

Slough Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025

Draft – 10th January 2020

Executive Summary

[Complete later, once detail agreed]

1. Housing for an attractive, healthy and economically inclusive Slough

1.1 Slough 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 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 and have been taking steps to make this happen. For example, the number of residents gaining an NVQ level 4 qualification has increased year on year since [xxx] which is enabling more of Slough's residents to secure good jobs within the town's economy than in the past.

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'**. Our ambition is developed further in Slough's Five Year Plan 2020-2025 which states that **'Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents'**. We determined that people of all ages 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.

1.2 Our vision for an attractive, healthy 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 and retired people. We want people to enjoy life in Slough and to happily spend their money within the local economy.

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 a rebranding exercise that involves local people in building the vision for the place.

1.3 The roles of housing in achieving this vision for Slough

Housing plays critical roles across all elements of the Council's ambition.

The type, size and suitability of homes available and the rent or purchase price determines who accesses homes in the borough and how long they stay. Getting the right sort of homes is central for ensuring that local firms have access to a pool of labour with various skill levels and also to ensure that local people and people who move into the town for work have adequate options as their housing requirements change across their life course and into old age. Land availability is very limited within the Council's boundary, so we are asking our neighbouring boroughs to play their part in enabling this to happen. We are also looking at how we can make best use of our existing housing.

The physical condition of Slough's homes, the size to household-size ratio and the attractiveness of Slough's neighbourhoods is a large factor in people's health and wellbeing and their ability to thrive, gain skills and contribute productively within our growing economy. For example, overcrowding reduces children's ability to study in the family home while the link between access to green spaces and good mental health is now proven. The quality of private landlords' management practices is also critical. For this reason, we intend to take action to drive up the quality of new homes being built in the borough, the quality of the environment and the quality of homes available and professionalism within the private rented sector.

Our ability to provide suitable homes and support for a range of people who would otherwise struggle to live independently is also critical. We want to minimise tenancy failures that damage people's livelihoods and give rise to large financial costs to the Council. We want to make sure our older population can access suitable housing options and/or adaptations as they grow older. And we want to do the best we can, working with our East Berkshire partners, to access suitable accommodation close to family and friend networks for people with learning disabilities, mental health and other difficulties in life.

1.4 The Strategy and Action Plan

This (draft) strategy and action plan sets out how the Council will work and what it is requesting of partners in order to move closer toward an attractive, healthy and economically inclusive Slough within and beyond the town's boundaries.

Throughout, we have highlighted in green where we believe there is a particular opportunity to work smarter across the Council and with other agencies and partners within the 'Our Future' programme.

The numbered actions within the Action Plan are referenced throughout the strategy document in red bold for ease of navigation and sense-making (these may be removed in the final version). In each case, they relate to the paragraphs immediately above.

2. Successes, Challenges and Opportunities

2.1 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] and 39% of Slough's residents hold a degree-level (NVQ4+) qualification, slightly more than the national average. The numbers holding these qualifications has increased in recent years [find ref].
- 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 79 households have been helped in this way.
- 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 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.

2.2 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 manner¹.
- Slough house prices are lower than the surrounding areas [ref figures]. Development costs are equal to the surrounding areas making Slough a less attractive proposition to developers. Gaining affordable housing through the planning system (s106) is difficult because most development sites have high existing or alternative use values (e.g. for commercial use) and land-owners/developers have been over-optimistic and have over-paid when purchasing sites not factoring in the Council's affordable housing policy. This means that on site affordable housing that complies with Slough BC policies makes development schemes unviable.
- Despite house prices being lower than the surrounding areas, they are high relative to local earnings making it difficult for local residents to afford. Rent levels are also high.
- The market preference is to build small apartments and poor quality housing schemes being put forward (both new developments and office conversions) whereas a wider

¹ 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

range of type, sizes, tenures and affordability of homes is what is actually needed. This means that families are living in small, unsuitable homes with no open space that are uncondusive to family life.

- The town has an exceptionally large private rented sector; around 33% of homes are privately rented [Private Rented Sector: Housing Stock Condition and Stressors Report; MetaStreet 2018] compared with a national average of 18-20%. In some wards levels of private renting is as high as 50%. With several thousand small landlords this makes quality improvement and regulation challenging and potentially resource intensive.
- Homeless acceptances 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 transition to Universal Credit has had several negative effects the legacy of which will continue even if changes are made. These include: large increase on arrears levels for council tenants [add figures here], a reduction in the number of private landlords who are prepared to let to benefit claimants (due to ending of direct payments) and an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless because their private tenancies are ending.

2.3 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. This will help us to change how we work, by asking “What is the best thing for Slough?” and working across teams and services areas – and beyond the council – to think and deliver differently. See box below for further information.
- The Council is positive about growth and development and is business-minded. There are many sites in sustainable locations where redevelopment in principle is acceptable.
- There are also funding sources that the Council could optimise to support different elements of this strategy and action plan. These include: further borrowing against the Housing Revenue Account, surpluses from the activity of council-owned companies just as James Elliman Homes and other commercial vehicles, institutional investment, Homes England, fees from Selective Licensing, national schemes that oblige energy companies to provide resources to address fuel poverty.
- 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. There are opportunities for the Council to promote comprehensive redevelopment or purchase key sites.

