

## Slough Interim Housing Strategy – for feedback

Focus	Recommendations / Questions for Slough BC
<b>1. Housing for an economically inclusive Slough</b>	
<p><b>Inclusive growth</b> – based on BLIS and 5-year plan statements ... so that people living in Slough will contribute to and benefit from the region’s economic growth.</p>	<p>This is what we are hearing about the contextual story and drivers.</p> <p><i>Is this the right story for Slough?</i></p> <p><i>See Appendix 1 - is this the right tone?</i></p>
<p><b>Housing roles:</b> ensuring local firms have access to a pool of labour with varying skill levels and that the housing also acts as a draw for new skilled residents to support further economic growth</p>	
<p><b>Other key factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing skills/qualifications of Slough’s residents</li> <li>• The overall vision for Slough especially the Town Centre</li> <li>• Quality of place and environment</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing of Slough’s residents</li> </ul>	

2. Successes, Challenges and Opportunities	
Successes	Please see Appendix 2 for a list <i>Is it a good idea to set these out at the start of the strategy document?</i> <i>Are they the right ones for the strategy?</i> <i>What is missing?</i> <i>What else do you want to see in this section of the strategy?</i>
Challenges	
Opportunities	
Opportunity of the Council’s Transformation Programme This needs to unequivocally drive an expectation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness and transparency</li> <li>• Communication across teams</li> <li>• Information-sharing</li> <li>• Evidence-based solutions (with evidence shared across teams)</li> <li>• Joint working across teams to address Slough’s issues</li> <li>• Devolvement of decision-making to an appropriate level</li> <li>• Better governance arrangements for joint decisions e.g. regarding site development</li> </ul>	<i>How should we express this in the strategy?</i>

3. How many and what sort of new homes does Slough require?																													
<p><b>The numbers:</b> The HNA has established that the 893 homes per annum over the 10-year period from 2019 to 2029 cannot be met within the constraints. The broad proportions as below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1-bed</th> <th>2-bed</th> <th>3-bed</th> <th>4+bed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Market homes</b></td> <td>0-5%</td> <td>20-25%</td> <td>50-55%</td> <td>20-25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Affordable home ownership</b></td> <td>20-25%</td> <td>40-45%</td> <td>25-30%</td> <td>5-10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Affordable rent</b></td> <td>35-40%</td> <td>25-30%</td> <td>25-35%</td> <td>5-10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>We will also include figures for Older People’s housing needs.</p>						1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+bed	<b>Market homes</b>	0-5%	20-25%	50-55%	20-25%	<b>Affordable home ownership</b>	20-25%	40-45%	25-30%	5-10%	<b>Affordable rent</b>	35-40%	25-30%	25-35%	5-10%	<p>Every effort should be made to maximise housing delivery at the same time as explaining why it is not possible.</p> <p>Broadly, we recommend (more below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking/securing high level support for expansion beyond Slough’s boundaries.</li> <li>• Continuing delivery on existing large sites</li> <li>• A phased plan for/delivering of estate renewal and intensification</li> </ul>				
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<p><b>The type of homes required:</b> To achieve the ambition for inclusive growth and for people to ‘stay’ living in Slough, we are recommending that Slough looks at five stages of life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slough’s young residents seeking independence</li> <li>2. Young professionals from Slough and elsewhere</li> <li>3. People settling in Slough</li> <li>4. Maturing families</li> <li>5. Older people (both active and frail older people)</li> </ol> <p>Specialised and supported housing for vulnerable people across the life course will also be considered within this section</p>					<p>Please see Appendix 3 for our ideas about the sort of homes and access for people at difference stages of life</p> <p>Recommend further consultation to develop a deep and nuanced understanding of what sort of housing people are looking for at different stages of life.</p> <p><i>Do you agree with these stages?</i> <i>Is it realistic for Slough to provide for all these stages?</i> <i>What should be prioritised?</i></p>																								

