

Housing Strategy 2026-2031
Slough Borough Council

Foreword

Good quality housing is fundamental to people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities. Everyone should be able to live in a safe, secure and affordable home and in a neighbourhood where they can thrive. Yet many residents across Slough continue to face significant housing challenges, including rising housing costs, homelessness, overcrowding and a shortage of affordable homes.

At the same time, Slough is a Borough with significant strengths and opportunities. Our strong economy, excellent transport links and major regeneration programmes will help shape the future of the Borough over the coming years. This Strategy sets out the Council's long-term priorities for increasing the supply of affordable homes, tackling homelessness, improving neighbourhoods and housing quality, supporting sustainability and strengthening the Council's role as a landlord.

There is significant work ahead, particularly in improving council housing services and rebuilding resident confidence following the findings of the Regulator of Social Housing inspection. We are committed to listening to residents, working closely with partners and delivering the improvements needed to ensure residents receive safe, high-quality and responsive housing services.

Housing challenges cannot be solved by the Council alone. By working together with residents, Registered Providers, developers, businesses, voluntary organisations and Government, we can help ensure more residents have access to good quality homes and create neighbourhoods where people can live well and thrive.

Councillor Iftakhar Ahmed

Lead Member for Housing

Good quality housing is fundamental to residents' health, wellbeing and quality of life and plays an important role in supporting strong communities and sustainable growth. Slough faces a range of housing challenges, including increasing demand, affordability pressures and changing housing needs. This Housing Strategy sets out the Council's long-term approach to addressing these challenges and delivering homes and neighbourhoods that meet the needs of residents now and in the future, supporting people to live in safe, secure and suitable homes and helping communities to thrive.

This strategy sets out our long-term vision to deliver homes that residents want and need. It is built around the following five priorities:

1. Increase affordable housing supply and build more new homes for residents.
2. Work to end homelessness and meet housing need, ensuring housing is affordable and accessible to all residents.
3. Create neighbourhoods and homes where residents want to live, work and play and address inequalities.
4. Address the sustainability and zero-carbon challenges in new and existing homes.
5. Be the best landlord we can be, improve the quality and management of our Council Housing.

The Housing Strategy will serve as a key tool for delivering several of the Council's core objectives. It has been informed by a range of existing research and evidence including the Housing Needs Assessment, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Census data, affordability and population projections, homelessness and rough sleeping data, the Private Rental Sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation Housing Stock Condition and Stressors Report, and wider health, wellbeing and specialist housing needs assessments. Together, these sources have helped identify current and future housing challenges across the Borough and informed the priorities set out within the Strategy.

1. Increase affordable housing supply and build more new homes for residents.

Providing enough homes that are affordable, suitable and accessible to residents is one of the most significant challenges facing Slough. Housing plays a critical role in supporting economic growth, reducing inequality and enabling residents to live independently and sustainably at different stages of their lives. Increasing the supply, quality and choice of housing is therefore central to supporting thriving communities and meeting current and future housing need.

Slough continues to face strong housing demand, increasing affordability pressures and limited land availability. As one of the most densely populated local authority areas in the country, the Borough faces challenges in delivering new homes at the pace and scale required, while changing demographics continue to drive demand for a wider range of housing, including homes for larger families, single person households and older residents.

The latest ONS population projections estimate Slough's population will increase by 3.4% by 2032. Over the same period, the proportion of residents aged over 65 is expected to increase from 9% to 11%, while demand for larger family homes, particularly 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties, remains significant.

To respond to these pressures, the Strategy will focus on accelerating housing delivery across a range of tenures and price points, with a strong emphasis on increasing the supply of affordable and social housing. This includes supporting high-quality development, strengthening partnerships with developers, Registered Providers and investors, and improving the use of council land and investment to support housing growth. The scale of housing demand, increasing financial pressures and the need to secure sustainable long-term delivery arrangements means the Council must ensure housing investment and delivery activity is focused, financially viable and capable of delivering value for money alongside positive outcomes for residents.

The Council will review how its housing delivery and investment activity is structured and governed to ensure arrangements support effective delivery of the Council's housing priorities and remain aligned to wider strategic, regeneration and financial objectives. This will include reviewing delivery models, companies and investment approaches and partnership arrangements. As part of this, the Council will independently review the role, financial viability and operation of James Elliman Homes, and will bring forward a report to Cabinet setting out findings and recommendations for consideration at the earliest opportunity.