The Council's Our Futures Programme – an opportunity to work smarter

The Council has embarked on a 5-year programme to transform the way it works across the Council and with partners in order to achieve its ambition to ***work as 'One Council' and with partners as One Slough to deliver better outcomes***. We are calling this programme 'Our Futures'.

Our Futures presents a number of opportunities for improving the way the Council works to deliver this strategy including through enhanced:

- Openness and transparency
- Communications across teams
- Information-sharing across teams and partners
- Evidence-based solutions
- Cross-team and multi-agency working
- Devolvement of decision-making to the most appropriate level
- Governance arrangements for joint decisions

[Revise - after speaking to Joe Carter ... still not managed to get a call set up]

Shifting to a more collaborative One Council approach will help with successful delivery of this housing strategy.

Throughout this strategy we have highlighted where and how we consider Our Futures can help us to work smarter and to take us closer to achieving our ambitions.

3. What sort of new homes does Slough require?

We want Slough to be a place where people '*... choose to live, work and stay*'.

3.1 What the projections are telling us?

We know, from our recent East Berkshire Housing Needs Assessment, that Slough needs an additional 893 homes per annum over the 10-year period from 2019 to 2029. However, the Council has already established that this target could not reasonably be met unless delivery of housing increases dramatically. Analysis in the Berkshire Housing Market Assessment shows a slightly higher level of 927 per annum.

Appendix 1 [to follow] summarise the findings of the Housing Needs and Market Assessments including the broad mix of homes required. This includes assessments of homes for older people and specialised homes to meet a wide range of need.

3.2 What sort of homes do people want at different stages of life?

We have identified 5 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;
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.

We have some knowledge about the types of homes people are looking for at different stages of life and we would like to know more. Each of them is considered further in the section below.

3.2.1 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 the ZEDpod, a low cost prefabricated super energy-efficient micro home designed to sit on an elevated platform above existing outdoor car

parks. Requiring 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 costs around £65,000 and they can also be easily relocated at low cost and with minimal wastage²;

- 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;
- Homeshare³ 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;
- 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.

3.2.2 Young professionals

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 coupled with positive options for landlords such as purchase of a new ethical letting service – with a view to promoting higher standards in private lettings;
- Home ownership options such as shared ownership and/or Rent to Buy.

3.2.3 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 family homes with 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms for sale on the open market or through Rent to Buy;

² <https://zedpods.com/>

³ <https://homeshareuk.org/>

- 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 scheme, that enables key-workers such as teachers at the new academy to purchase a home and settle in the town;
- Home ownership options such as shared ownership and/or Rent to Buy;
- 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.

3.2.4 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.

3.2.5 Older people

Recent consultation with the Slough 50plus Forum⁴ confirmed that the housing situations and experiences of older people are as diverse in later life as they are for younger people.

⁴ This consultation took place in April 2019 and was facilitated undertaken by Care & Repair England with input from the South East Forum on Ageing (SEEFA)

Nationally 96% of older households live in general needs housing⁵ and around 80% express a preference to live in their current home for as long as possible rather than to move⁶. We know that older people do better when they have level access homes and that today's older people have expectations that exceed standards in some of our former sheltered housing schemes.

The 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 hospital⁷. We prioritise 'supported living at home'. A recent study by Housing LIN argues for housing to support health and social care 'preventative' priorities and specifically to reduce residential care placements.

We are therefore looking into:

- a proportion of homes (say 10%) in Slough's larger developments that meet the 'Lifetime Homes' criteria⁸ offering enhanced mobility and accessibility;
- making it easier for people to make timely adaptations to their current homes, including dementia features, enabling people to stay living in their current home for longer;
- a range of floating support suitable for older people with different levels of need to enable them to stay living in their own home for longer;
- developing additional extra care facilities appropriately designed with assistive technology that can provide high quality care especially for people with dementia;
- aiming for a future tenure split for older people's housing of 53% owner occupier 47% affordable housing by 2036 (SHMA);
- reinventing our (de-designated) former sheltered housing to meet modern expectations – see section 5.3;
- cohousing options, where older people choose to live 'independently together' having their own private space as well as some shared facilities⁹;
- support to help older people to work through their housing options and help them to make appropriate and timely decisions – see also section 5.1;
- supported Homeshare¹⁰ – where an older person offers accommodation to a younger, more able person who provides low level support with day-to-day tasks;
- Developing 'student style' accommodation with some shared communal areas enables a 'shared care' approach.

⁵ Garrett H & Burris S, (2015) Homes and ageing in England, Building Research Establishment, Bracknell, IHS BRE Press

⁶ Lloyd J (2015) Older Owners Research London, Strategic Society Centre

⁷ Older People's Commissioning Strategy, Table 143 Berkshire SHMA, JSNA.

⁸ Lifetime Homes: <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

⁹ See UK Cohousing for more information on cohousing: <https://cohousing.org.uk/>

¹⁰ Homeshare is currently being offered through PossAbilities CIC

3.2 6 Specialised and supported housing for vulnerable people across the life course

Information on the needs and aspirations for specialised housing for people with a wide range of vulnerabilities is collected and handled in many places – across different council teams and partners. We are working towards better data-sharing and commissioning arrangements. The recently established Coproduction Network is helping us to understand more about what would help people with particular housing needs to live their lives well and we are looking to build connections with other grass-roots groups to understand the requirements better.

