

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel
DATE: 14th January 2020
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WARD(S): ALL

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

FIVE YEAR PLAN – OUTCOME 4 UPDATE

1. **Purpose of Report**

This report updates the Scrutiny Panel on progress of the Outcome 4 work stream of the Council's Five Year Plan for 2019/20.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

That the Panel considers and comments on the progress of the Outcome 4 Action Plan.

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

The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA

3.1 Housing is one of the key priorities of Slough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS). It contributes to reducing inequalities in health through access to high quality housing. There are clear links between housing and the JSNA priorities around improving health conditions, particularly mental health and protecting vulnerable children.

3.2 **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Outcome 4 of Slough's Five Year Plan 2019-2024 states: "Our residents will live in good quality homes". This outcome recognises the critical links between improved health and wellbeing and affordable good quality housing.

3.3 The updated Outcome 4, 2019/20, Action Plan can be seen at Appendix A. The action plan has followed the pattern of the previous action plan and was put together by the Outcome 4 Group. This group is a selection of officers across the Housing Service. The Action Plan is monitored regularly and updated periodically.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, indirectly there are very significant financial implications for the Council given the numbers of homeless households residing in expensive temporary accommodation, for example.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

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

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

(d) **Equalities Impact Assessment**

An equality impact assessment is not necessary for the Outcome 4 Action Plan.

5. **Background Information**

5.1 The Outcome 4 Group interpreted the Five Year Plan 2019-2024, Outcome 4 “Our residents will live in good quality Homes” into nine actions: -

- 1) Implement new Housing Strategy;
- 2) Robust regulation of the private rented sector to ensure health and safety standards are met;
- 3) Make best use of existing public sector housing stock;
- 4) Review Delivery of Affordable Housing;
- 5) Prevent Homelessness where possible through early intervention and using a range of housing options;
- 6) Deliver effective stakeholder engagement across the borough;
- 7) Ensure that council tenants and leaseholders receive a best in class service through our contractor, Osbornes;
- 8) Effective Public Protection and
- 9) Temporary Accommodation Reduction.

5.2 The Action Plan at Appendix A shows a brief summary of the updated position in relation to progress. However, below is a more detailed account of the position.

6 **Summary**

6.1 **Implement new Housing Strategy**

6.1.1 The Interim Draft Housing Strategy was presented to the last Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 28th November 2019. This was an opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to discuss the emerging themes coming from the many discussions from stakeholders across the Council and partners.

6.1.2 The completed strategy will be available in April 2020 after a public consultation has taken place during February and March 2020.

6.2 Robust regulation of the private rented sector to ensure health and safety standards are met

6.2.1 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assesses 29 housing hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of current or future occupants of a property in the private sector. The HHSRS provides a way that hazards can be assessed and the best way of dealing with them identified. If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, this is known as a Category 1 hazard. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, this is known as a Category 2 hazard. Examples of hazards are: -

- **Damp and mould growth**
- **Excess cold**
- **Excess heat**
- **Asbestos**
- **Biocides**
- **Carbon Monoxide and fuel combustion products.**

6.2.2 Since April 2019, 84 Category 1 hazards and 128 Category 2 hazards have been removed. Therefore, these actions have significantly reduced the risk of harm to vulnerable people in Slough by improving their housing.

6.2.3 Discretionary Licensing Schemes have been introduced in Chalvey and Central and in the last three months, officers have carried out 10 'raids' of suspected unlicensed properties and obtained a charging order against a landlord who refused to pay her £37,000 fine.

6.2.4 To date, 154 HMO licence applications have been received.

6.3 Make best use of existing public sector housing stock

6.3.1 Officers have identified a range of options to encourage existing council tenants in large properties to downsize. This includes offering creative financial incentives (possibly making, 'a welcome to your new home payment' for mutual exchangers, paying removal costs, providing white goods and/or carpets).

6.3.2 These suggestions will be presented to the new Scrutiny Group of the Residents' Board for their consideration before these are progressed. All ideas must be fully costed and the budget identified.

6.4 Review Delivery of Affordable Housing

6.4.1 Currently, the Housing Development and Contracts Service is working up plans to develop over 600 housing units over the next few years. These will predominantly be on housing land. However, the council acknowledges that the development of affordable housing is a key challenge for the borough. The new Housing Strategy will be giving specific focus to this issue. A draft of the strategy will be available by the middle of January 2020.

6.5 Prevent homelessness where possible through early intervention and using a range of housing options

6.5.1 It is an uphill struggle to keep pace with homelessness. Since April 2019 until the end of November 2019, 1,059 homeless households approached the Council for assistance. Homeless approaches have tripled since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force on 3rd April 2018.

