



Housing HIGHLIGHTS

Housing Services newsletter

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Slough
Borough Council



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Issued by Slough Borough Council
for our tenants and leaseholders

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Welcome from Neil Euesden

In previous editions, we have spoken about the changes to our repair contractors. You will recall, the original company (Osborne) was sold to a new provider called Cardo. They have worked hard over the last few months to successfully improve the relationship with the council and its residents.

You would have seen some of the Social Value initiatives for local people they have introduced. However, there is still more to do, and the housing team will be working closely with Cardo to improve things even more over the next 12 months.

During this time, we have begun the process to look at new contracts and what we might include in them to meet residents' needs and the council's ambitions to improve the service. We will continue to consult with the Resident Board and our other council residents as ideas and the plans evolve.

We are particularly keen to look at the call centre, improved technology, compliance areas, including damp and mould, void property maintenance, the cleaning service, and the possibility of creating a small council team for specialist repairs. As things develop, we will keep you updated on progress.



30 years of Slough in Bloom

This year's Slough in Bloom gardens and allotments competition has launched! The competition is celebrating its 30th anniversary having launched in the borough in 1994.

Margaret Inniss, Chairman of Slough in Bloom, is part of the original team that set up the competition in the nineties.

Entries are open until 29 June, with judging taking place from 15 July.

Anyone can enter for free and there are 10 different categories to choose from:

- Residential front garden
- Residential hanging baskets, window boxes and containers (front of property)
- Community project
- Business/commercial/hospital
- Student project
- Public house/restaurant/hotel

- Sponsored roundabouts and roadside planting
- Best allotment plot
- Best allotment newcomer
- Environmental project.

Margaret Inniss, Chair of Slough in Bloom, said: "The Slough in Bloom Committee were delighted by the number and quality of the entries last year, but we still want to see more gardens and allotments entering this free competition. As this is our 30th year, we are looking forward to seeing even more entries and what new ideas have been thought up by our green fingered gardeners. Everyone can enter. Even if you only have enough space for a few containers and hanging baskets, it all makes all the difference to the appearance of our town, makes you feel good and helps wildlife."

Entries can be posted to the address on the entry form. Paper copies of

entry forms are available at the libraries and a downloadable version which can be posted to the address on the form is available at: Slough in Bloom application form - Slough Borough Council - www.slough.gov.uk/downloads/download/1044/slough-in-bloom-application-form

You can also email to enter with your contact details to: sloughinbloom@gmail.com

Entries close on 29 June, and the winners will be announced in August.



Resident Board update

Over the last few months, the Independent Chair of the Board Tim, has been getting to know the board members by meeting them on a one-to-one basis. Finding out what is important to them, all of which were keen to see more open and honest communication and services improved.

At the April meeting the board welcomed the new Director of Housing, Neil Euesden. Neil gave an overview of his extensive experience of working within the housing industry; and the key areas he was planning to focus on the re-procurement of the repairs and

maintenance contract. He was keen to look at ensuring at Slough we were complying with the Building Safety Act and the New Social Housing Legislation.

Both Housing Management and Cardo staff were in attendance to give the board an overview of their service areas; and how the new legislation will impact their service areas and where we need to make improvements.

Minutes of the meetings can be found on our website [Resident Board meeting minutes - Slough Borough Council](#)

If you wish to receive a printed version of the Housing Highlights Newsletter or Resident Involvement Strategy, please contact the Resident Involvement Team by calling 01753 475111 or emailing getinvolved@slough.gov.uk.

If you wish to receive the newsletter in another language please get in touch using the contact details above.

Resident involvement update

Since last month's update, we are pleased to inform you the Resident Involvement Policy has now been finalised; the policy has had board members input, and senior management approval. The policy can be found on our website [Resident Involvement Policy May 2024 - Slough Borough Council](#)

The policy sets out the council's approach to involving and engaging tenants and leaseholders in how it manages and delivers its housing services.

