



# Housing HIGHLIGHTS

Housing Services newsletter

[www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk)  
**Slough**  
Borough Council

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Issued by Slough Borough Council  
for our tenants and leaseholders

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# Update from Councillor Paul Kelly

Since I last wrote to you in February, a huge amount of work has been undertaken within the service, which I hope will lead to tangible results for you in the year ahead.

Following approval by Cabinet on 26 February, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year business plan and Medium Term Budgets were debated and approved at Full Council on 7 March.

The Business Plan presents a detailed set of financial proposals and assumptions underpinning key asset management and investment proposals in respect of the council's housing stock.

This year, for the first time, it includes substantial resource to begin the substantive investment to achieve the government's stated objective of achieving net zero carbon emissions. The five-year programme is proposed to increase in spend from £52 million identified in 23/24 to over £105 million. This is mainly due to additional costs associated with the decarbonisation

works which are due to commence from 2024/25.

An area of continued focus following feedback from residents, is our plan to tackle issues of damp and mould within the housing stock. We anticipate spending over £13million in 2024/25 on repairs and maintenance.

I am pleased that the council, and our partners in health, will be running information sessions about how to help asthma issues if you are living in a property with damp and mould. These sessions will be focused on families with young children and the next sessions are:

- 29 May - Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Langley, SL3 8PE, 10am-12noon
- 17 July - Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Langley, SL3 8PE, 10am-12noon

I am committed to tackling these issues for you and your families. The commitment of this administration to driving sustained and rapid improvements is demonstrated



clearly by the fact that combined capital and revenue expenditure over the course of the business plan is almost £1 billion.

I look forward to writing to you again next month. In the meantime, please do feel free to contact me at [Paul.Kelly@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Kelly@slough.gov.uk).

## Change in Housing Management

**Chris Stratford has been the Interim Housing Director for some time now and has been providing regular updates for our newsletter. Chris is moving onto pastures new.**

In the meantime, we are in the advanced stages of recruiting a permanent Housing Director. To

provide cover before the new person is appointed and takes up post, Neil Eusedon will be taking over as Interim Housing Director.

Neil is extremely experienced, having been Director of Housing at the London Borough of Lambeth, which has one of the biggest

housing stocks, and we are really fortunate to have him join us on an interim basis.

We welcome Neil to Slough and wish Chris every success for the future and thank him for his efforts in changes he has brought forth during his time at Slough.



# NEW REPAIRS CONTRACT

Residents were invited to take part in a fully interactive workshop on 20 February, regarding the procurement of multiple new maintenance contracts.

The event was hosted by procurement consultant Faithorn Farrell Timms (FFT), on behalf of the council.

The purpose of the evening was to enable residents to learn about the new contract proposals, meet face to face with council staff, and give their views on the current service. Residents were encouraged to provide open and honest feedback on any positive aspects, as well as any improvements that could be made by the council with the new contractors.

All attendees were provided with:

- background information and the reasons for the new contracts
- an overview of the services included
- the evaluation process that the council must use to appoint the contractors.

The workshop was well attended, and the following key areas were discussed, with residents raising queries and offering useful comments:

- ✓ tailoring service delivery to meet resident needs
- ✓ communication with residents both before, during and after services/works
- ✓ a need for local delivery
- ✓ organising appointments and works to avoid delays and inconvenience to residents
- ✓ behaviour and appearance of staff entering resident homes
- ✓ health and safety to keep resident properties safe.

Everyone applying for the new contracts will need information about how Slough Borough Council and their residents want the maintenance services to be provided, via a specification document. All of the information gathered will now be considered when writing these specification requirements. The document will be

prepared over the next few months, then provided to applicants in May 2024.

Any resident unable to attend the workshop on 20 February is therefore still welcome to provide views on the current maintenance services, via a survey.

You are also invited to have more involvement in the procurement moving forward, by participating in focus groups to discuss the specification, and/or supporting the evaluation process. The evaluation will involve an ongoing commitment from residents and at key evaluation points will require involvement over a number of days. If you would like to have further involvement, please indicate this by completing the last question of the survey and including your contact details. More information will then be provided in the coming weeks.

The survey can be accessed until 5 April via the link or QR code [forms.office.com/e/nTcq8PEbXr](https://forms.office.com/e/nTcq8PEbXr)



# Rent and service charge increases

**You will have received a rent and service charge increase letter over recent weeks, notifying you of an increase of 7.7% from 1 April.**

This was agreed by Slough's Cabinet on 15 January. This increase was based upon a Government rent formula based upon September 2023 Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%. This increase applies whether you have a council tenancy or a James Elliman Homes tenancy. Garage rents were also increased by 7.7%.

