities.
- 4c.4 Supreme Court decision in May 2015 ([Hotak, Kanu and Johnson](#)) The Supreme Court case was important, as it was the first time the highest court in the land had considered the meaning of vulnerability, and as a result the previous vulnerability test, known as the ‘Pereira test’, was modified to ensure relevant homelessness and equalities legislation, and guidance is properly applied.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment Initial screening ahs been taken for the purposes of producing a new Preventing Homeless Strategy to take into consideration the possible impact for age, religion and sexual orientation and mitigate against any adverse impact etc. Likewise a full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the production of the Draft Housing Strategy which includes an assessment as to the impact of the proposal/policy on race, gender and disability groups.

(e) Workforce

The new outlined Homeless Prevention legislation when it comes into force sometime in the next 12 months, will place an additional burden on most councils already overstretched homeless services. It covers the whole population and given the focus on vulnerable groups, there will also be an even greater demand

placed on all our current Housing Demand Team by Adult Social Care and Slough Children's Service's Trust to provide council house allocations, temporary bespoke accommodation, housing advice and intervention within the council's own stock and with private landlords to prevent evictions of vulnerable people. The staffing implications this are currently being assessed.

## 5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 Currently, there are a number of known risks materialising as sharp upturns in homelessness applications and financial pressures on the Council:

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

5.2 Previously, some of these households had to be accommodated in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) hotels, a problem also facing most neighbouring councils, and particularly those in London. This Council has however succeeded in reducing the number of households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation from 46 in September 2015 to 21 a year later. We had eliminated the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families by January 2017 and have stabilized the numbers in temporary accommodation at 316 as at March 2017.

5.3 We are also taking a strategic approach to reducing Temporary Accommodation spend and costs can be divided into four categories:

- Very Expensive - bed and breakfast accommodation- costing up to £160 per night. This council has eliminated use of this accommodation for families during the last six months.
- Expensive – nightly rate accommodation – currently the gross average cost of this accommodation is £40 per night via contracted arrangements
- Free or low cost accommodation – this mainly relates to buy backs or other council properties used as temporary accommodation where full cost recovery models can be used as “exempt accommodation” from LHA Levels.
- Income generating – where accommodation can be classified as “exempt accommodation” under HB regulations the rental income can provide a surplus. E.g. our new emergency temporary accommodation units at High Street Langley.

#### 5.4 Our strategy is to:

- Target a reduction of 25% per year for number of households in nightly booked accommodation.
- Reduce admissions into temporary accommodation through the new homelessness prevention model.
- Our Subsidiary Housing Company James Elliman Homes, will acquire existing housing for use for households threatened with homelessness. The new company will act as an exemplar private landlord and help promote good standards in the private rented sector.
- Continuation of communications campaign setting out the challenges for homeless people in Slough.

### 6. **Comments of Other Committees**

- 6.1 The item on Homelessness arose from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's debate on 20<sup>th</sup> December. The report in the form of a presentation for information purposes was taken by officers on 20<sup>th</sup> December, the minutes and the written question referred to in the minutes are all available on the Council's website.
- 6.2 Members written questions were answered in regard to statistics including the number of rough sleepers and the number of deaths on the street, downsizing in Council properties, and the status of the current Homelessness Strategy written in 2011.
- 6.3 It was agreed that the homeless strategy was out of date and the plan was to complete the Housing Strategy by April 2017 which would have a section on homelessness and a full Homeless Prevention Strategy by September 2017.

### 7. **Conclusion**

- 7.1 There are a number of reasons outlined in this report that leads us to conclude that homelessness will continue to grow. The threat for Slough is that the very high levels of homelessness and usage of temporary accommodation seen in neighbouring London Boroughs will spread outwards to this Borough.
- The major risk for Slough is that a number of factors will combine to produce further sharp increases in homelessness of all types, from local working families who cannot afford to accommodate themselves through to rough sleepers.
- 7.2 These are;
- Continued population growth leading to overcrowding and further increases in house prices and rents pricing local working families out of the private sector housing market;
  - The 4 years freeze in welfare benefits, including Local Housing Allowance, announced by the Chancellor in the Budget for 2015 and the implementation of the Benefit Cap and roll out of Universal Credit;

- Continued placement into Slough by London and surrounding Boroughs as Slough has a large private rented sector and rents though high are still less than inner London;
- It is becoming ever more difficult for households on benefits, or low or modest incomes to find and sustain tenancies in Slough's private rented sector.

