

Slough Draft Housing Strategy: Action Plan

Section 3: What sort of new homes does Slough require?				
Action	Description	Start by	Complete by	Lead
1.	We will undertake a detailed affordability analysis to establish what Slough residents at the different stages of life can afford to pay in terms of house prices and rents compared to local incomes and savings levels. This will help us both to make the case for the right mix on a site-by-site basis at public examination and to steer our funding decisions to enable this mix to emerge (for example through the Slough Housing Fund – see section 4.1).			
2.	We will undertake a programme of consultation with residents through direct engagement with a range of existing forums such as the Youth Parliament, Slough 50plus Forum and our Coproduction Network. This is to test and further develop our initial ideas and to gain a nuanced understanding about what people at different stages of the life-course aspire to for their housing and neighbourhoods and what will persuade people to ‘stay’ living in Slough.			



Section 4: Delivering new homes to support inclusive growth				
Action	Description	Start by	Complete by	Lead
3	We will introduce new measures in government guidance (NPPG) that establishes benchmark land value into our pre-application discussions with developers and into our viability assessments on sites to help to overcome the problem of developers over-paying for land.			
4	Establish a 'Large Sites Delivery Project Management System' to help standardise our approach and keep track of progress on each site.			
5	<p>Offer a range of pre-applications support for potential developers, and in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer proactive communication with potential developers of the requirements of this housing strategy – especially the housing requirements in Chapter 3, our s106 policy and the place requirements in Chapter 8. • Seek early engagement with developers considering purchasing a site, where possible, before they make the investment of land purchase to clarify expectations and requirements and benchmark land value. • Identify what measures might be taken and what assistance we might provide to overcome barriers to delivery of affordable homes and attractive places – such as investment through the Slough Housing Fund – and what conditions we might place on that investment. 			
6	Identify strategic sites for acquisition by the Council where appropriate, through negotiation or using CPO where necessary as a last resort			

Section 4: Delivering new homes to support inclusive growth				
7	Appoint a Housing Delivery Tsar - someone with authority to bust problems over delivery including to kickstart stalled developments and revisit unstarted planning permissions			
8	Develop a council-wide land and assets strategy in order to ensure good estate management and optimise use of under-utilised land and assets, including for housing growth as detailed in this strategy			
9	Work with health, education, transport, leisure and commercial partners through the One Public Estate programme to identify existing public sector sites that might be redeveloped for housing			
10	Place responsibility for 'public sector partnerships and delivery' into the hands of a Senior Council Executive to lead on negotiations with public sector partners, drive forward discussions, take final decisions across all council land and ensure these are delivered effectively.			
11	Invest £140m to deliver 612 homes spread over a range of HRA sites.			
12	Create a small sites developer and constructors' framework for local suppliers and companies to offer a key to key solution to build homes within and outside the borough.			
13	Continue our work with neighbouring authorities on a northern expansion and explore the possibilities with MHCLG and other third parties who may be able to help broker a solution.			
14	Develop a Housing Investment Development Strategy to optimise how we use the resources available to build the homes Slough needs in the right			

Section 4: Delivering new homes to support inclusive growth				
	places, based on the matrix showing development routes, house types and potential funding sources in the table in Appendix 1.			
15	Test the capacity of the Council’s 30-years HRA borrowing plan to enable borrowing for new Council homes. Develop a plan that is coordinated with the Council’s 30 years business and borrowing plans and that includes a risk mitigation model for each project business case to be evaluated within a context of the capacity of the council as a whole.			
16	Develop a strong relationship with Homes England in order to maximise financial assistance through the full range of programmes. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous market engagement through the Affordable Rent Programme including development through Registered Providers • Care and support funding • Move-on funding • LA small sites funding to help unlock land • Community Housing Fund 			
17	Work with local stakeholders such as retailers and landlords to secure funding from Stronger Towns and Future High Street Fund to unlock the assets of the town centre for shopping, leisure and for accommodation.			
18	Establish a Slough Housing Fund to provide gap funding that can be used flexibly and rigorously to enable new affordable housing delivery.			
19	Explore, with Slough residents, the appetite for community-led housing development and, if the appetite is there, look at the feasibility of options that may help to meet demand.			

Section 4: Delivering new homes to support inclusive growth				
20	Review the purpose and operations of James Elliman Homes, Hershall Homes and Slough Urban Renewal, considering whether new roles could support delivery of some of the action in this Housing Strategy.			
21	In order to provide regular communication and updates with the range of partners who we believe might actively support Slough’s vision, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Developers’ Forum for SME developers and builders • Engage with our Registered Provider partners on a regular basis 			
22	Establish a Senior Officers’ Project Review Board to appraise all developments for their impact on achieving the goals set out in this strategy			
23	Develop a set of criteria to enable the Board to determine what constitutes a good housing development for third party projects. This will include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were pre-application discussions undertaken and were they helpful in maximising adherence to the Council’s affordable housing policy? • Has the viability of the site been independently assessed? • Has delivery of affordable housing through planning obligations been maximised? • Have all external sources of funding been explored fully and optimised? • Is the scheme using innovative approaches to land and/or funding use and if so could that intelligence be shared more widely? • To what degree will the balance of house size, types, tenures, affordability help to meet the aims of this strategy? • What is the quality of homes and neighbourhoods being developed? 			

