

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Slough Wellbeing Board **DATE:** 15th November 2017

CONTACT OFFICER: Colin Moone , Service Lead - Strategic Housing Services
Paul J Thomas, Interim Housing Supply Manager
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 874057 & (01753) 874097

WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR INFORMATION

HOUSING UPDATE: KEY ELEMENTS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDING KEY WORKER HOUSING

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides the Slough Wellbeing Board with an update on the Housing Strategy Action Plan particularly in relation to Theme 5 of the Housing Strategy: Special Housing Needs and Vulnerable People. It also provides an opportunity for consideration around the timescale of actions to help shape the priorities.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Board is recommended to note this report and provide input to help shape the delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan and its priorities for delivery.

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

The priorities of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) have been taken account of in the production of the Housing Strategy and cross-linked to the JSNA and the Five Year Plan with a detailed action plan that sets out the priorities agreed for Slough with partner organisations.

The Housing Strategy for Slough presents a clear ambitious way forward to improve housing in the borough. It sets out priorities which will form the focus of activities and resources over the next 5 years in line with our Five Year Plan and Local Plan in seeking to deliver more homes in the borough and of better quality to improve health and economic outcomes for residents.

The Housing Strategy draws together all of the housing issues into one comprehensive document. It also comprises actions for Private Sector Housing, Homelessness, Council new build housing and our approaches to supporting vulnerable adults and children as part of wider Council objectives laid out in the Five Year Plan.

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Housing is a key determinant of health and wellbeing and it is a priority in the new Wellbeing Strategy. It aims to ensure:

- The right supply and mix of new homes including maximising affordable housing

- That quality and best use of existing homes is improved across the council, housing association and private sector
- That land and capital resources are used in the most efficient way
- That a sustainable balance is struck between housing supply, regenerated areas and community infrastructure demands.

3b. **The JSNA**

The Housing Strategy is a “broad brush” strategy and the key needs assessment data relating to its production ranged from specific client group needs and wider determinants of public health gained through consultation and research. Key objectives identified:

- That specialist accommodation is available for adults and children (if needs cannot be met within ordinary housing solutions)
- That homelessness and rough sleeping is reduced
- That professionally managed and well-maintained homes are delivered including increased controls and regulation of the Private Sector
- That we ensure “Green and healthy homes” wherever possible.

3c. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The key driver for the Housing Strategy is to deliver Outcome 4 of the 2017 Five Year Plan: “Our residents will have access to good quality homes”. It also helps to deliver and makes significant contributions to each of the other outcomes:

- 1) Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives
- 2) Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs
- 3) Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit
- 4) Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents.

4. **Other Implications**

- (a) Financial – There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- (b) Risk Management - There are no risk management implications arising from this report.
- (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications – There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.
- (d) Equalities Impact Assessment - An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to the Housing Strategy and its implementation.

5. **Summary**

- This item provides members with an update on the delivery of the Housing Strategy over the first eight months of implementation.
- It gives members a better understanding of the size and scale of our ambition and a better understanding of the housing challenges facing the borough.
- The Wellbeing Board is asked to note the progress to date and comment and offer wider solutions to joint areas of operation as contained within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

6. Supporting Information

- 6.1 Housing has been identified as one of the four key priorities in the Wellbeing Strategy.
- 6.2 At the last housing presentation to the Wellbeing Board there was a request that housing report on the progress of implementation of the Housing Strategy and to identify any early challenges and issues which may have wider impacts across the partnership and the council. The six key partnership issues identified by the Wellbeing Board have been incorporated into the Housing Strategy and are named and updated below.

- **Housing opportunities for key workers.**

The council's new subsidiary housing company - James Elliman Homes has purchased its first 20 new properties across the town of which at least six have been identified as suitable for key workers. These will be offered at an affordable rent i.e. below Housing Benefit Levels namely a "Slough Living Rent" which is based on average earnings not just local rent levels to ensure affordability. A policy to assist key workers from Education, Adults and Children Services (those working with vulnerable people) has been drafted and is currently being discussed.

- **Services to allow elderly and disabled residents to live independently in their home and which reduce the impact of poor housing on health.**

Over 40 new homes have been built by the council itself in the last 6 months which are largely suitable for older people on the council's waiting list. This includes a specifically adapted property designed to full disabled standards at Lydia Court our newly opened housing development providing 11 new homes to meet specific individual needs.

- **Priorities will be developed through partnership working, particularly with adult services, public health and the CCG.**

We have commenced partnership work to design an Older Persons Housing Strategy as an identified gap in the wider housing strategy. Terms of Reference are currently being considered for a time-limited working group to look at the issues.

- **Joint work would be undertaken with the health sector and other agencies to monitor and address the health and care needs of vulnerable homeless**

We have commencing partnership work to design a new Preventing Homeless Strategy as required by new legislation and have bid for and secured transformation funding to employ project staff to re-design homeless systems to better prevent homelessness and reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation. This is a priority as we understand the negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of families if they remain in temporary accommodation too long and subsequently on partner agencies such as GPs, Education and the wider health economy.

- **People placed in Slough by other local authorities and that those authorities are required to review their placement and notification policies.**

This is an on-going process and the transformation funding should allow more staff resources to focus on holding other authorities to account for not notifying their placements, however there is no legislation or specific guidance in place to prevent this practice.

6.3 The focus of the Housing Strategy is now on delivery of the Action Plan and how the council will counter existing and anticipated challenges through robust delivery and monitoring of housing supply and wider aspects of housing as outlined.

6.4 It is recognised that the scope of the Housing Strategy is of prime importance to the Wellbeing Board as it reaches far beyond lack of housing supply or poor housing as both have a fundamental affect on both physical and mental wellbeing, education, employment and community safety affecting all aspects of life and life chances for the borough's residents.

7. **Comments of Other Committees**

7.1 The Council's Cabinet on the 6th April 2017 approved the draft Housing Strategy and associated Action Plan following full public consultation and consideration by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.2 The Safer Slough Partnership at its meeting on the 14th June 2017 recognised the progress made in the Housing Strategy and agreed to fully engage in the production of a new Homelessness Strategy. They recognise it is an opportunity for capturing the most pressing and complex needs in homelessness, and creating new services that have wider community benefits.

8. **Conclusion**

8.1 Officers have made progress on the identified partnership housing objectives as outlined and have begun work on two further major strategic documents in the shape of a Preventing Homeless Strategy and effectively an Accommodation Strategy for Older People. This will include extra-care development options. Our shared aim is to enable people to take control of their lives, remain free from negative behaviours including offending, stay mentally and physically active and avoid social exclusion.

9. **Appendices**

None.

10. **Background Papers**

1 – Board Themed Discussion Housing Report – Key Priorities: September 2016
<http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=592&MId=5616&Ver=4>

2 – Housing Strategy Update for Board
<http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=592&MId=5661&Ver=4>

3 - Equalities Impact Assessment – Available on request from the author