We are considering how we might:

- Bring the data about specialised housing needs and aspirations together from a wide range of sources, including partners like MHT and Turning Point, to gain an accurate picture of what is required and to improve our commissioning practice. This includes accommodation and support for
 - young people;
 - children leaving care;
 - people with learning disability, mental health problems, alcohol or substance misuse issues or dual diagnosis/complex needs;
 - older people (active and frail);
 - homeless people – including temporary, move-one accommodation and Housing First pledges from housing associations;
- Reduce distance-placements for people with a learning disability and autism, by working with our close neighbours, South Bucks and RB Windsor and Maidenhead, to draw on a broader range of specialised housing available close to Slough;
- Make sure specialised homes are in safe, well-lit locations with CCTV for example;
- Improve the process for making adaptations to homes;
- Make best use of assistive technology;
- Ensure that more Lifetime Homes are available across the borough.

We are working with the Coproduction Network to expand our knowledge and information and to find solutions that consider both the accommodation and support requirements together.

Our Futures opportunity: to develop a joint approach to commissioning for specialised accommodation and support including support for residents in general needs accommodation and private housing across housing services, adult social care and Children’s Trust and a range of partners.

We will improve our knowledge of what sort of homes people want and can afford at different stage of life we will undertake more detailed affordability analysis and further consultation with residents.

Actions 1 and 2

Our Future opportunity: To establish a detailed and common evidence-based for the housing needs and aspirations of Slough's residents and to consider how this might be developed alongside market-driven homes (largely for people moving into the borough) across all sites that become available over the coming years – including HRA land, Council GF sites, other public land and privately owned land.

Our Future opportunity: To coordinate this consultation with the 'One Council Community Engagement Group'.

4. Delivering new homes to support inclusive growth

One of the biggest challenges the borough faces is making sure the right mix of new homes are built with sufficient being affordable to local residents.

The Core Strategy for Slough 2006-2026 requires between 25% and 40% of homes on new development sites of 15 or more units to be affordable housing and sets out the mix of different levels of affordability. While this is difficult to deliver in practice, we are committed to finding better ways to deliver much more new affordable housing at a range of price points, through improving our land use and investment strategies for housing. We also want a wider range of types, tenures and sizes of homes that meet residents' needs and aspirations at different stages of their lives as set out in section 3.

We will consider the potential for every development site – whether privately owned, council owned (HRA or General Fund sites) or owned by our joint venture Slough Urban Renewal – to contribute to these goals. Adopting some new measures in the latest NPPF and NPPG (National Policy Planning Framework and Guidance) should help alleviate the issue of artificially high land values and assist in establishing true viability.

This chapter sets out the range of innovative ways we will work to make the most of our financial and land assets to increase our capacity to deliver the new homes Slough needs, working flexibly with a range of partners towards Slough's vision.

What we are already doing

We are well into the process of redeveloping a number of large sites across the Borough, each of which includes significant numbers of new homes and has its own market, commercial and development dynamics that needs to be worked through on a site by site basis. These are listed below with further information on each in Appendix 2.

- Town Centre site
- North West Quadrant (Thames Valley University site)
- Horlicks site
- AkzoNobel
- Queensmere and The Observatory
- Canal basin
- Colnbrook
- Stoke Gardens
- Stoke Wharf
- Montem

The council has directly delivered 200 affordable homes over 26 HRA sites since 2012/13. A further 44 affordable homes will be completed on 8 sites within the next 12 months [Housing Development Strategy].

[Include a photo of the 4 new homes in Denbeigh Street (off Fox Lane).

4.1 Best use of land to maximise new supply

4.1.1 Providing clarity on viability and land value

New measures in government guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that when assessing land value this must take account of planning policy. It establishes benchmark land value as 'existing use plus a premium' in normal circumstances.

We will introduce this new consideration of benchmark land value into our pre-application discussions with developers and into our viability assessments on sites. This should help to overcome the problem of developers over-paying for land.

Action 3

4.1.2 Improving land assembly and development process on large complex sites

We will change the way we work in the early stages of site development in order to improve the development process overall, maximise the volume of affordable homes through section 106 and secure development that better matches the housing and place requirements set out in this strategy.

We are considering the following additional actions to support the land assembly and development process:

- Establish a 'Large Sites Delivery Project Management System' to help standardise our approach and keep track of progress on each site;
- Offer a range of pre-applications support for potential developers, including:
 - 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;
- Identify strategic sites for acquisition by the Council where appropriate, through negotiation or using CPO where necessary as a last resort;
- Appointing a Housing Delivery Tsar - someone with authority to bust problems over delivery including to kickstart stalled developments and revisit unstarted planning permissions.

Actions 4, 5, 6, 7

4.1.3 Best use of non-HRA council land and other publicly owned land

We intend to take a more collaborative approach to use of public sector land so that we are considering the collective impact of what is developed across a range of sites owned by different public sector bodies. This includes the council as well as health trusts and education authorities.

This requires a much more collaborative effort led by senior officers to make best use of sites across the council and beyond, for example, through working with One Public Estate to secure buy-in from other statutory bodies.