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24	<p>Develop a set of criteria to enable the Board to determine what constitutes a good housing development for Council-owned housing development. This will include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much of its own money is the Council investing, per unit? • Does this constitute a good financial return? • Does the development align with the Council’s 30-year business plan? • What are the delivery outputs and to what extent does this help the Council to achieve its target for affordable homes • What type/mix of affordable homes are being built? • What is the risk profile? • What is the quality of homes and neighbourhoods being developed? 			

Section 5: Best use of existing homes				
Action	Description	Start by	Complete by	Lead
25	<p>Develop a plan to make suitable homes available and to work with overcrowded families to meet their housing needs within Slough where possible, so they are not compelled to move outside the borough. The plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on how to build quality extensions that meet high standards through permitted development and advertising the availability of that advice through relevant channels. • An offer of small grants on condition that the contract to build goes to a suitably qualified and registered local company that provides local jobs and apprenticeships. • Support for overcrowded households to take up self-build options, so they can appoint a house builder to help them • Better information about the availability of deposit bond/guarantees to support a move to a suitable, larger private rented home • Some new 4 and 5 bedroom social homes to enable more larger households to access suitable social housing via the housing register • Methods for sharing information to identify overcrowded owner occupying households and looking for a bespoke solution for them, including by providing financial advice on options 			
26	Develop a cross-tenure scheme that supports people over the age of 60 who are living in larger homes in any tenure and who are thinking about moving			



Section 5: Best use of existing homes				
	<p>to a smaller, more manageable home or move into sheltered or extra care accommodation. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to identify and consider the options available, for example by training volunteers to work with FirstStop HOOP (Housing Options for Older People)¹; • Specialise outreach support in a range of languages to help older people from BME communities to know their housing options and make good choices about where they live as they age; • Help to administer the move – including sale and purchase as appropriate; • Practical support to move possessions from one home to another; 			
27	Undertake a review of our Home improvement Agency activity to ensure adaptations are made in a timely way to meet the needs of occupant.			
28	Explore the potential for establishing a paid-for ‘Handyperson’ service to help older frail residents living in private housing to maintain their property and outside space.			
29	<p>Work with residents and tenants to undertake a systematic review of our age-restricted housing schemes. For each scheme we will consider how it might best be developed, within the available resources, in order to contribute to the vision for Slough. For each scheme will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how best to improve or in some cases rebuild the schemes so that they are meeting modern expectations • whether Extra Care is the right model for the site 			

¹First Stop Housing Options for Older People - resources to assist people to make good and timely decisions regarding their changing housing requirements
<http://hoop.eac.org.uk/>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether other types of homes suitable for older people, or a mix of types and tenures, might be possible • whether the scheme might be improved through the reintroduction of dedicated support whether off-site or on-site • how the scheme might blend with its surrounding area; for example how older people living in the surrounding area might engage with and make use of the amenities and services it has to offer or how the scheme might blend into existing amenities close by • whether age-restricted housing is still the right type of housing for the sites or whether the site might best used for other type of housing for people at different stages of life in line with section 3 of this strategy. 			
30	<p>We will employ a Voids Coordinator to assist with this. Initiatives being looked at to reduce void periods are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing accompanied viewing practices • Viewing properties before then are ready to let • Reviewing the lettable standard 			
31	<p>Develop an action plan containing the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of identifying empty properties such as through Council Tax records and through complaints to out enforcement team • An incentive scheme to encourage owners of long-term empty homes to bring them back into useful occupation through the housing register or for a homeless household for a period of 3-5 years. • A survey of empty properties above shops in the town centre and consideration of how they might be developed within the town centre regeneration plans <p><i>[Insert further information from cabinet report when it's available].</i></p>			



Section 5: Best use of existing homes				
32	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			
33	<p>We intend to support a range of sharing options where people want to go down this route, including for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Share – which is essentially supported lodgings • 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 https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/ • Co-housing, where people live ‘independently together’ having their own private space as well as some shared facilities² 			

² See UK Cohousing for more information on cohousing: <https://cohousing.org.uk/>



Section 6: Supporting people and households with greater needs				
Action	Description	Start by	Complete by	Lead
34	<p>Develop tenancy sustainment and support for private residents to help them at an early stage and the prevent them from being evicted from their home. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking at national ‘best practice’ in private sector tenancy sustainment • providing tenants with information and advice about relevant matters 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 <i>locality workers</i>, 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 			
35	<p>Look into ways of helping all our private renters to equip themselves with information about their rights as tenants so that they can be better equipped to respond to landlord requests and know where to go for tenancy support. We may do with in partnership with Generation Rent or through encouraging our tenants to join self-organised groups on WhatsApp, for example.</p>			