Delivery of new homes will also be supported through wider regeneration and growth activity. The Council's refreshed Local Plan, due in 2026, will provide an important framework for future housing growth across the Borough. It will help shape where and how development takes place, support the delivery of homes that meet local

need and ensure growth is aligned with wider ambitions around infrastructure, sustainability and place-making.

The [Slough is Now regeneration vision](#) will help shape future development opportunities across the Borough, including consideration of sites that could support additional family housing, while a new Economic Regeneration Strategy, to be published in 2026/27, will support investment, employment growth and place-making ambitions across Slough. Alongside this, the Council will work with partners to bring forward ambitious regeneration proposals and maximise opportunities through programmes such as the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP), the Slough Neighbourhoods Options Study and the Council Housebuilding Support Service (CHoSS) to unlock sites and increase housing delivery.

The Council is already investing directly in increasing housing supply. Through Government Local Authority Housing Fund grant funding, match funded by the Council, 58 homes will be acquired over the next three years. In addition, the Housing Revenue Account is investing £5m annually to support the long-term delivery of approximately 300 additional homes.

The Strategy will also support the delivery of housing that meets a broader range of needs, including accommodation for families, older people, care leavers, rough sleepers, residents requiring supported or adapted housing and those experiencing domestic abuse. Alongside this, the Council will use its planning powers and strategic partnerships to support sustainable, well-designed development that better meets the needs of Slough residents now and in the future.

2. Work to end homelessness and meet housing need, ensuring housing is affordable and accessible to all residents

Access to safe, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to residents' health, wellbeing and life opportunities. Housing instability and homelessness can have significant impacts on health, education, employment and community cohesion. Ensuring residents can access suitable housing is therefore central to improving outcomes and supporting inclusive growth across Slough.

Slough faces significant housing pressures driven by high demand, rising housing costs and limited supply across the social and private rented sectors. Homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation have increased consistently in recent years, placing growing pressure on residents and council services. Eviction from the private rented sector is now the single biggest cause of homelessness locally.

Housing affordability remains a significant challenge in Slough. Average monthly private rents reached £1,567 in March 2026, higher than the South East average of £1,411, while average house prices stand at £348,842. The affordability ratio in Slough is 10.1, above the national average of 7.7. Nearly one third of households privately rent, and overcrowding affects 15.8% of households overall and almost half of households in the private rented sector.

The Borough also faces challenges around rough sleeping and complex housing need. The Council's future Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Supported Housing Strategy will build on this, including findings from the Safer Accommodation Needs Assessment and wider analysis of homelessness, rough sleeping and support needs across the Borough. Slough experiences comparably high levels of long-term rough sleeping nationally, with many residents requiring coordinated and joined-up support to sustain stable housing.

In response, the Housing Strategy will focus on prevention, earlier intervention and increasing access to stable, good quality housing. This includes strengthening homelessness prevention services, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation, increasing the supply of affordable homes through acquisitions and development, and strengthening partnerships with Registered Providers and private landlords. Alongside this, the Council will take a more active role in improving standards across the private rented sector, including through strengthened licensing, regulating and oversight of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and other privately rented homes, ensuring tenants are supported to live in safe and well-managed accommodation.

The Council's approach to regulation and enforcement will be informed by evidence from the [Private Sector Housing Stock Condition and Stressors Report \(2026\)](#), which identified key issues relating to housing quality, overcrowding, energy efficiency and housing stress across the Borough. In accordance with its duties under the Housing Act 2004, the Council will use this evidence to inform future interventions and consider the need for additional regulatory measures, including selective and additional licensing schemes where these are supported by the evidence base.

Alongside this, the Council will strengthen its approach to improving standards

and compliance in the private rented sector through a more robust and proactive enforcement framework. In response to the Renters' Rights Act 2025, the Council will implement updated Housing Regulation Enforcement and Civil Penalty policies which place a stronger emphasis on formal enforcement action where landlords breach legal requirements, including in relation to housing conditions, tenancy rights and illegal eviction. These policies provide a clear and consistent basis for action, including the use of financial penalties, and align with nationally recognised approaches to ensure transparency, proportionality and fairness for residents. The Council will take a more targeted and risk-based approach to enforcement, focusing on poor quality and non-compliant landlords, while also ensuring tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable, are protected and supported to access safe, secure accommodation. Income from enforcement activity will be reinvested into regulatory services to support ongoing improvement in standards across the sector.