This is particularly important at this time given the newly revised

Consumer Standards which came into force April 2024.

The New Consumer Standards set expectations that all social housing landlords which includes councils and housing associations must meet. There are four standards and key one that relates to resident involvement is the Transparency Influence and Accountability Standard.

This requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, when necessary,

influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.

You may recall we previously updated you about Housing's Resident Involvement Strategy which received Cabinet approval in December; along with the strategy sits an 3 year Action Plan for involvement.

We are currently in the process of preparation to recruit more staff into the resident involvement team to take this work forward. The resident board will play a key role in monitoring our progress.

Ask for permission before making home alterations

Officers within tenancy management have recently come across a number of cases where tenants have completed improvement or alteration works to their homes without seeking written permission from their housing officer.

In some cases, the council has had to instigate legal action or ask for the unauthorised works to be removed and put back to its original condition. Carrying out unauthorised works in your home is a serious breach of the tenancy agreement which can then lead to a risk of losing the tenancy.

We understand some residents have desires to make improvements to their homes for a better quality of life for them or their families. In most cases, housing officers will not deny permission unless there is a valid reason.

If you are thinking of carrying out improvements/alterations to your home, then you must first check your tenancy agreement. Below, are extracts from the three different types of tenancy agreements about alterations, improvements and adaptations.

Introductory tenancies

9. Alterations, improvements and adaptations	9.1	Introductory tenants are not allowed to make alterations or improvements to the premises.
	9.2	Adaptations for the disabled will be assessed in accordance with individual needs. Contact the tenant's housing officer to discuss.

Flexible tenancies

9. Alterations, improvements and adaptations	The right of a secure tenant to improve or alter the premises is limited to that set out in the Housing Act 1985, s97.	
	If the tenancy ceases to be secure then the tenant may not improve or alter the premises.	
	Adaptations for the disabled will be assessed in accordance with individual needs. For further information the tenant should speak to the tenant's housing officer.	

Secure tenancies

9. Alterations, improvements and adaptations	9.1.1	Secure tenants must seek the council's permission before making alterations, or improvements to the premises. The council may impose conditions when giving permission for any alterations or improvements with which the tenant must comply.
	9.1.2	The council accepts no liability or responsibility for maintaining any alteration or improvement that the tenant has made to the premises or for any problems caused to the rest of the premises by such alterations or improvements.
	9.2	Adaptations for the disabled will be assessed in accordance with individual needs.

Examples of improvements/alterations requests that you must have permission for could be:

- installation of laminated flooring
- any type of electrical or gas works
- significant alterations to the garden area
- resurfacing the front garden area
- any adaptations works
- any type of plumbing works
- installations of external sheds/conservatories/lean to
- alterations to kitchen or bathrooms.

In the first instance, you must formally write or email your housing officer and describe the works that you wish to carry out. The housing officer will then assess if they are able to grant permission or if an inspection is required by a technical officer. Once your request has been fully assessed you will then receive the outcome in writing from your housing officer.

If permission is granted, then it will be on the following conditions:

1. You must ensure all works are done to a professional standard.
2. You must abide by all relevant statutory and legal requirements (e.g. any planning permission, or building regulation approval that may be required).
3. You must make your own arrangements for the execution of the works.
4. All damage caused during the execution of the works to yours or any other property must be made good at your own expense.
5. Should you decide to move or terminate your tenancy, you may not remove the alteration, unless returning the property back to a condition acceptable to Slough Borough Council.
6. It is not council policy to reimburse for any works carried out should you vacate the dwelling.
7. You must ensure that all mess is cleared away and that you do not break your conditions of tenancy.

Please remember, without obtaining permission from the council or completing significant works by a non-professional, it will lead to serious financial and legal implications and may potentially damage neighbouring properties. Always speak to your housing officer for advice where you are uncertain.

Fire doors

Fire doors and their frames are designed to withstand heat. They help to slow down the spread of fire and give you extra time to get out safely.