4. Delivering new homes to support the right housing development - <i>comments? what is missing? what would you prioritise?</i>	
<p><b>A Slough Housing Fund</b>                  This could include: surpluses from JEH/SUR, s106 commuted sums, RTB receipts, New Homes Bonus, surpluses generated through the Council’s other commercial activity, sources (in line with the ambition <b><i>to pursue commercial and other funding opportunities to maximise benefits for Slough</i></b>)</p>	<p>A Housing Fund would provide the possibility of leverage; the Council can use these funds in a flexible way to provide gap funding to make sites viable with the right type and mix of homes.</p>
<p><b>The potential to increase HRA borrowing for new homes</b></p>	<p>Explore borrowing to build new Council homes directly to fill other gaps that the market won’t provide for e.g. temporary accommodation, social rent</p>
<p><b>Best use of council and other public land to increase supply</b></p>	<p>Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Public Estate to identify public sector sites (e.g. old hospital sites)</li> <li>• An appraisal of all HRA sites for estate regeneration and intensification followed by a phased plan</li> <li>• A phased plan for development on infill and garage sites following the estates capacity plan</li> <li>• Maximise leverage on all Council-owned sites by requiring site buyers and development partners to commit to building homes that meet the vision in this strategy</li> <li>• Continue to innovate and develop our financial and development models for small sites to meet Slough’s housing requirements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improving the land assembly and development process</b></p>	<p>Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proactive communication of the requirements of this housing strategy to all potential developers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early engagement with developers ahead of purchase to provide clarity about expectations of the housing mix and place-making requirements.</li> <li>• proactive identification of strategic sites for acquisition using CPO powers if necessary</li> <li>• appointing a Housing Delivery Tsar - someone with authority to bust problems over delivery, kickstart stalled developments, revisit unstarted planning permissions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seeking to expand beyond Slough’s boundaries</b></p>	<p>As well as making a strong argument for the northern expansion, we recommend early talks with MHCLG, Homes England as well as sub-regionally with colleagues. Test ‘duty to co-operate’.</p>
<p><b>Delivery partnerships</b></p>	<p>Recommend that, going forward, SBC chooses development partners (RPs and developers) on the basis of their commitment to Slough’s vision – to building the required housing mix in attractive neighbourhoods and providing apprenticeships for local people – and their track record in other places.</p>
<p><b>Roles of council-owned development vehicles</b></p>	<p>Recommend a review the purpose and operations of JEH and SUR to support delivery of the right mix of new homes and filling gaps in provision</p>
<p><b>Slough Living Rent (SLR)</b> RPs tell us that SLR makes schemes unviable and Homes England can’t fund it.</p>	<p>Recommend reviewing SLR in the light of Slough’s inability to deliver many new homes at this rent level</p>

<p><b>Potential for assistance from Homes England</b>                  Homes England can provide funding to support new homes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous market engagement – affordable rent (including social rent)</li> <li>• Supported housing funding</li> <li>• Care and support funding – for older people</li> <li>• Move-on funding – for second stage schemes</li> <li>• LA small sites funding – can help unlock land</li> <li>• Legacy bids</li> </ul> <p>Slough may not be making best use of these resources</p>	<p>Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct a 5-year plan for schemes, including funding request to Homes England</li> <li>• Develop a sustained and responsive relationship with Homes England to maximise funds for delivery across all sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stronger Towns Fund</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stronger-towns-fund">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stronger-towns-fund</a>                  and  <b>Future High Street Funding</b>  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund</a></p>	<p>Please confirm if any bids have been made to either of these funds:</p>

<b>5. Increasing supply through better use of existing homes – <i>comments? what is missing? what would you prioritise?</i></b>	
<b>Supported ‘right-sizing’ to enable people to live in a more suitable home</b>	<p>Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported Up-sizing to alleviate overcrowding</li> <li>• Supported Down-sizing across all tenures (beyond TIS) to free up larger homes</li> </ul>
<b>Review the use of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</b>	<p>We understand a review is ongoing to increase the flexibility in support for older and disabled people to live well in their homes and within their community.</p>
<b>Maintaining decent Council homes</b>	<p>Further work required here to establish status of planned maintenance, improvement etc</p>
<b>Reinventing our sheltered housing to meet modern expectations</b>	<p>Recommend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undertaking a systematic review of our sheltered housing schemes</li> <li>• constructing a 5 year plan for improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing the turnaround time for void properties</b>	<p>Commit to targets for improvement of relet periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to reach the national average relet period by March 2020</li> <li>• to reach upper quartile relet period by March 2021</li> </ul>
<b>Bringing empty homes back into use</b>	<p>Developing a new Empty Homes Strategy. Including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentive scheme to bring back long-term empties use, for nominations for 3-5 year period.</li> <li>• survey of empty properties above shops in the town centre and inclusion in town centre regeneration plans</li> </ul>