6.5.2 As at the 16th December 2019, there were 429 homeless households in all forms of temporary accommodation. This fell from 450 recently. However, the Council has been successful in preventing homeless households becoming actually homeless and entering temporary accommodation. Last year (2018/19), 205 homeless preventions were achieved. So far this year, to the end of November, 187 preventions have been achieved, averaging 23 preventions a month. At the end of the financial year, 2017/18, only 86 preventions were achieved.

6.5.3 This year's target is 238 preventions and if this is achieved, actual homeless preventions would have nearly tripled since March 2018.

6.6 Deliver effective stakeholder engagement across the borough

6.6.1 There has been a bit of activity across this area: -

- The Resident Board is fully constituted and recruitment is ongoing to 3 vacancies (1 leaseholder and 2 tenants);
- The Board are meeting bi-monthly and 3 members have taken up their places on the Neighbourhood & Community Services Scrutiny Panel;
- The Resident Scrutiny Group met for the first time on 10th December 2019 and have agreed their priorities for the next 6 months;
- The Resident Complaints Panel has continued to review complaints at Stage 3 of the process;
- The annual satisfaction survey and gap analysis against the Regulatory Consumer Standards have been refreshed and presented to the Resident Board who have delegated responsibility for the ongoing monitoring to the Resident Scrutiny Group;
- The Board are continuing to monitor compliance, particularly in relation to fire safety and the recommendations arising from the Phase 1 report of the Grenfell Inquiry;
- The Resident Board have completed an Introduction to Social Housing training day (together with members). Facilitation and presentation skills training arrangements are currently being finalised by Jules Potter – shared training with volunteers working with Adult Social Care;
- The Housing Service is continuing to work closely with community engagement colleagues across the Council to identify opportunities for joint working. The Housing Service continues to contribute to the One Council Group and will be exploring options for using social media to engage with residents;

- The annual satisfaction survey was carried out in September 2019 and presented to representatives from across the Council and Osborne Property Services in December 2019. On the summary, at Appendix B, comparisons can be seen from last year. The results will now be used to prioritise areas of low satisfaction through the various groups that are already in place, e.g. the Customer Experience Sub-Group and the Communications Sub-Group. The action plan will be made available once these groups have scrutinised the results.
- Two Landlords' Forums already delivered. One planned before the end of the financial year as well as an Options day for homeless households;
- The first Private Tenants' Forum was held in October 2019 and
- The last leasehold forums were held in September 2019 at two locations (minutes are available on the SBC Website).

6.7 Ensure that council tenants and leaseholders receive a best in class service through our contractor, Osbornes

- 6.7.1 At least one Neighbourhood Manager attends (and currently chairs) the Repairs, Voids and Caretaking Sub Group and the Customer Experience Sub Group. Other sub groups (Performance, Commercial, Compliance, Social Return on Investment (SROI), Communications etc., are attended whenever possible.
- 6.7.2 Senior officers also attend the Strategic Management Board, where officers of the Council and Osbornes meet to discuss issues. There are now a range of ways where the contract is discussed and performance managed, which going forward, will prove to be valuable for the residents of Slough.

6.8 Effective Public Protection

- 6.8.1 New warden arrangements have been implemented covering the Town Centre and Chalvey. Two full time wardens are deployed on Slough High Street as part of the Town Centre Project to provide a consistent presence in the area and to complement the 6 Enforcement officers who operate across the borough. Known sites are being continually monitored and any issues quickly identified and dealt with. This project is ongoing.
- 6.8.2 Community Safety Wardens continue to be deployed in key hot spot areas in Chalvey. Evidence has been collated to support legal action in 13 prosecution applications for Public Protection Space Orders (PSPOs). Evidence is currently being collated to support a wider operation in the area.
- 6.8.3 The Pilot Signage Scheme discussed and requested by Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, Project "Fly Capture" has been launched. To date, 5 vehicles have been seized and 1 search warrant executed. 2 prosecution cases are pending for multiple offences. A publicity campaign has been launched to raise the profile.

6.9 Temporary Accommodation Reduction

- 6.9.1 The temporary accommodation reduction target was set to 350 for the end of this year (2019/20), from a 2018/19 end of year position of 409. The current position is that there are 429 households in temporary accommodation, which is well above the position needed to achieve the target.
- 6.9.2 Officers continue to manage this situation as best as possible but there are a number of contributory factors impacting the numbers. The situation continues to be monitored on a monthly basis as well as action taken to mitigate further increases.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Outcome 4 Action Plan covers a broad range of housing issues and will continue to be monitored until completion.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 There are no background papers.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A - Outcome 4 - 2019/20: December 2019 Update
Appendix B – Resident Satisfaction Survey, 2019, Summary