This 2024/25 financial year has 53 weeks, as opposed to the more normal 52 weeks. The financial year runs from 1 April 2024 to 6 April 2025. Therefore, to calculate a monthly rent, we use the following formula: Weekly rent x 53 weeks/12 months e.g. if weekly rent is £120, then  $£120 \times 53/12 = £530$  per month.

## Please note

**Housing Benefit** awards will be adjusted in line with the new rents and Housing Benefit letters will be posted separately by the Housing Benefit team. Help can be accessed from Slough's website at [www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk)

Tenants in receipt of **Universal Credit** must inform DWP about their new rent via the online Journal. Information regarding Universal Credit and application form are also available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) (search Universal Credit).

Please ensure you make all necessary arrangements in advance where possible, so you pay the correct rent from 1 April. We appreciate this may be difficult, but it is important to keep your rent account up to date.

## Extra support

Slough Borough Council's debt and welfare team provides advice and support for people, including information on those struggling with council tax payments, as well as advice and guidance on welfare benefits and financial hardship funds.

Visit [www.slough.gov.uk/benefits-support](http://www.slough.gov.uk/benefits-support), email [incomeboost@slough.gov.uk](mailto:incomeboost@slough.gov.uk) or call via the contact centre on 01753 475111.



## Tool donation for Slough Repairs Café

**Cardo proudly backed the Slough Repairs Café, an initiative led by dedicated Slough Anti-Litter Society volunteers.**

The Repairs Café marked a significant milestone, celebrating one year of hosting repair workshops. Their initiative prevents household items from ending up in landfills, thereby reducing waste and providing a renewed purpose for these items.

In a show of support for this commendable initiative, Cardo's Social Value Manager, Sairah, attended the celebratory event commemorating the one-year anniversary. In recognition of their

impactful work, Sairah presented the Slough Repairs Café with thoughtful gifts, including electric screwdriver sets, personal protective equipment (PPE), and gloves. These items were intended to enhance and streamline the repair processes undertaken by the volunteers, reinforcing Cardo's

commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

The celebration was attended by Slough's Mayor Cllr Amjad Abassi, local Councillor Puja Bedi, and representatives from various local community groups and businesses.



# CARDO

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Housing Highlights March 2024



# Resident Involvement Strategy

**In January, we announced the Cabinet's approval of the Housing Resident Involvement Strategy. This is our plan, developed with involvement of tenants and leaseholders, to ensure accountability and transparency to our residents and strengthen resident influence.**



The strategy is also in line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing through the new consumer standards that comes into effect on 1 April 2024.

We have worked with Tim Blanc, the new independent chair and the rest of Resident Board to develop an action plan to bring the strategy to life and they will monitor our progress throughout the life of the strategy. We will use the annual report to communicate our progress to all residents.

We have worked with our digital team to improve the council's housing webpages to make it easier for tenants and leaseholders to find information about Housing Resident Involvement.

Council tenants and leaseholders can now access the refreshed Housing Resident Involvement page to find the new strategy, action plan, the range of ways to get involved, how to sign up and more. Visit [www.slough.gov.uk/residentinvolvement](http://www.slough.gov.uk/residentinvolvement)

# Christine's experience as a board member

**I became interested in becoming a board member after reading an article in the housing newsletter.**

The article gave some insight into the role and purpose of the board. It explained the board being an important part of the council's governance structure, it is made up of tenants and leaseholders. It was not in place to look at individual resident issues but making sure the voice and experience of the wider residents is being taken into consideration in decisions that affect them.

I have now been an active board member for a number of years, I am passionate about helping the tenants and residents of Slough to have a better, healthy and happier life within their neighborhood.

The board meets between 6-8 times a year, and up until recently they were mainly online, this is changing with a hybrid approach. At meetings we look at a wide range of information about services to residents such as performance data, complaints and survey feedback to provide ongoing challenge. The overall aim is to consider residents' perspective in everything it does.

Recently the council appointed a new independent chair, Tim Blanc, who has a vast experience in resident engagement. With this appointment and plans outlined in the new Resident Involvement Strategy, this is an exciting time for the board to move forward to

ensure that we are holding the council to account. Particularly as the regulator for social housing is strengthening the resident voice.