6. Improving access to homes – <i>comments? what is missing? what would you prioritise?</i>	
<b>A Slough Rent to Buy scheme</b>	<p>Aimed at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slough’s emerging households who are interested in home ownership but who can’t afford to buy outright</li> <li>• Key workers working in Slough (social workers, teachers)</li> </ul>
<b>Reasonable preference to Slough residents to access ‘intermediate home ownership’</b>	<p>Aim to negotiate with private developers a ‘reasonable preference’ agreement, whereby Help to Buy, Rent to Buy and shared ownership properties built by developers are initially offered to Slough’s residents for a period of 12 weeks before offering them on the open market</p>
<b>A self-build offer</b>	<p>Explore appetite for this with Slough residents</p>
<b>Community Land Trust</b>	<p>Explore appetite for this with Slough residents</p>
<b>Encouraging sharing options where appropriate</b>	<p>For example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Share – which is essentially supported lodgings</li> <li>• Shared lives plus – a CQC registered model aimed at people with a learning disability or mental health problem but which could be offered to more people irrespective of vulnerability <a href="https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/">https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/</a></li> </ul>



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-housing, where people live ‘independently together’ having their own private space as well as some shared facilities<sup>1</sup></li><li>• Community Land Trust – to support intentional affordable home ownership communities.</li></ul> |
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<sup>1</sup> See UK Cohousing for more information on cohousing: <https://cohousing.org.uk/>

<p><b>7. Supporting people, improving health and wellbeing - will these suggestions help to prevent homelessness? How best can housing co-ordinate with other teams to improve outcomes?</b></p>	
<p><b>Preventing people ‘at risk’ of becoming homelessness</b></p>	<p>Recommend four priorities for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing our private rented tenancy sustainment activity</li> <li>• Mediation and housing advice for young people excluded from the family home</li> <li>• Fail-safe accommodation and support for care leavers</li> <li>• People with complex needs</li> </ul> <p>A range of recommendations to get both the accommodation and the support offer right for each of these.</p>
<p><b>Graded support for vulnerable people including in general needs homes</b></p>	<p>Recommend a fundamental review of the types of support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To prevent people from losing an existing tenancy in both social and private sectors</li> <li>• Asset-based, equip them with skills and confidence</li> <li>• So that number of hours and intensity of support can change as the persons needs change</li> <li>• More community-based, peer-led, networked support wherever possible (e.g. Key-ring <a href="https://www.keyring.org/">https://www.keyring.org/</a> )</li> <li>• ‘shared lives’ opportunities (e.g. Shared lives plus <a href="https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/">https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/</a> and homeshare)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relieving homelessness and rough sleeping</b></p>	<p>Further work required here</p>

**Coordinated action for better wellbeing**

Recommend housing's participation in emerging sophisticated council-wide and NHS approaches to targeted action to support wellbeing, including:

- A multi-agency approach to solving local problems – highlighting housing's role in the Councils 'Locality and Accommodation Strategy'
- Towards a data-driven 'healthy homes and lives' programme
- Hospital to home scheme

These developments will support a more enhanced approach to a range of matters.

<p><b>8. Building healthy, thriving places with Slough’s residents</b> - <i>will these steps help create better neighbourhoods / places? What else needs to happen?</i></p>	
<p><b>Healthy place-shaping principles</b></p>	<p>Recommend adopt the ten ‘Healthy New Towns’ principles<sup>2</sup>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan ahead collectively</li> <li>2. Assess local health care needs and assets</li> <li>3. Connect, involve and empower people and communities</li> <li>4. Create compact neighbourhoods</li> <li>5. Maximise active travel</li> <li>6. Inspire and enable healthy eating</li> <li>7. Foster health in homes and buildings</li> <li>8. Enable healthy play and leisure</li> <li>9. Develop health services that enable people to stay well</li> <li>10. Create integrated health and wellbeing centres</li> </ol>
<p><b>Connecting, involving and empowering people and communities</b></p>	<p>Building on Stronger Healthier Attractive Neighbourhood programme to link grass-roots community work with large-scale regeneration programmes so local people help to shape their neighbourhoods’ vision for the town</p>
<p><b>Adopting healthy and attractive place-shaping practices in new development</b></p>	<p>Through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• partnerships with providers genuinely want to create better places in Slough</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Putting Health into Place: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Masterplanning new development buildings and environments with communities where possible</li></ul>
<b>Improving Slough's neighbourhoods</b>	Through a range of measures including Selective Licensing in areas with high levels of private rented housing

## Appendix 1 – Introduction

### 1. Housing for an economically inclusive Slough

Slough is at the centre of Berkshire's growing economy.