Outcome 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes

Updated: December 2019

Officer lead: Colin Moone

Key Action	Specific actions to deliver success	Target/ Performance measure	Timescale	Update
1. Implement new Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Request for Quote • Ensure effective stakeholder engagement • Housing Strategy drafted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Consultant to carry out work • Ensure SLT engagement • Strategy consulted on and agreed 	<p>April 2019</p> <p>April 2019</p> <p>August 2019</p>	The Housing Strategy has moved from its initial stage of information gathering to an initial draft, which is due in December 2019. The final strategy will be available by the end of March 2020.
2. Robust regulation of the private rented sector to ensure health and safety standards are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Additional and Selective Licensing Scheme • Explore pilot Renovation Grants Scheme • Explore pilot Empty Property Grants Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new licensing scheme • Draft business case for pilot scheme • Draft business case for pilot scheme 	<p>July 2019</p> <p>May 2019</p> <p>May 2019</p>	<p>Scheme has now been fully implemented.</p> <p>This has been put back due to the additional work that the implementation of the licensing scheme has caused. This will be considered as part of the new Housing Strategy Action Plan.</p> <p>An empty property grants scheme has been</p>

				implemented. £200k has been made available in 2019/20.
3. Make best use of existing public sector housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review voids process and consider introducing innovative approaches, to reducing void times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve best in class turnaround times 	June 2019	Void times are still disappointing. Officers are still considering a number of initiatives to reduce the turnaround times and a dedicated Voids Coordinator will be employed, for a fixed period, to look at these issues. This will concentrate on the internal processes within Housing Services as remedial work carried out by Osbornes mean that they are on target with their part of the process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Mutual Exchange Scheme to create more opportunities for tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve at least 10 mutual exchanges through the use of new promotion materials 	May 2019	26 swaps have taken place in the past 12 months.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider other creative approaches to increase housing opportunities for council tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up time-limited group to look at what other authorities are doing and bring back a discussion paper for consideration 	June 2018	Time-limited group have met and have come up with a number of options. These will be presented to the Resident Board Scrutiny Group for progressing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise the use of Homefinder UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce promotional material 	May 2019	Homefinder UK is now being used as a tool for helping residents to move out of the

				borough. This is a voluntary scheme but will be considered when looking to discharge the Council's homeless obligations out of the borough.
4 Review delivery of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be addressed fully in the new Housing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full engagement and involvement with key stakeholders 	July 2019	This is being considered in the new Housing Strategy. However, a Development Strategy is now in place to deliver the needed housing for the borough.
5 Prevent Homelessness where possible through early intervention and using a range of housing options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement new prevention arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New prevention arrangements implemented and embedded in the service 	May 2019	New arrangements implemented and having positive impact.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet or exceed prevention target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 238 preventions 	March 2020	Prevention target on track.
6 Deliver effective stakeholder engagement across the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new Resident Board arrangements for resident engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident Board constituted with elected Board Members 	July 2019	New Resident Board now launched and meeting regularly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold at least two Landlords' Forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forums held by the end of May 2019 and by the end of November 2019 	May and November 2019	Two Landlords' Forums already delivered. One planned before the end of the financial year as well as an Options day for homeless households. Also the first Private Tenants' Forum was held in October 2019.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold at least 4 Leaseholder Forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Leaseholder Forums held in both areas collectively 	September 2019 and March 2020	The last leasehold forums were held in September 2019 at two locations (minutes are available on the SBC Website). Leaseholders agreed that 2 forums each a year would be adequate unless there was anything particularly happening at the time.
7. Ensure that council tenants and leaseholders receive a best in class service through our contractor, Osbornes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Strategic Board Meetings • Attend Operational performance Meetings • Create accurate performance feedback tool • Performance statistics presented to the Resident Board and Leasehold Forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review performance issues at every meeting • Review performance issues at every meeting • Performance tool is accurate and timely • Statistics are accurate and timely 	<p>Every Month</p> <p>Every Month</p> <p>Performance statistics reviewed every month at Housing's Performance Review Meeting</p> <p>Every Meeting</p>	Neighbourhood Forums are now taking place. There have been six since the beginning of the financial year. Officers continue to attend performance meetings and challenge performance issues.
8. Effective Public Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Implement Warden Arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new Warden approach covering the Town Centre 	By May 2019	This has been implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly tipping pilot scheme launch 	<p>and Chalvey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Signage Scheme requested by Neighbourhoods & Community Scrutiny Panel 	June 2019	This has been implemented.
9. Temporary Accommodation Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Temporary Accommodation numbers at Supply and Demand Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 households in all forms of TA 	March 2020	Temporary accommodation being constantly monitored but currently the numbers are significantly higher than the profiled target (for the end of December 2019) of about 390 – numbers are 429 as at 16/12/19.

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