Please take note of the following information for all tenants and leaseholders.

- Keep all fire doors closed at all times - don't wedge them open. They're there to stop the spread of fire.
- Do NOT drill into, damage, or alter the doors or their self closing-devices.
- Do NOT allow anyone else such as telecom companies, electrical companies etc to do this also, as you will be held responsible.
- Don't change or tamper with fire doors - this is a breach of your tenancy.
- Report any fire doors which are not working, or appear damaged, immediately to our service partner Cardo on 0800 915 1215.

Slough Borough Council continues to significantly invest in improving fire safety for our tenants and leaseholders.

We have been notified by our Fire Risk Assessors that breaches of the above requirements were noticed already within various blocks, which are putting yourselves and others at risk.

Breaches will not be tolerated. Your Housing Officer will take action in the case of any identified breaches. Please note this may affect your tenancy and/or result in a repair/replacement recharge.



Sherwood Close Clear up

An estate inspection and reports from residents led to the discovery on an encampment in Sherwood Close.

Tents had been pitched in the area behind the flats in Langley, which is used as a communal washing area.

There was an intervention by the homelessness team at the council, however the tent occupants declined accommodation and moved on.

The housing and environmental services teams worked together to co-ordinate the clean-up which took a couple of hours. There was hazardous waste, which was also cleaned up.

If residents spot issues such as this in future, please report it to your housing officer.



Works by CARDO

Winvale Crescent improved drainage



A number of bungalows had suffered from flooding issues over the years, and residents were again impacted by the extreme rainfall in November 2023. This led to dirty water entering four properties, making them uninhabitable. Cardo immediately found alternative accommodation for residents, and began full drainage works and refurbishments to the properties.

The drainage works were extensive, to prevent a recurrence. New manholes were installed, anti-flood valves installed, and a culvert was dug out to prevent any further backup of water and waste. Cardo laid new pathways and landscaped the areas to the front of the properties. The residents' homes required works internally too. This involved replacing flooring throughout, replacing multiple doors and woodwork, installing new carpets and the re-plastering and decorating of walls.

Darvills Lane communal areas

A residential block at Darvills Lane faced numerous roof leaks and required extensive renovation of the

communal areas. After thorough planning and consultation, Cardo started the project by replacing the roof, which involved scaffold installation around the entire block. Unexpectedly, asbestos was found, leading to its safe removal.

The project faced significant delays due to persistent rainfall over several



months, but despite challenges, Cardo successfully completed the roof replacement and enhanced communal spaces with new decorations and flooring. This substantial investment by Slough Borough Council promises a vastly improved living environment for all residents in the block.

Front door replacement

Cardo and Slough Borough Council undertake the installation of hundreds of new front doors



annually. At this particular address in Teesdale Road, the issue was a deteriorated front door that was beyond repair, rotten, and allowing draughts to enter.

Cardo replaced it with a durable UPVC door, providing notable enhancements in heat retention and security, compared to the original door. This upgrade is part of approximately 230 window and door replacements carried out by Cardo in the past year, contributing to reduced heat loss and expense for the resident.

Wet room refurbishment Goldsworthy Road



As part of Cardo's ongoing programme to deliver suitable bathrooms, they completed a bathroom conversion, transitioning to a fully renovated wet room. The original bathroom had surpassed its lifespan and did not meet the resident's needs.

After consulting with the resident in Goldsworthy Way and an Occupational Therapist, Cardo comprehensively upgraded the bathroom to align with the resident's specific requirements, ensuring it became a functional space. On average, Cardo executes one of these upgrade projects weekly, contributing to improved quality homes for residents.

Asthma, damp and mould advice sessions

Anyone living in a home with damp and mould, and who has asthma, is welcome to attend an advice session with experts.

This will be the third in a series of drop-in sessions, where NHS partners, Cardo representatives and council housing staff will be present to answer questions, offer mini asthma reviews and to provide guidance.

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's centres, where families can come along and get advice and help on how to manage their child's asthma.