Already economically strong, Slough's location on the edge of London and next to Heathrow makes it a focus for international business. The completion of Crossrail and potential for a third runway will intensify this bringing increased prosperity to Berkshire's towns and villages. Good rail and road links make Slough an easy place to travel to and from, and through, so the town offers a great deal to people who live in the surrounding areas; a global business centre, employment prospects, good schools and a convenient commuting hub.

Slough's residents have historically benefitted less from this economic activity than people living outside the town and it has not historically been a place where many people aspire to live the entire course of their lives. We want this to change. We want the town's economic success to be shared by its residents and we are asking the surrounding areas to play their part in enabling that.

Slough's ambition for economic growth is reflected in the county's Local Industrial Strategy which states that **'Berkshire should grow with ambition and intent ... but we also want to see good growth ... growth that is smart, knowledge-intensive, inclusive and resilient'**. It is developed further in Slough's Five Year Plan 2019-2024 which states that **'Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents'**. We will put people first and are determined that people living in Slough will contribute to and benefit from the region's economic growth, that they will progress, prosper and flourish as the economy grows.

Housing plays critical roles in ensuring local firms has access to a pool of labour with varying skill levels. It also acts as a potential draw attracting new skilled residents to support further economic growth. This strategy and action plan sets out how the Council will work and what it is requesting of partners in order to support inclusive growth within and beyond the town's boundaries.

#### Our vision for Slough

We want Slough to be **'an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay'** [Five Year Plan 2019-2024].

We are working with developers, businesses and communities to develop the cultural, experience and leisure offer in Slough Town Centre so that it matches the town's impressive economy. Capitalising on the success of The Curve and new library we are building the infrastructure for lunchtime and early evening activity and theatre/film space for Slough's young people and young families, as well as others who work here, to enjoy.

Alongside this, Slough's residents are developing a new sense of pride in the town and in their neighbourhoods. This is being supported through programmes like Stronger Healthier Attractive

Neighbourhoods and is part of rebranding exercise that involves local people in building the vision for the place. The number of residents gaining an NVQ level 4 qualification has been increasing year on year since [xxx] which is enabling more of Slough's residents to secure good jobs within the towns' economy than in the past.

This is all part of our ambition for Slough's residents to participate in the economic future of the town.

## Appendix 2

### 2. Successes, Challenges and Opportunities

#### Successes

Slough is a strong and resilient place that is not afraid of taking risks in order to achieve more for the town and wider region.

- Slough's schools are performing above the national average [find ref].
- 39% of Slough's residents hold a degree-level (NVQ4+) qualification, slightly more than the national average, with a further 15% holding an NVQ3 level qualification and the numbers holding these qualifications has increased in recent years [find ref].
- Slough was the first town in the country to trial revolutionary green technology which generates electricity from plant microbes. We have continued to make improvements to our highway network and trialled the use of electric buses along the Green Line.
- Slough Borough Council has positioned itself to benefit from Slough's commercial enterprise so that it can maximise its income for reinvestment in Slough
- Slough Borough Council has set up a housing company James Elliman Homes to buy homes and make them available at a reasonable rent for people who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. So far x households have been helped in this way. The aim is for 230-250 homes to be owned and managed in this way over the 5 years to [add year] representing an asset of around £70m which the council might then be in a position to raise further funds for reinvestment in the town.

***[Please advise and make further suggestions for successes to add to this list]***

#### Challenges

There are some unusual dynamics in Slough's housing and land markets, that present some very significant challenges.

- The town is small and the boundary tight. Even if all the spatial options proposed in the Emerging Local Plan were implemented it would not be possible to accommodate all Slough's housing and employment needs within the Borough in a sustainable manner<sup>3</sup>.
- The strong and growing economy means there is competition on available sites between employment and housing use. The latest Housing Needs Assessment<sup>4</sup> assumes that few of the jobs to be created will fall to residents, this generates an important policy dilemma

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<sup>3</sup> See Issues and Options Document on the Review of the Local Plan for Slough 2013 -2036 which was the subject of public consultation in January and February 2017

<sup>4</sup> For example, page 20 East Berkshire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019



over whether housing or employment generates more revenue for the which the council will need to resolve.