7.3 Overall, Slough has all the market conditions and characteristics that could lead to a sharp increase in homelessness on the scale of some inner London boroughs if significant and effective prevention measures are not taken. We have outlined the measures we already have in place and will be taking in the longer term both here and in the Draft Housing Strategy.

7.4 In the meantime the Council could advocate a change in the LHA rates with government to protect the economic and general wellbeing of a significant number of the borough's residents, who may be at risk from Homelessness. We effectively have London rent levels without comparative LHA rates for all qualifying households including homeless ones to contribute towards their rents.

## 8. **Background Papers**

- Housing Act 1996
- Homeless Act 2002
- Supplementary Guidance on the changes in Localism Act 2011 & on the suitability of accommodation Order 2012
- Supplementary Guidance on domestic abuse & Homelessness – November 2014
- Homeless Reduction Bill 2017
- UK Housing White Paper 2017
- Luton's Homeless Prevention Strategy 2017

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel  
**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Savio DeCruz  
**(For all Enquiries)** Head of Transport and Highways  
(01753) 875640  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR INFORMATION**

**YELLOW BOX JUNCTIONS**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide information about the legislation regarding yellow box junctions, the respective powers of local authorities and the police and the options for enforcement of yellow box junctions.

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

The Panel is requested to note the report

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

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

The road network of Slough and its improvement will create a better, healthier environment for local residents and improve their outcomes.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Outcome - Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no risks in relation to the recommendation

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act or other legal implications relating to the recommendations of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA in relation to this report

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The Neighbourhoods and Community Services Panel held their annual Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017. As part of this meeting, the Panel raised concerns over yellow box junctions, the extent to which they were being ignored and the impact of this on traffic management. As a result, the Panel requested a report for information outlining the matters in Section 1.

5.2 The Panel also discussed the issue of yellow box junctions at its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016. The following minute was taken to summarise the discussion:

*“Cameras could be used to enforce yellow box junctions; however, the funds they raised reduced as knowledge of their existence spread which limited their financial viability. Joint operations with Reading or the procurement of mobile cameras offered alternatives, whilst the Safer Road Partnership could provide local intelligence. Officer capability would remain limited whichever options were selected.”*

5.3 Furthermore, other factors militate against the operation of cameras to enforce regulations relating to yellow box junctions. These are:

- a) Local authorities (except London Boroughs) do not have the powers to enforce box markings, given current legislation. Whilst moving traffic violations exist in London, they do not elsewhere; the Transport Select Committee has raised this matter with the Government, but this has been rejected by the Department for Transport.
- b) Cameras can only enforce offences concerning red traffic lights or speeding. Yellow box junctions are not included.
- c) Thames Valley Police could prioritise this matter. However, given public demand for other areas to be prioritised, the limits of technology making their use of our cameras of limited utility and the amount of staff time that would need to be dedicated to this, such a request is unlikely to be implemented.
- d) The cameras used to stop drivers ignoring red lights only take photographs, rather than videos. As a result, they cannot prove that a driver rested in a yellow box junction area for a significant period of time.

5.4 As a result of these limitations, the monitoring of yellow box junctions will remain as it currently stands.



6. **Comments of Other Committees**

This report has not been considered by any other Committee. The Panel's previous discussion on the matter (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016) is outlined in Section 5.2.

7. **Conclusion**

The Panel is asked to note the information contained in this report.

8. **Background Papers**

None

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**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD**  
**NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL 2016 – 17**

	MEETING DATES						
COUNCILLOR	21/07/2016	08/09/2016	03/11/2016	17/01/2017	02/03/2017	04/04/2017	
Anderson	P	P	P	P*	P		
Davis	P	P	P	P	P		
N. Holledge	P	P	P	P	P		
Morris	P	P	P	Ap			
Plenty	P	P	P	P	P		
Rana	Ap	P	Ap	P	P		
Rasib	Ap	Ab	P*	Ap	Ap		
Swindlehurst	P	P	Ap	P	Ap		
Wright	P	P	P*	P	P*		

P = Present for whole meeting      P\* = Present for part of meeting  
 Ap = Apologies given                Ab = Absent, no apologies given

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