Actions 8, 9 ,10

***Our Futures opportunity:* to maximise the potential for all public sites to support this strategy and meet Slough's housing requirements.**

4.1.4 The Council's HRA (Housing Revenue Account) land

Our aim over time is to improve or replace properties that have a poor social, economic or environmental performance, because of low demand or high costs, and either improving them or replacing them with properties which are fit for purpose. We will aim to optimise the contribution of this activity to achieving the vision in this strategy including for increasing the volume and range of homes available and for supporting wider objectives such as new development supporting wider community activities.

Following a review of how we invest in HRA estates (in our 2018 Asset Management Strategy) we have produced a Housing Development Strategy for our HRA sites.

Through our current programme we will invest £140m and deliver 612 homes spread over a range of sites. Key sites include:

- Tower House & Ashbourne House in Chaveley – 193 new affordable units by Apr 2021;
- Weekes Drive in Cippenham Meadows – 114 new affordable units by Dec 2021;
- Garrick House in Foxborough – 60 new specialist units by Dec 2021.

We are creating 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.

Actions 11 and 12

***Our Future opportunity:* To coordinate the work of Regeneration, Planning and Housing Development and Contracts Teams**

4.1.5 Seeking to expand beyond Slough's boundaries

We are working with our neighbouring authorities, Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire, to develop plans that would enable all three authorities to better manage the housing implications of the economic growth planned for Slough and from which these areas benefit. We have put forward Options in the Local Plan Issues and Options document for a ***northern expansion*** in the form of a "garden suburb".

We recognise our neighbouring districts also face significant challenges for housing delivery. As identified in the HNA 2019, the inter-relationship between our three districts points to seeking common solutions.

We will continue our work on this to make a case for a common solution as part of the duty to cooperate with adjoining Council's. We will also explore solutions with MHCLG and other third parties who may be able to help broker a solution.

Action 13

4.2 Getting smarter at financing and building new homes

4.2.1 Housing Development Investment Strategy

We will develop an investment strategy to optimise how we use the resources available to build the homes Slough needs in the right places. This will be based on the matrix showing development routes, house types and potential funding sources in the table in Appendix 1.

Action 14

4.2.2 Financing new homes on HRA and other strategic small sites

Coordinating several funding sources – the HRA, General Fund and institutional finance possibilities – will place the Council in a better position to make the most of opportunities to develop new affordable and specialised homes on HRA and other small sites.

We will test the capacity of our 30-years HRA borrowing plan to enable borrowing for new Council homes in light of the government lifting of the restrictions in borrowing against HRA assets in late 2018. We will develop a plan that is coordinated with the Council's 30 years business and borrowing plans. This will provide clarity and consistency when determining the feasibility of each project while leaving space for innovation, enterprise and negotiation to drive value for money. It will include a risk mitigation model for each project business case to be evaluated within a context of the capacity of the council as a whole.

Action 15

4.2.3 Maximising opportunities available through national and regional programmes

Our 'ask' from Homes England

We will develop a strong relationship with Homes England so that we can be on the front-foot in seeking financial assistance through the full range of programmes. This includes:

- 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

Action 16

Stronger Towns and Future High Street Funding

We will work with local stakeholders such as retailers and landlords to secure funding to unlock the assets of the town centre for shopping, leisure and for accommodation.

Action 17

Berkshire LEP funding

[Need to complete this section]

Action x

4.1.2 A Slough Housing Fund – for gap-funding

We will identify sources of funding that might be drawn together to create a Slough Housing Fund to provide gap funding to enable new affordable housing delivery.

Sources might include surpluses made by Council-owned company James Elliman Homes and our joint venture Slough Urban Renewal, commuted sums from s106 negotiations, Right to Buy receipts, New Homes Bonus, surpluses generated through the Council's other commercial activity and other sources.

We will use the intelligence we gain from benchmark land values and viability assessments to make good decisions about how best to invest these funds and will only provide funding when developers operate an 'open-book' policy. We will consider drawing on the fund to invest in homes that aren't otherwise funded through public subsidy and for which double subsidy rules apply to deliver a housing mix on larger sites that wouldn't otherwise be possible. We will make decisions based on best value for money.

Having this fund gives us flexibility and leverage that will bring us closer to our ambition for the right housing development in the right places.

This is in line with the Council's ambition ***to pursue commercial and other funding opportunities to maximise benefits for Slough.***

Action 18**4.2.4 New PRS homes and a Slough Rent to Buy scheme**

[Need to discuss whether RPS is the right thing for Slough Council to get into before recommending. Maybe something like ... We will explore the feasibility of entering the PRS market ...]

4.2.5 Innovative design and construction standards including modular homes

[This section to be completed]

4.2.6 Community-led housing development

The Council will explore, with Slough residents, the appetite for community-led housing development. If the appetite is there, we will look at the feasibility of options that may help to meet demand.

This could include a 'self-build' offer to enable Slough residents to build their own home with support from an RP or small developer. We know that 120 people have expressed an interest so far (through the housing register application process) but it is currently unknown how many are linked to Slough.

It could also include a Community Land Trust that has the potential to remove the land value from house prices making the homes more affordable in the long term (in perpetuity).