- Slough house prices are high relative to local earnings but more affordable than the surrounding areas [ref figures]. Rent levels are also high. There is a danger that Crossrail could increase prices further placing them out of the reach of people employed in lower and middle income roles.
- Fewer of Slough's residents hold a degree level qualification than in the surrounding areas while many of the jobs that exist in the Borough require a higher skill level than average. This means many of Slough's residents travel out of the town for work. However, this is starting to change.
- The market preference is to build small apartments but a wider range of type, sizes, tenures and affordability of homes is what is actually needed.
- Homeless acceptance increased four-fold between 2013/14 and 2017/18 with the biggest jump being between 2013/14 and 2014/15 [Homelessness review 2018]. As well as providing statutory assistance to Slough's residents who become homeless, being so close to London, yet having lower rents, makes Slough a key destination for placement of homeless people by many London boroughs.
- The town has an exceptionally large private rented sector; around 28% of homes are privately rented [BRE integrated Stock Model report] compared with a national average of 18-20%. In some wards levels of private renting is as high as 50%. England's experience suggests there will be several thousand small landlords which makes quality improvement and overall regulation challenging and potentially resource intensive.
- In some parts of Slough, levels of fuel poverty and cold homes in private housing are very high. We know that this is detrimental to people's health.
- The transition to Universal Credit has had a very large impact on arrears levels for council tenants. [add figures here]. Removing direct payments to landlords has also had the effect of reducing the number of private landlords who are prepared to let to benefit claimants. (We appreciate the welfare payment regime might change after the General Election. However, even if this happens the legacy of UC will continue to impact on potential landlord supply.)

***[Please advise and make further suggestions for challenges to add to this list]***

## Opportunities

We have been diligent in creating opportunities where we think we can make a big difference.

- The development of a 20 year vision for Slough will provide a good context for this housing strategy enabling the whole Council and external partners to see how the housing strategy will help to achieve the town's long-term goals
- The Council's Transformation Programme provides a significant opportunity to better coordinate our activity across the Council and with partners which will improve our approach to many elements of this strategy. It will help us to change how we work, by asking "What is the best thing for Slough?" and working across teams and services areas – across and beyond the council – to think and deliver differently. It will help to become more transparent and to transform our approach to:

- Openness and transparency
  - Communication, information-sharing and learning across teams
  - Evidence-based solutions (with evidence shared across teams)
  - Joint working across teams and organisations to identify, address, solve Slough's issues
  - Devolvement of decision-making to an appropriate level
  - Better governance and decision-making on sites for housing and other development
  - Our ability to respond to neighbourhood problems through a multi-agency approach.
- Homes England has several funds that are relevant to Slough and there is the potential for additional funding to be drawn in to support elements of this strategy
  - Slough Council has been actively buying sites and now has significant land holdings. This means that we have a degree of leverage to get the right type of new homes built alongside development for the economy
  - Lifting of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap provides an opportunity for higher level of borrowing to fund new Council homes to fill gaps in the market
  - Through a number of national schemes, energy companies have an obligation to provide resources to address fuel poverty. Through a partnership with the NHS, it may be possible to support some of the households living in these homes through securing dedicated funds.

***[Please advise and make further suggestions for opportunities to add to this list]***

## Appendix 3

### What sort of housing do people want at different stages of life?

We have identified five stages of life each of which brings different needs and aspirations for housing and an additional category of specialised housing for vulnerable people across the life-course. These are:

1. Slough's young residents seeking independence
2. Young professionals from Slough and elsewhere
3. People settling in Slough
4. Maturing families
5. Older people (both active and frail older people)
6. Specialised and supported housing for vulnerable people across the life course

Each of them is considered further in the section below.