The Council will prepare for the introduction of new requirements arising from the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, which provides powers for national standards and a licensing regime for supported housing. Subject to the publication of regulations, the Council will work across housing, environmental health, revenues and benefits and adult social care to strengthen oversight of supported housing, improve accommodation standards and support vulnerable residents.

The Council will seek to reduce reliance on expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation by considering the use of longer-term leasing arrangements and other more sustainable accommodation models where these provide better value for money and improved outcomes for residents. This includes exploring opportunities arising from the Council's wider asset and regeneration decisions, aligned with the Council's Asset Disposal Strategy, including where the redevelopment of surplus Council assets may create opportunities to access more sustainable forms of temporary accommodation, subject to viability, financial modelling and future approval. The Council will also modernise its approach to housing allocations to ensure available homes are used as effectively as possible, supporting earlier intervention, reducing demand pressures and improving access to suitable housing for households with the greatest need.

Progress against homelessness pressures, temporary accommodation demand and prevention activity will continue to be monitored through regular reporting, including quarterly updates to Cabinet, to strengthen accountability and ongoing service improvement.

Alongside this, the Council will develop a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2026 and Supported Housing Strategy and Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation delivery plan to ensure support is targeted effectively at those most in need.

Over the lifetime of the Strategy, the Council will work to reduce homelessness, ensure temporary accommodation is genuinely temporary and support more residents to access safe, stable and affordable homes.

3. Create neighbourhoods and homes where residents want to live, work and play and address inequalities

Housing and neighbourhoods play a fundamental role in shaping residents' health, wellbeing, life chances and sense of community. Creating places where people want to live, work and play means delivering high quality homes alongside neighbourhoods that are safe, inclusive, sustainable and connected to opportunities. Improving housing quality and reducing inequalities will therefore be central to supporting healthier and more resilient communities across Slough.

Slough's proximity to London and Heathrow Airport, alongside improved connectivity through the Elizabeth Line, has further strengthened the Borough's attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest. Slough has an £8 billion economy, around 7,500 businesses and one of the highest concentrations of global company headquarters outside London. As the Borough plans for future growth, the quality of its housing offer and neighbourhoods will remain critical to supporting economic success and creating thriving communities.

Despite these strengths, significant housing inequalities remain. Poor housing conditions, particularly within the private rented sector, continue to affect some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and contribute to wider health and social inequalities. In Slough, 16% of homes are overcrowded, 14% fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard, 37% have an EPC rating of D or below and around 10% of households experience fuel poverty. These issues are felt most acutely by deprived households, minority ethnic communities, older residents and disabled residents. The JSNA, public health data and wider housing needs highlight the relationship between poor housing conditions, overcrowding, fuel poverty and poorer health outcomes for some residents and communities across Slough.

The Borough also faces significant demand for larger family housing alongside increasing need for specialist, supported and adapted accommodation for older people, care leavers, residents with disabilities and those requiring housing-related support. Ensuring residents can access homes that meet their needs at different stages of life is therefore an important priority.

To respond to these challenges, the Strategy will focus on improving housing quality, supporting safe and sustainable neighbourhoods and increasing access to a broader range of housing options. This includes developing a Private Rented Sector Strategy to improve standards, safety and management, supporting specialist and supported housing provision and promoting right-sizing to make better use of existing homes. This work will also be informed by future specialist housing needs assessments and wider health and wellbeing evidence to help ensure housing provision better reflects the changing needs of residents over time. The Strategy will also support the aims of the [Slough Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) by helping more residents live independently through access to suitable, adapted and people-centred housing solutions.

The Council will continue to embed healthy place-making principles within regeneration and new development, ensuring communities are well designed, accessible and connected to green space, active travel and local services. The [Slough is Now regeneration vision](#) and [town centre regeneration programme](#) will help shape the Borough over the next 5–15 years, supporting investment, improving neighbourhood quality and creating vibrant places where residents can live, work and thrive. Through strategic partnerships, investment and planning powers, the Council will support development that delivers social value, promotes community safety and strengthens residents' health, wellbeing and economic opportunity.

The Council will work with partners to create more inclusive, sustainable and resilient neighbourhoods over the Strategy lifespan, while ensuring more residents can access good quality homes that support independent and healthy lives.

4. Address the sustainability and zero-carbon challenges in new and existing homes

Improving the sustainability and energy efficiency of homes is important for reducing carbon emissions, tackling fuel poverty and improving residents' health and wellbeing. Warm, energy-efficient homes are cheaper to run, can reduce health inequalities and support broader ambitions around environmental sustainability and achieving net zero targets.