Action 19**4.3 Delivery vehicles and partnerships****4.3.1 Review of the roles of council-owned vehicles in improving Slough's housing offer****What we are already doing**

In addition to purchasing homes to meet housing need, through James Elliman Homes, our joint venture between Slough Borough Council and developer Morgan Sindell, called Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) enables us to develop a wide range of homes on large sites alongside other types of development and infrastructure. SUR is a major player in the Town Centre redevelopment, Thames Valley University site, Canal Basin and others, including some small sites. Through this joint venture we benefit from commercial know-how and we share both the profits and the risks associated with the development; it provides us with a source of income that can be reinvested by the Council to support the vision for Slough, including this housing strategy.

We will review the purpose and operations of each of our existing council-owned property companies, James Elliman Homes and Hershall Homes, and our joint venture Slough Urban

Renewal. We will consider roles each might play in helping to deliver high quality new homes across the life course (as set out in section 3).

Action 20

4.3.2 Optimising our delivery partnerships

Going forward, Slough Borough Council is committed to working with registered providers and development partners who are committed to ‘building a Slough where people want to live, work and stay’ including through the ambitions set out in this strategy. In particular, we want to provide better opportunities for locally-based small and medium sized housebuilders and developers and those that employ and offer development opportunities for local people who are more likely to spend their money locally and contribute actively to the local economy.

We will prioritise and incentivise registered providers and developers who demonstrate this commitment over the long-term.

Action 21

4.4 Making good decisions about housing development across all sites

We will establish new governance arrangements and process for review and senior-level decision-making in respect of all new housing developments.

This is to provide a check that we are employing our finances and undertaking land acquisition and disposals optimally, choosing our partners well and negotiating proficiently with developers, land-owners, funders, partners and others to secure commitment to Slough’s vision.

We will:

- Establish a Senior Officers’ Project Review Board to appraise all developments for their impact on achieving the goals set out in this strategy;
- 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:
 - 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?

- 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:
 - 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?

As part of this, we will keep records of the types, sizes, tenure and affordability of new homes built through all our programmes so that we can check that, over time, we are building the right proportion of different homes to meet the needs and aspirations of Slough's residents and those who come to live in Slough across the life course.

The intention is to make sure we are doing all we can to deliver for Slough's residents and to provide a forum for sharing, learning about and embedding innovations widely across our Council. It is intended for this process to drive up the quality of our development approaches over time, not to impede development.

Action 22, 23, 24

Our Futures opportunity: to optimise, learn from and drive up the quality of our approach to developing new homes to meet Slough's housing requirements.

5. Best use of existing homes

5.1 Supported 'right-sizing' to enable people to live in a more suitable home

We want to help people to be able to find a home that is suitable for their changing circumstances, including through up-sizing and down-sizing. We will develop our own approach and we will also seek to work with our nearest neighbours – RB Windsor and Maidenhead and South Bucks Councils – to make a wider range of options available close to Slough.

Supported Up-sizing

While we have powers to address overcrowding [*data to follow*] we can only employ them if suitable alternatives are available or if homes can be extended to improve their suitability.

We will 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.

Action 25

Supported Down-sizing

We will also encourage 'down-sizing' from larger to smaller properties, where someone is living in a home that is too big for their current needs. This can help to increase the supply of larger homes in both the owner occupied and social rented sector.

What we already do

We already have a 'Tenants Incentives Scheme' that provides a financial incentive to Slough Borough Council tenants who wish to 'downsize' from a larger to a smaller Council property. Since 201? we have secured x vacancies of 2/3/4 bedroom homes that have become available for larger households on the housing register.

We will develop this further into 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 to a smaller, more manageable home or move into sheltered or extra care accommodation.

Action 26

5.2 Review the Home Improvement Agency use of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

What we are already doing

Slough BC is undertaking a comprehensive review of its DFG policy in order to make better use of the flexibly it affords to enhance how we use it to support older and disabled people to live well in their homes and within their community. **[Call out to Tony Molloy who is doing the DFG review]**

In addition, we will undertake a review of our Home improvement Agency activity to ensure adaptations are made in a timely way to meet the needs of occupant. As part of this we will

explore the potential for establishing a ‘Handyperson’ service to help older frail residents living in private housing to maintain their property and outside space.

This is also a crucial element to get right when developing our Hospital to Home Scheme (see section 7.2.4).

Actions 27 and 28

5.3 Reinventing our former sheltered housing to meet modern expectations

Through the options appraisal we undertook for our HRA Asset Management Strategy we identified the need for a long-term strategy for the future of our former sheltered housing schemes that is now operating as ‘age-restricted’ housing since the schemes were de-designated.

We will 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.

Action 29

5.4 Reducing the turnaround time for void properties

The length of time Council properties are void between lets is too long. We have undertaken a review, so we know what the problems are, and we are looking at ways of reducing the time properties are vacant between lets.

We will employ a Voids Coordinator to assist with this. Initiatives being looked at to reduce void periods are:

- Reviewing accompanied viewing practices
- Viewing properties before then are ready to let
- Reviewing the lettable standard

We have set ourselves a target to reach upper quartile relet period by March 2021.

Action 30

5.5 Bringing empty homes back into use

What we have already done

Over the last x years, the Council brought 40 long-term empty properties back into use that were causing problems to residents. We have recently introduced ‘Empty Property Grants’.