#### 1. Slough's young residents seeking independence

This could include, for example:

- Purpose-built 'Co-Living' accommodation with some private space and some shared spaces available at social/affordable rent level to people between the ages of 16 and 30 who have grown up in Slough.
- Innovative housing solutions such as ZEDpod, developed by Bill Dunster Architects, a low cost prefabricated super energy-efficient micro home designed to sit on an elevated platform above existing outdoor car parks. They utilise otherwise unused space and require only air rights, with no need for land. ZEDpods can be installed as singles or doubles and as a 'community cluster' offering an inexpensive rented starter home for young singles or couples. The entry level model of the fully installed homes costs around £65,000 and can be bought outright if air rights are signed over. They can also be easily relocated at low cost and with minimal wastage.
- Supported renovations. The council could buy empty and/or poor condition private homes on the open market and make them available for shared ownership through 'sweat equity'. A young person would be offered 'on the job' training through our refurbishment contractor and would be expected to participate in the renovations in return for an equity stake (of between say 20 and 50%) in the home.
- Homeshare<sup>5</sup> where a young person shares accommodation with an older person who has a spare room in their home. The Council could offer a 'vetting' and management service for older people prepared to offer a room for rent to young people.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://homeshareuk.org/>

- Foyer-style accommodation for 16-21 year olds with part-time support for young people who, although they may not have grown up in the care system, nevertheless feel the need to move out of the family home.
- A trained mediator/advisor who can help young people to find the right housing option for them either through resolving differences with their families if staying in the family home is a good short-term solution for them or by accessing suitable accommodation.

## 2. Young professionals from Slough and elsewhere

Some of the actions we are considering include:

- An ethical lettings scheme – actively advertised both to young professionals through local businesses and to local private landlords – to set a new standard for private rental management in the town
- A Council-led build-to-rent and/or acquire-to-rent programme to broaden the range and increase the quality of market rental homes available for young professionals. This is about setting a high standard for property condition and safety
- New models and designs of rented accommodation that would attract young people to live in the town – as part of the town centre strategy
- Taking a more proactive approach to enforcement in hand with developing our private landlords' forum – with a view to promoting higher standards in private lettings.

## 3. People looking to settle down in Slough

We are looking into a range of options including, for example:

- Active encouragement and incentives for private developers to build new, high quality 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes for sale on the open market or through Rent to Buy
- Council-led building of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom affordable homes including social homes and market homes that will allow for cross-subsidy – so that more lower income households can find a suitable home
- Encouragement of Registered Providers to build 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes at social/affordable rents alongside market homes (enabling cross-subsidy)
- A Slough Rent-to-Buy scheme, that enables key-workers such as teachers at the new academy to purchase a home and settle in the town
- Active promotion of the council's means-tested 'Deposit Bond' scheme that assists households to cover the deposit on a private rented home
- Purchase, refurbishment and resale of empty homes for sale on the open market
- Homesteading options where low cost finance is provided to support refurbishment of poor condition homes
- Working with small local developers to establish 'self-build' – providing people with the option of building their own home (with support) or of having one built to their design.

## 4. Maturing families

The kind of options we are looking at include:

- To encourage the development of new 3, 4 and 5 bed homes with adequate parking facilities and not too far from good secondary schools and bus routes;
- To offer and promote more custom-build options for those who want to take charge of developing a home in a location they want to live in.
- A Community Land Trust development, led by members of the local community who want to live in a semi-communal environment and own property within a cooperative model of home ownership
- Intergenerational cohousing schemes where people of different ages live in close proximity, become friends and share many aspects of everyday living.
- Building a small number of new 5-bedroom social/affordable homes for extended families who are overcrowding to 'up-size' into
- Providing advice on the suitability of home extensions
- To establish a 'right-sizing' programme that helps older people living in large properties (in both the social private housing sectors) to decide whether to move to a more suitable home and with the process of moving. This is partly to make more larger homes available for other families to live in Slough in the long term.

## 5. Older people

While the number of older people living in Slough is lower than for Berkshire as a whole [Figure 48 Berkshire SHMA], the over-75 population is projected to increase by three quarters by 2039. A shortfall of 1,563 homes is calculated [East Berkshire HNA 2019]. This also creates significant challenges for the care and support sector.

Council's approach is to provide housing and forms of support that enable older people to live well within the community for as long as possible; to reduce reliance on long-term residential care home placements, avoid crises requiring hospitalisation and reduce delays within hospital. [OP Commissioning Strategy, Table 143 Berkshire SHMA, JSNA].