Serving as a board member has been exciting and at times challenging; I have gained new skills and abilities which have helped in other areas of my life.

We are looking to recruit and train new members to join us on this journey to make a difference for the residents of Slough. If you want to know more about how you can get involved, please contact us by emailing [getinvolved@slough.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@slough.gov.uk)

## Board membership - register your interest

The Resident Board is made up of tenants and leaseholders and we are looking to recruit new members onto the board. Given that Slough is an exceptionally diverse town with people from all ethnicities, faiths and backgrounds, we want to make sure the board is representative of the community, including a variety of ages and those with disabilities and LGBTQ representatives, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to input into the service provided by housing and repairs.

If you are interested in joining the resident board, please email [getinvolved@slough.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@slough.gov.uk).

# Improvement works

We have completed the work on new car parking areas to the front of the buildings of Moreton Way and The Greenway in Cippenham. Residents are delighted as this will improve parking for them, particularly as this will be strictly for residents.

From April onwards the plan is to renew the main roofs along with the walkway covering; whilst doing the roofs we will upgrade the insulation and carry out fire stopping work that may be required.



## Energy efficiency

Our work to increase energy efficient homes continues as we move to the de-designated blocks across the borough. We will begin by fitting Solar PV panels on Redwood and Seymour House in March. Redwood house will be the first trial with full PV system and battery back up to power the common areas at night.

## Creating more general needs

Garrick house in Langley used to be supported living accommodation for people with a learning disability. A few years ago, tenants were moved to more suitable accommodation leaving the properties empty for quite a few years.

We have recently received planning permission to upgrade and convert these into general needs accommodation. Once completed there will be 6 x 2 bed flats and 4 x 1 bed flats with parking. This is currently with building control and planning departments. The accommodation next to Garrick House will also be upgraded.



# Damp and mould asthma advice sessions

**Council and health partners will be running information sessions about how to help asthma issues if you are living in a property with damp or mould.**

Working in partnership with the NHS, the damp and mould advice session will involve representatives from Slough Borough Council, Frimley Health Foundation Trust, Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System, The Green Doctor, Cardo, and social prescribers.

The sessions will be focused on families with young children.

Councillor Paul Kelly, lead member for highways, housing and transport, said: "Having these information sessions with health partners will be a real benefit to any residents who would like some tips about managing their child's asthma, while ensuring home conditions don't worsen it. They will offer practical tips and solutions on how to make your child's home safer for asthma. I thank our partners for getting involved in this joint initiative."

Katie Hannant, Clinical Respiratory lead CYP Frimley ICS, said: "We know that living in a damp home can have a negative impact on children and young people who have asthma. We are running health and housing events at the local children centres where families can come along and get advice and help on how to manage their child's asthma, including inhaler technique and asthma action plans and information on how to make your home as safe as possible.

"The teams from Slough Borough Council and Frimley Health will be there to answer questions and make access to these services easy for families.

"We are really looking forward to seeing how we can help as many families as possible and are planning future events with more help from The Green Doctor, Cardo and social

prescribers, including input from your local GPs and hospital teams."

The dates of the next sessions are:

- 29 May - Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Langley, SL3 8PE, 10am-12noon
- 17 July - Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Langley, SL3 8PE, 10am-12noon

**Slough** Borough Council [www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk)

**NHS** Frimley

## Does your child have asthma?

**Do you know that mould and dampness in your home can worsen you or your child's asthma symptoms?**

**When: 29th May & 17th July  
10am-12noon**

**Where: Romsey Close Children's Centre,  
Marish Primary School, Langley SL3 8PE**

**Together we can help**

**Come and talk to representatives from  
Slough Borough Council, Frimley Health,  
The Green Doctor, Osborne and social prescribers.**

**With more sessions to come across the borough.**



# Private Fostering

**Is your child being looked after by someone who isn't a close relative or have you made arrangements for them to be?**

**If so, this could be a private fostering arrangement and your local authority needs to be notified.**

Private fostering is when a child is living with someone other than a close relative for 28 days or more.

**This is for all children up to the age of 16, or 18 if they have a disability.**

For advice and support or to notify Slough Children First of a private fostering arrangement, please:

Visit: [www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](http://www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)

Email: [Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](mailto:Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)

Scan the QR code





# Defibrillators save lives

**Some time ago, we wrote about installing defibrillators in our over 50's blocks. You will be pleased to hear they have all been installed and are ready for use if necessary.**

There are six in the east of the borough and two in the south, at Calstock House, Apsley House, Redwood House, Armstrong House, Allington Court, Seymour House, Kennedy House, and Brook House.