We are committed to spending £200,000 per annum to take this work further. We will develop a plan to identify long-term empty homes and to bring them back into use to increase supply at the same time as improving the neighbourhood. *[Insert further information from cabinet report when it’s available].*

Action 31

5.6 Reasonable preference to Slough residents to access ‘intermediate home ownership’

We will 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.

Action 32

5.7 Encouraging sharing options where appropriate

Sharing a home or some communal facilities is not now limited to young people and extended families. Enabled by digital technologies the ‘sharing economy’ is growing and more people are considering sharing their living space for a wide range of reasons.

We intend to support a range of sharing options where people want to go down this route, including for example Home Share, Shared lives plus¹¹ and Co-housing¹².

Action 33

¹¹ <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/>

¹² See UK Cohousing for more information on cohousing: <https://cohousing.org.uk/>

6. Supporting people and households with greater needs

Housing has always played roles in supporting people to live independently.

The Council supports people at many stages of life including older people with long term conditions, people with learning or physical disabilities, people with mental health, substance misuse problems or both and children leaving the care system. Some of these people require specialist or adapted accommodation while others are more suited to general needs housing and this may change throughout their lives.

Supporting people successfully requires them to have access both to accommodation that is suitable and support that is offered at the right time, in the right way and at the right level.

This section is mainly focused on people's support requirements and on timely access to suitable accommodation (Chapter 4 deals with new supply). This is because we have identified gaps in these that are contributing significantly to Slough's homelessness problem. Getting this right will require a more collaborative approach to commissioning for both housing and support across housing, social care and the Children's Trust.

6.1 Preventing people from becoming homeless

Homelessness acceptances in Slough have risen sharply over the last 5 years. Recent legislation (the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) placed new duties on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness and this is changing the way we work; we are placing a greater focus on helping 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 preventative 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.

6.1.1 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 prevent them from being evicted from their home.

Action 34

We will also 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 this in partnership with Generation Rent or through encouraging our tenants to join self-organised groups on WhatsApp, for example.

Action 35

6.1.2 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.

Action 36

6.1.3 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 through providing the Children's Trust with nominations to social housing, making it impossible for care leavers to be 'intentionally homeless', introduce an early warning mechanism to trigger appropriate support for care leavers up to age 25 and provide suitable support in general needs tenancies for an extended period.

Action 37

6.1.4 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. The placements that do exist require people to be clean from drugs and alcohol before they will be considered, and this is unrealistic for some people.

Action 38

6.1.5 A review of the housing register and allocations policy and process

We will 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.

Action 39

Our Futures opportunity: To develop a joint approach to commissioning a broader range of support that better meet the specific needs of individuals and households across housing, social care and the Children's Trust. To share information about who is and isn't managing to access the accommodation they need, the reasons behind that, and to collaborate to find solutions.

6.2 Graded support for vulnerable people including in general needs homes

We have identified gaps in our provision for support, particularly for those living in general needs accommodation who are currently not eligible for support. This is resulting in preventable failed tenancies. For example, the Council's 'Early Help' support is only available for families, not for single people.

For many people, the type and level of support they require varies over time, so we need more flexible types of support that follows the individual or household and meets their needs at any one time.

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 graded and flexible support that meets people's changing needs over time, in other words that:

- 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 (e.g. Key-ring <https://www.keyring.org/>);

- offers more 'shared lives' opportunities for those who want to go down this route (e.g. Shared Lives Plus <https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/> and HomeShare).

Action 40

6.3 Relieving homelessness and Rough sleeping

While we will place a bigger focus on preventing people from becoming homeless, the Homelessness Reduction Act also required councils to relieve homelessness and increases the length of time councils have responsibilities towards homeless people. It is placing a greater pressure on finding suitable temporary accommodation.

What we are already doing

Through our Council-owned property company, James Elliman Homes, we have bought and improved 79 homes and made them available at a reasonable rent for households who were either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The aim is for 230-250 homes to be owned and managed in this way over the 5 years to 2022 representing an asset of around £70m. The council might then be in a position to raise further funds for reinvestment in the town providing more options for relieving and preventing homelessness.

We provide a good advice and support network in Slough for both statutory and non-statutory households, including single homeless people.

In line with legislation, we give reasonable preference through our housing register to people who are homeless.

We intend to take further action to improve our offer to homeless households and this includes both the housing and support available. We will develop a Temporary Accommodation strategy in response to the need for higher levels of provision, which will include some new council-owned provision. We will also Develop a Housing First¹³ approach for long-term rough sleepers who have complex needs in partnership with one of our specialist housing support providers. This will help long-term homeless people who have longstanding substance-misuse issues because the approach ensures they are not barred from suitable accommodation with appropriate support to overcome their addiction.

Actions 41 and 42

¹³ 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>

6.4 Coordinated action to supporting people and households

What we are already doing

Enforcement of standards in private rented sector: We respond to tenants' complaints and use our enforcement power to take appropriate action against poor private rented property condition and management practices.

6.4.1 A multi-agency approach to solving local problems – a locality approach

We estimate that around 80% of Slough's residents are able to access most of our services online, such as repairs requests and rent payment.

This allows us to spend more resources working with the 20% who are not managing to access services effectively and who may need more help getting what they need to live well. We can help people with debt problems, help to apply for benefits or with hoarding problems for example.