"We want to see 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."

During the drop-in session, residents can:

- get advice about managing the child's asthma, or their own
- check they know how to be administering the inhaler and asthma medication
- talk to council housing representatives about any damp or mould issues in their council home
- speak to a Cardo representative about the mould remediation works taking place.

The next session is from 10am-12noon on Wednesday 29 May at Romsey Close Children's Centre, Marish Primary School, Langley, SL3 8PE.

Councillor Paul Kelly, lead member for housing, highways, planning and transport, said: "These sessions offer a great opportunity to raise your concerns with someone in person and to receive expert advice in managing your child's asthma, or even your own if you are also affected.

"Resolving issues of damp and mould in the home will not cure the asthma, but it will help ease symptoms."

The [NHS Healthier Together website](#) has lots of advice on a range of topics, including fevers, coughs and cold, mental health, health for young people, safe sleeping, cost of living worries, and more.

Visit the [asthma section](#) to find out more and learn about asthma action plans.

New maximum fine for fly-tipping set

Fly-tipping rubbish could now land offenders with a £1,000 fine.

Anyone caught out dumping their items in parks, roads, garage sites, or anywhere else illegally, will be handed a £1,000 fine, reduced to £500 if repaid within 10 days.

For anyone with items which can't fit in their household bin, they can visit Chalvey Household Waste and Recycling Centre. It is free to use for household waste and it is open seven days a week.

Linda Corcoran, Resilience and Enforcement Lead, said: "There really is no excuse for fly-tipping rubbish. We know a lot of people feel fortnightly bin collections have contributed to the problem.

However, most law-abiding residents will find a responsible way to reduce the waste they generate or dispose of any excess waste without the need to commit an environmental crime.

"Dumping your waste items for someone else to clear up is not acceptable and we have now set the maximum fine to £1,000 to act as a deterrent.

"We encourage everyone to think twice before fly-tipping, check that anyone they employ to dispose of their waste has a valid waste carrier's licence, and visit the Chalvey HWRC to dispose of their excess waste."

Previously the council did not specify a set amount for this type of crime

and was tied to legislation to offer the default amount of £200. Now, the maximum level has been signed off by Cabinet and is in line with other local authorities.

For failure in Duty of Care, where checks for a valid waste carrier's licence have not been made, or for allowing your waste to escape your control, the fine is £600, discounted to £400 if paid within 10 days.

To find out more about what Chalvey HWRC accepts, opening hours and details on the commercial waste transfer station, visit the [council's website](#).

To report fly-tipping, please use the [online report form](#).



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
Email: sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk
Scan the QR code



Contact information

Housing Management

- North Slough email: _northteam@slough.gov.uk
- South Slough email: _southteam@slough.gov.uk
- East Slough email: _eastteam@slough.gov.uk

James Elliman Homes

- Email: jehomes@slough.gov.uk

Leaseholder enquiries

- Service charge costs/calculation queries email: neighbourhoodrecharges@slough.gov.uk
- Right to Buy sales and information email: rtb@slough.gov.uk
- General home ownership and service charge queries email: Homeownership@slough.gov.uk
- Home ownership Direct Debit mandates and queries email: Directdebithomeownership@slough.gov.uk
- Sale/Management Pack, when selling on a property email: Managementpacks@slough.gov.uk

Rent queries

- Queries about your rent direct debits, or refunds - rentaccounting@slough.gov.uk
- Queries about rent arrears - rentrecovery@slough.gov.uk

Repair reporting and caretaking

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

Resident involvement opportunities

- Email: getinvolved@slough.gov.uk



Debt

Slough Borough Council's Debt and Welfare team can help you to deal with your debts.

They can help you to talk to your creditors, rent provider, council tax, housing benefit overpayments, energy provider, bank, mortgage provider, credit cards, store cards and more.

Do not ignore letters or notices - talk to us now to see how we can help.

Contact _incomeboost@slough.gov.uk