Councillor Paul Kelly, lead member for highways, housing and transport, said: "Some of the residents in these buildings may have social or medical vulnerabilities. To have the defibrillator on site in case of an emergency will hopefully be of some reassurance to them and it could even save a life someday.

"These devices can easily be used by members of the public in an emergency where someone is suffering a cardiac arrest or heart-

related issue, and the use of a defibrillator could increase the chances of survival until emergency services arrive on the scene."

You do not have to be a medical professional to use the defibrillator. The defibrillators we have in place talk you through step by step how to use them.

When following the defibrillator's instructions, users will be informed when they both can and cannot touch the patient.

Defibrillators analyse heart rhythms and use the collected data to determine shock requirements. Defibrillators only deliver shocks if required.

Each of the defibrillators is also registered nationally so anyone can search for where the nearest one is.

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) has a video which residents can watch to learn how to use a defibrillator.

Visit [www.scas.nhs.uk/what-we-do/community-first-responders/public-access-defibrillators/](http://www.scas.nhs.uk/what-we-do/community-first-responders/public-access-defibrillators/)



# Gas safety checks

Annual gas safety checks are carried out by Cardo.

When your gas check is due, the housing officer will send you a letter of appointment. It is a legal requirement for the council to ensure your gas appliances are checked to keep you safe. Please ensure you are home to allow access, as failure to comply could mean court, staff and access costs of more than £300.

## Gas leak in the home

If you smell gas and in the event of an emergency:

- call the National Gas Emergency number (0800 111 999)
- do not smoke or light matches
- do not turn electrical switches on or off
- open doors and windows
- turn the meter off at the control handle unless the meter is in the cellar.

## Contact information

### Housing Management

- North Slough email: [\\_northteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:_northteam@slough.gov.uk)
- South Slough email: [\\_southteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:_southteam@slough.gov.uk)
- East Slough email: [\\_eastteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:_eastteam@slough.gov.uk)

### James Elliman Homes

- Email: [jehomes@slough.gov.uk](mailto:jehomes@slough.gov.uk)

### Rent queries

- Queries about your rent direct debits, or refunds - [rentaccounting@slough.gov.uk](mailto:rentaccounting@slough.gov.uk)
- Queries about rent arrears - [rentrecovery@slough.gov.uk](mailto:rentrecovery@slough.gov.uk)

### Leaseholder enquiries

- Day to day issues email: [leaseholdservices@slough.gov.uk](mailto:leaseholdservices@slough.gov.uk)
- Service charge invoices and payment queries email: [revenues@slough.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@slough.gov.uk)
- Service charge costs/calculation queries email: [neighbourhoodrecharges@slough.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodrecharges@slough.gov.uk)
- Right to Buy queries email: [rtb@slough.gov.uk](mailto:rtb@slough.gov.uk)

### Repair reporting and caretaking

- Email: [booking.slough@cardogroup.co.uk](mailto:booking.slough@cardogroup.co.uk)
- Web: [Repairs - Slough Borough Council](#)
- Follow up enquiry relating to repair/caretaking: [booking.slough@cardogroup.co.uk](mailto:booking.slough@cardogroup.co.uk)

### Resident involvement opportunities

- Email: [getinvolved@slough.gov.uk](mailto:getinvolved@slough.gov.uk)

# PAYING YOUR RENT

There are several ways to pay your rent.

- Direct Debit: if you pay your rent monthly, the simplest way is via direct debit. Your monthly rent is taken out on one of four dates (1st, 8th, 15th or 22nd) and is automatically calculated following rent increase or benefit changes and can be adjusted to reduce any arrears by instalments. [Set it up online.](#)
- Online using debit/credit card: use the link above and scroll to the 'pay online' option. You will need your 11-digit reference number (begins 10 or 20 for garages) found on your rent card or letters about rent.
- By 24-hour Freephone using debit/credit card: telephone 0300 456 0480 - you will need your 11-digit reference number.
- At the Post Office: using your rent card.
- To have your rent paid directly from your Universal Credit contact the rent recovery team on the email below.