Going further, we are starting to join up the Council's services across three localities – North, South and East, drawing on different teams to take appropriate actions altogether. This is so that our work with households makes better sense to them and makes a measurable impact on that household's circumstances and prospects.

Building on our existing multi-agency regulatory work – with policy, fire service, trading standards and others – we will involve our Housing Services team, including our Private Rented Sector enforcement team in this new multi-agency approach – in which operations are driven by the demands arising from the neighbourhood rather than through traditional line management.

Action 43

Example

This might mean, for example, helping a household to apply for benefits they may be eligible for, taking action to compel the landlord to address property defects, fixing insulation in the home, enrolling the children in an after-school homework club and arranging a home-based GP consultation – all within a period of 2 weeks.

***Our Futures opportunity:* To establish systems for sharing information and taking appropriate actions at the neighbourhood level across teams and agencies to enable rapid progress to be made in addressing complex issues that emerge for households and neighbourhoods, whatever their nature.**

7. Creating healthy, thriving homes and places

A healthy economy needs a healthy, happy population to power it¹⁴.

Through Slough Wellbeing Board and the Council's public health teams, we are developing a new and productive partnership with the NHS and in particular the Frimley Integrated Care Service. It is well evidenced that poor or unsuitable housing can play a significant factor in poor mental and physical health and can limit their happiness and productivity. This includes problems like damp and cold homes, poor internal air quality, overcrowding and noise disturbance all of which can be a problem across all tenures. Increasing our collaboration across housing, health and care will help us to address these problems in a more comprehensive fashion going forward.

People place a high value on the quality and suitability of the public realm, facilities and services, the local education offer, cultural and leisure offer and how they get on with their neighbours. These are major considerations for people who are making decisions about whether or not to live, work and stay, and spend their time and money, in Slough.

Delivering healthy and attractive places that work for young and old, disabled and able-bodied people alike can only be achieved if we have the right partnerships, processes and systems of accountability in place, as well as the right principles.

7.1 Healthy place-shaping principles

To help us to improve both Slough town centre and its neighbourhoods, we will adopt the ten principles that have emerged from Public Health England and NHS England's Healthy New Towns programme¹⁵. They are:

1. Plan ahead collectively
2. Assess local health care needs and assets
3. Connect, involve and empower people and communities
4. Create compact neighbourhoods
5. Maximise active travel
6. Inspire and enable healthy eating
7. Foster health in homes and buildings
8. Enable healthy play and leisure
9. Develop health services that enable people to stay well
10. Create integrated health and wellbeing centres

¹⁴ Health Foundation: <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/news/a-healthy-economy-needs-a-healthy-population-to-power-it>

¹⁵ Putting Health into Place: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

These principles will flow through all of our development, regeneration and community development activity.

Action 44

7.2 Healthy homes

The physical condition of Slough’s housing – measured by Category 1 hazards, disrepair, fuel poverty and SAP rating – compares reasonably well to the rest of the South East region and nationally. However, it compares significantly worse for low income households.

While the total cost of mitigating all of these problems may be prohibitive¹⁶ we intend to do more to improve the condition of homes for low income households living in private homes. We have good quality data about the pattern of a wide range of health outcomes, income and property condition across our neighbourhoods and we intend to move quickly to a position where we are routinely using these data-sets to guide our multi-agency response and resources.

What we are already doing

Promotion of home energy efficiency measures

We have a Memorandum of Understanding with Aran Services Limited who promote, assess and deliver energy efficiency measures through the government’s Energy Company Obligation (ECO 2t) scheme to Slough’s residents. The Council’s role is to support publicity so that as many of Slough’s residents as possible can benefit from the measures available through warmer homes and lower energy bills.

7.2.1 Maintaining and improving Council homes

We reviewed how we invest in Slough Borough Council homes and published our Asset Management Strategy in 2018. Through this process we looked at a range of options for investing in our homes to the ‘Slough Standard’ to meet customer needs and regulatory requirements.

We will also upgrade our complaints process for Council tenants to raise concerns in line with the Social Housing Green Paper 2018.

[Also add Fire safety, post-Grenfell works]

Action 45

¹⁶ The total cost of mitigating category 1 hazards in Slough’s private sector stock is estimated to be £11.3 million.



7.2.2 Proactive approach to improving standards in the private rented sector

What we have already done

Licensing of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs): We have recently expanded the mandatory licensing to a further 215 HMOs, responding to new legislation.

In July 2019 we introduced a 'Selective Licensing' scheme in a small number of neighbourhoods that have high levels of private rented homes. As we audit properties within the scheme, we will gain a much better idea of the condition of the properties and where the biggest problems lie. This will enable us to be on the front-foot in terms of finding solutions to problems that arise in these areas. The fees we charge landlords will cover the costs of our proactive enforcement work in these areas.

Proactive enforcement

Building on the Selective Licensing we intend to take a more proactive approach to enforcement of standards across our whole private rented sector, seeking out where the hazards and disrepair is greatest or where management standards are being breached and addressing issues even where no complaint has been raised.

We will employ a combination of legal powers as appropriate to compel landlords to undertake the necessary works.

Actions 46

Ethical lettings and leasehold options

Alongside stronger more proactive enforcement, we want to offer landlords some positive options to professionalise their service to tenants.