A recent study by Housing LIN argues for housing to support health and social care 'preventative' priorities and specifically to reduce residential care placements. It proposes:

- Building some homes in Slough's larger developments that meet the 'lifetime homes' criteria
- The development of additional extra care facilities appropriately designed with assistive technology that can provide high quality care especially for people with dementia.
- A future tenure split for older people's housing of 53% owner occupier 47% affordable housing by 2036 (SHMA).
- A range of floating support suitable for older people with different levels of need
- Cohousing options, for older people to live in close proximity with others and share some aspects of everyday living.
- We know that older people do better when they have level access homes and that today's older people have expectations that exceed some of our existing sheltered housing schemes.

## **6. Specialised and supported housing for vulnerable people across the life course**

[To be completed]

## **7. Other aspirations**

High levels of car ownership among Slough residents are straining parking arrangements. It is important, therefore, that all developments consider the arrangements for car parking and aim for a minimum of 1 parking space per unit.

## Appendix 4

### Preventing people ‘at risk’ of becoming homelessness

Homelessness acceptances have risen sharply over the last five years and, in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, we need to do more to help people to avoid being made homeless.

#### What we have already done

In late 2018 we undertook a review of our homelessness services. This told us that the focus for action going forward must be

- Private renters – over half of all people who present as homeless cite loss of an assured shorthold (private sector) tenancy as the main reason
- And 19-24 year olds facing family and friends exclusions – 52% of those in this age group presenting as homeless cited a ‘request to move out’ from friends and family as being the causal factor.

Over the first 18 months of this housing strategy we will concentrate our ‘homelessness prevention’ efforts in four areas where we think we can make a significant difference. They are:

1. Increasing our private rented tenancy sustainment activity
2. Fail-safe accommodation and support for care leavers
3. Mediation and housing advice for young people excluded from the family home
4. People with complex needs

We will aim to get both the accommodation and the support offer right for each of these.

#### 1. Increasing our private rented tenancy sustainment activity

We intend to develop tenancy sustainment and support for private residents to help them at an early stage and to prevent them from being evicted from their home. We will do this by:

- Looking at national ‘best practice’ in private sector tenancy sustainment
- Providing tenants with information and advice about relevant matter such as tenancy, rent payment and benefit matters when they are offered a deposit guarantee through the Council’s scheme
- Developing a tenancy sustainment service through which we support negotiations between private renters and landlords, for example around rent levels, and aim to mediate in any disputes with a view to finding a solution and avoiding eviction
- Publicising this service to private tenants and locality workers, for example through our Locality activity (see section 5.3).

- Where appropriate, covering the shortfall in rent for a limited period whilst working on an alternative housing solution with the household

## 2. Mediation and housing advice for young people excluded from the family home

We believe that some homeless presentations could be avoided through mediation for young people and their families coupled with advice about options for moving into independence. This needs to run alongside better provision of purpose-built affordable rented shared accommodation for Slough's younger residents who are at the stage of becoming independent.

## 3. Fail-safe accommodation and support for care leavers [Priority]

The Council has 'corporate parenting' duties towards children leaving care up until the age of 25 affirmed in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This includes making provision for them to be safe, for stability in their home lives and to prepare these children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

We intend to make it virtually impossible for our care leavers to fall through the gaps and become homeless.

We will do this by:

- Providing the Children's Trust with up to 20 nominations per annum to Slough BC homes for direct placement of children leaving care, foster homes or semi-independent accommodation. This is in addition to the existing route whereby children leaving care join the housing register and seek a home through the normal route. The route taken by each individual will be at the discretion of the Children's Trust in liaison with the young person.
- Removing the possibility for care leavers to be assessed as 'intentionally homeless' (up to age 30).
- Introduce an early warning mechanism when children who have been in the care system go into arrears (up to age 25), so that the Children's Trust is informed and a multi-agency meeting convened to look for solutions to specific cases.
- Providing asset-based, flexible support that has an elements of peer support on commencement of a 'general needs' tenancy. We will work with the young people to shape the support offer, the aim being to equip the young person with skills, confidence and contacts with others who have had similar experiences and who can offer them ongoing advice that enables them to live independently (or interdependently with others). The support will be withdrawn gradually as the individual becomes better equipped to live successfully independently.

## 4. People with complex needs

Slough currently has too little specialised accommodation for people with complex needs – usually a dual mental health and substance misuse diagnosis.



We propose:

- A Housing First approach to entrenched rough sleepers
- build new temporary accommodation dedicated for this group

[This section to be completed]