Please note the council can no longer accept cheques. If you have any problems paying your rent, the best way to contact the team is to email [rentrecovery@slough.gov.uk](mailto:rentrecovery@slough.gov.uk)



Join the **Free** holiday activities and food programme this Easter break

- 4 days of free\* fun during the holidays!
- Arts and crafts, learn to make simple nutritious meals, or play basketball and football with your friends
- \*Free with HAF codes
- No HAF codes? You and your friends can pay to join in the fun!

**FROM  
2-12  
APRIL**

For more info and to book:



Funded by



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# Repair priorities

When you report a repair, the work will be prioritised as below.

**Priority 1: Emergency repairs:** risk of immediate danger to people and/or significant damage to property (e.g. this could be a substantial leak or flood that can't be contained by the tenant).

**Priority 2: Urgent repairs:** risk of danger to people and/or damage to property if not attended to within three days.

**Priority 3: Routine repairs:** low risk of danger to people and/or further damage to property.

You can expect us to respond within the following timescales:

**Priority 1:** We will attend within 2 hours to make safe with the objective of completing the repair within 24 hours or the next working day (if attended by the out of hours service).

**Priority 2:** To be completed within 3 working days.

**Priority 3:** To be completed within 20 working days.

When you call to report a repair, the call taker will tell you how the repair has been prioritised and book an appointment with you within timescales above.

This guide shows which repairs are the council's or the tenant's responsibility. You should check this guide before contacting the council to request a repair. Any SBC repair that has been caused by damage or neglect will be rechargeable. We may agree to undertake some tenant responsibility repairs in exceptional circumstances and recharge.

## Information for leaseholders

Repair responsibilities for leaseholders differ depending on your lease agreement. Please check your lease for confirmation of responsibility for repairs.

Repair description	Council tenancies SBC	Council tenancies Tenant	Lease hold
<b>The structure</b>			
Roof and chimney stacks/breasts (brickwork, flashing, cowls and protective fittings)	✓		
Chimney cleaning		✓	✓
Walls, foundations and flooring (floorboards, MDF panel or concrete screed and lino in kitchen/bathroom/wet rooms)	✓		✓
<b>Heating, power and sanitary installations</b>			
Central heating boilers and radiators	✓		✓
Council-supplied gas and electric fires	✓		✓
Electricity wiring and gas and water* pipework from meter or point of entry into the property *the council may be responsible for water supply pipework outside the property and some pipework passing through leasehold properties	✓		✓
Blocked and damaged drains and sewers	✓		
Slow-draining/blocked sink, hand basin and bath waste traps/u-bends		✓	✓
W.C. pans, sinks and cisterns	✓		✓
<b>Fixtures and fittings</b>			
Laminate flooring, carpets and other non-council floor coverings		✓	✓
Kitchen sinks, units and worktops	✓		✓
Toilet seats		✓	✓
Curtain battens, rails, shelves and coat hooks		✓	✓
Standard light and fluorescent light bulbs and starter fittings		✓	✓
Electrical sockets, light switches and pull cords	✓		✓
Sink plugs and toilet chains		✓	✓
Smoke alarm batteries		✓	✓
Hard-wired smoke alarms	✓		✓
Shower rails and curtains		✓	✓
<b>Doors and windows</b>			
External doors, hinges and locks	✓		✓
Internal doors and hinges and privacy door locks		✓	✓
Window frames and glazing panes, latches, locks, putty and sills	✓		✓
Failed seal in double glazing units (not caused by pane break)	✓		✓
Gaining access/lost keys		✓	✓
<b>Gardens</b>			
Individual washing lines and rotary driers		✓	✓
Washing lines/driers in communal areas	✓		
Dividing fencing and gates for tenants/leaseholder gardens * The council will maintain any estate boundary fencing		✓	✓
Garden sheds, greenhouses and patios		✓	✓
<b>Decoration</b>			
Internal decorations including minor plastering		✓	✓
External decorations	✓		
<b>Other repairs</b>			
White goods and non-council appliances		✓	✓
Improvements and alterations by you or previous tenants		✓	✓
<b>Communal and external areas</b>			
Footpaths to your front door	✓		
Estate paths across grounds	✓		
Gates and fencing to alleyways and drying areas	✓		
Play equipment	✓		
Door entry systems *Damage to door entry system handsets may be rechargeable	✓		
<b>Refuse and recycling</b>			
Cleaning individual refuse/recycling bins		✓	✓
Replacing lost or stolen bins (via MyCouncil)		✓	✓