Our main priority in this respect is to establish an Ethical Lettings Agency in the town. This could be developed and run by James Elliman Homes or through one of our RP partners. We will offer this option to private landlords as appropriate.

We will also expand options for landlords to lease their homes to the Council for a period of 3 or 5 years in return for property improvements.

Actions 47 and 48

Information and support for landlords through the Landlords' Forum

We will undertake a review of our Landlords' Forums to provide 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. We may offer workshops with guest speakers (such as our health colleagues) on relevant themes of interest and sessions to inform them of our new proactive approach to hazards, disrepair and fuel poverty in order to improve health outcomes. We will also provide more information on positive steps they can take such as to purchase our ethical lettings service.

Action 49

Home Improvement Districts

We will 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.

Action 50

7.2.3 Towards a data-driven approach to improving homes and lives

We already have good data on where the most vulnerable households live, who is most 'at risk' of poor health and of the causal factors for their ill health and we intend to use this to develop more evidence-led ways of targeting our limited resources to where the need is.

We will also 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.

We are at the start of this exciting journey. This will take some time to develop but it will help us to spend our limited resources in the best way possible.

Our Futures opportunity: To develop a more evidence-based approach to identifying and understanding problems and targeting our resources by sharing information and developing coordinated-evidence-based responses across multiple teams, agencies and partners

Actions 51 and 52

7.2.4 Hospital to home scheme

We will 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.

We will also 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.

We will consider using resources available through the Better Care Fund and will consider contracting a suitable partner to deliver.

Actions 53 and 54

7.3 Attractive, Healthy places

7.3.1 Connecting, involving and empowering people and communities

Work is underway to build strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods through collaborations with local people.

We have already embarked on community development within a number of Slough’s neighbourhoods and we intend to expand this work to other neighbourhoods. We will 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. Our ambition is to link this grass-roots community work up with our large-scale regeneration programmes so that local people are helping to shape both their own neighbourhoods and the vision and delivery for the town as a whole.

Action 55

Stronger Healthy Attractive Neighbourhoods programme

Slough BC is working in collaboration with the people of Manor Park and other local partners to give local people much more influence and involvement in what happens there. We undertook an assessment of both needs and assets in a locality and, based on the findings, we created a 5-year plan for the neighbourhood with the community. The difference is that:

- Individuals and community organisations are now the first point of call for prevention related work;
- Trust between the community and partners is stronger;
- New facilities have been secured for community activity;
- The community takes responsibility for organising and hosting a wide range of community events/activities and more people are now active more often;
- The community has greater ownership of their local park.

The programme will be extended to Chalvey, Trelawney Avenue and Foxborough initially, and the Oasis initiative in Britwell will adopt the same principles. The intention is to extend the programme across all Slough’s neighbourhoods, embedding learning as we do so, helping to build a sense of pride, active engagement in community life and laying the foundations to make each area a great place to live.

7.3.2 Adopting healthy and attractive place-shaping practices in new development

Through our regeneration and housing development activity we want to make sure we’re doing the best we can to develop attractive and healthy new environments that make people feel good and help them to live well. This includes embedding green spaces, nature



reserves and greenways for walking and cycling – however small – into new developments since we know these are hugely appreciated by residents.

Place-shaping partnerships

The Council will increasingly choose to work with development partners that genuinely want to create better homes, places and opportunities in Slough and that, through their actions, are committed to our vision for Slough and for Slough’s neighbourhoods.

We will require our development partners to sign up to the healthy place-shaping principles (see section 7.1) and to commit to providing employment and skills development opportunities for local people, for example through apprenticeships, through their own organisations and through their supply chains.

Action 56

Masterplanning new development buildings and environments

Through a masterplan-led approach we will involve local people at all stages of life in shaping all new housing developments from the start and to influence how we invest beyond the housing – both capital and revenue – in those places. We will coordinate this with our community-strengthening work – including through our Stronger Healthier Attractive Neighbourhoods programme – involving existing communities where new development is taking place close to them.

We will build time and resource into our processes and space within our partnerships to develop this community planning approach; the aim is to create attractive places that inspire people to walk and cycle, that have access to green spaces and that have play spaces for children and that work for people, enabling them to lead happy healthy lives in the borough.

Action 57

Slough Town Centre

STAR (Slough Town Association of Residents) are engaged in this improvement process.

[Complete this example]

7.3.3 Improving Slough’s existing neighbourhoods

We are considering a range of measures to improve and enhance local environments, from small community-led changes to large-scale regeneration of estates.

In addition to our SHAN programme, we will 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.

We intend to develop effective multi-agency responses to 'hidden' crime e.g. 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.

Actions 58 and 59

Improving areas with Council homes (HRA sites)

As we extend the SHAN programme, we will look at the regeneration needs of each of our neighbourhoods, with residents who live there.

7.4 Partnerships for healthy homes and places

Registered housing providers and support providers are a valuable asset and want to work in partnership with them to engender support for the ambitions set out in this strategy.

Every Registered Provider has different capacities, ambitions and strengths and we want to make sure that we play to all those strengths.

We will 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 simple statement (an MoU?) with each one that sets out the opportunity for them to contribute.

Our Futures opportunity: To develop trust and build stronger partnerships that will enable us to deliver more of what Slough needs, together.

Action 60

Action Plan

See separate action plan for a full list of proposed Actions.