Slough faces significant challenges in improving the energy performance of existing homes while ensuring that new development is delivered to high sustainability standards. Across the Borough, 37% of homes have an EPC rating of D or below, contributing to higher energy costs and fuel poverty, which affects around 10% of households and disproportionately impacting vulnerable residents. Poor quality and cold homes can contribute to poorer physical and mental health outcomes and place additional pressure on health and care services. The Council also owns approximately 6,500 social homes and improving the condition and energy performance of existing stock will require long-term investment and a clear understanding of future housing need.

To address this the Strategy will focus on improving energy efficiency across both existing and new homes through a long-term programme of retrofit and decarbonisation activity, with the ambition of achieving a minimum EPC C rating across Council homes by 2030. A "fabric first" approach will prioritise improvements to insulation, windows, roofs and the energy performance of homes before introducing low-carbon technologies and heating solutions, helping to reduce energy demand and support residents with the rising cost of living. Alongside improvements to existing homes, the Council will support the delivery of new homes that meet high sustainability and energy efficiency standards in line with the Government's Future Homes Standard, helping to reduce carbon emissions and future energy costs for residents. Residents and tenants will be engaged throughout this work to ensure improvements deliver benefits that support residents' needs and experiences.

This work will support the Council's wider [Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan](#), including Slough's ambition for borough-wide carbon neutrality, ensuring housing plays an important role in delivering the Borough's wider environmental ambitions.

The Council is already investing in this work and is maximising external funding opportunities. More than £1.3m of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund has been secured to improve 156 homes, alongside £6.3m through the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund over three years to improve over 800 properties. The Council will continue to work with partners and pursue funding opportunities to improve housing standards across all tenures.

The Council will support the delivery of warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient homes that reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty and improve outcomes for residents.

5. Be the best landlord we can be, improving the quality and management of Council Housing

Good quality housing management and effective landlord services play a fundamental role in supporting residents' wellbeing, sustaining tenancies and ensuring residents feel safe and secure in their homes. As a landlord, the Council has a responsibility to provide safe, well-maintained homes and deliver high quality services that are responsive, transparent and focused on residents' needs. Delivering high quality landlord services is therefore essential to improving outcomes for residents and strengthening trust and confidence in the Council.

The Council owns and manages approximately 6,500 homes across the Borough and has a responsibility to ensure homes are safe, well maintained and compliant with regulatory standards. Following an inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing in 2025, the [Council received a C3 regulatory judgement](#), which identified weaknesses in areas including tenant engagement, housing management, data quality, governance and assurance arrangements. While improvement activity is already underway, further work is required to deliver sustained improvement and rebuild resident confidence in landlord services.

The Strategy will therefore prioritise improving housing quality, strengthening compliance and safety arrangements and delivering landlord services that are more transparent, responsive and resident-focused. The Council will enter into a Voluntary Undertaking with the Regulator of Social Housing, establishing a clear programme of improvement to address identified issues and demonstrate sustained progress over time. This includes improving repairs and maintenance services, strengthening approaches to damp and mould, ensuring robust safety and compliance arrangements are in place for residents, enhancing the quality of housing data and investment planning and ensuring residents have greater opportunities to shape and influence services.

The Council will strengthen its decant arrangements to ensure residents affected by major works, regeneration or safety requirements are supported through a clear and consistent process that minimises disruption.

The Strategy will also support a stronger resident voice through improved engagement, communication and accountability arrangements, including delivery of the refreshed [Resident Involvement Policy](#) due 2026, to ensure services are informed by resident experience and feedback. Alongside this, the Council will strengthen governance and performance monitoring arrangements to ensure improvements are embedded and sustained over the long term.

Through delivery of this Strategy, the Council will work to restore trust and confidence in landlord services, ensuring residents live in safe, good quality homes and receive responsive, reliable services focused on their needs, with the ambition of returning to full regulatory compliance.

The Housing Strategy 2026–2031 sets a clear direction for how the Council will respond to housing challenges and support residents across Slough over the next five years. Delivering the ambitions set out within the Strategy will require continued collaboration with residents, Registered Providers, developers, voluntary and community sector organisations and wider partners across the Borough. Through a coordinated and evidence-led approach, the Council will work to increase housing supply, improve housing quality, reduce homelessness and support the delivery of safe, sustainable and affordable homes that better meet the needs of residents now and in the future.