Section 6: Supporting people and households with greater needs				
36	Offer mediation for young people and their families alongside advice about options for moving into suitable housing independent from their families.			
37	<p>We intend to make it virtually impossible for our care leavers to fall through the gaps and become homeless. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 			



Section 6: Supporting people and households with greater needs				
38	Work with one or more of our specialist RPs to develop supported accommodation that is suitable for people with complex needs and that helps to prevent them from becoming homeless.			
39	Consider what other updates might be required to our housing allocations policy and process in order to better match people to properties in a timely way. In doing this, we will take into account the social care and homelessness costs that accrue to different council departments when people are not rehoused in a timely way.			
40	<p>We will undertake a fundamental review of the types of support we provide across the council that help people to live independently. Based on these findings, we will develop a commissioning and funding strategy for support that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides suitable support for both individuals of any age and families to live independently within the Borough, regardless of tenure • helps to prevent people from losing an existing tenancy in both social and private sectors • is asset-based so that it builds on what people can already do and aims to equip them with skills and confidence to connect well with others and to live their lives independently • is graded so that the number of hours and intensity of support can change as the person requires less or more support as their needs change • encourages and makes provision for community-based, peer-led, networked support wherever possible (eg. Key-ring https://www.keyring.org/) 			

Section 6: Supporting people and households with greater needs				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offers more 'shared lives' opportunities for those who want to go down this route (eg. Shared Lives Plus https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/ and HomeShare) 			
41	Develop a Temporary Accommodation strategy in response to the need for higher levels of provision, which will include some new council-owned provision.			
42	Develop a Housing First ³ approach for long-term rough sleepers who have complex needs in partnership with one of our specialist housing support providers.			
43	Involve our Housing Services team, including our Private Rented Sector enforcement team, in the Council's new multi-agency approach to multi-agency locality working.			

³ Housing First is an evidence-based approach to working with people with very high and complex needs (usually mental health plus addition/substance misuse) ... those for whom other approaches haven't worked: <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/resource/principles-housing-first>



Section 7: Creating healthy, thriving homes and places				
Action	Description	Start by	Complete by	Lead
44	Adopt the ten principles that have emerged from Public Health England and NHS England's Healthy New Towns programme ⁴ .			
45	Upgrade our complaints process for Council tenants to raise concerns in line with the Social Housing Green Paper 2018.			
46	Take a more proactive approach to enforcement of standards across our whole private rented sector by employing a combination of legal powers as appropriate to compel landlords to undertake the necessary works.			
47	Establish an Ethical Lettings Agency potentially run by James Elliman Homes or through one of our RP partners and offer this option to private landlords as appropriate.			
48	Expand options for landlords to lease their homes to the Council for a period of 3 or 5 years in return for property improvements.			

⁴ Putting Health into Place: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

Section 7: Creating healthy, thriving homes and places				
49	Undertake a review of our Landlords' Forums to support better information and support for landlords, so that they can be on the front-foot in terms of their approach to property maintenance and management.			
50	Identify a number of small districts where we will focus our efforts to improve both private homes and neighbourhood problems that impact on people's health. We will employ a range of proactive measures on a house-by-house basis and take an asset-based approach to caring for people.			
51	Use our sophisticated data on 'at risk' households to develop more evidenced ways of targeting our limited resources to where the need is.			
52	Develop more sophisticated ways of responding to problems we know exist by developing a multi-agency response across housing, support, health, policing, education or other services response. We will work with residents to find solutions in a supportive, personalised and asset-based way so that we meet their specific needs in an appropriate manner.			
53	Explore the potential for a 'Hospital to Home' scheme to assess people's housing needs while they are in hospital and necessary works undertaken to their home before or soon after discharge.			
54	Look into commissioning a number of 'step down' level access flats for people whose own home may no longer be suitable for their needs where they can live temporarily while they undergo reablement and consider, with an advisor, their future housing options.			

Section 7: Creating healthy, thriving homes and places				
55	Work in partnership with our Coproduction Network to help people to connect with each other, to reach isolated people and have their say in the future of their neighbourhood.			
56	Require our development partners to sign up to the healthy place-shaping principles and to commit to providing employment and skills development opportunities for local people			
57	Build time and resource into our processes to involve local people at all stages of life in shaping all new housing developments from the start through a masterplan-led approach. We will coordinate this with our community-strengthening work – including through our Stronger Healthier Attractive Neighbourhoods programme.			
58	Invite some of our registered provider partners who have homes in the borough and who are experienced in community regeneration to work with us and our communities to deliver better outcomes that local people want.			
59	Develop effective multi-agency responses to ‘hidden’ crime eg. drug-dealing, modern slavery and cookooing that takes place behind closed doors. This will be supported by data-sharing systems, by the Safer Slough Partnership and other agencies such as the police, environmental health, trading standards.			
60	Actively manage relationships with registered housing providers, inviting each to tell us about their ambitions, strengths and roles they might play in supporting delivery of the ambitions in this strategy. We will draw up a			

Section 7: Creating healthy, thriving homes and places				
	simple statement (an MoU?) with each one that sets out the opportunity for them to contribute.			