

Date of issue: 16 October 2023

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> (Councillors Manku (Chair), Shaik (Vice Chair), Escott, Hulme, Iftakhar, Mann, Matloob, Mohindra, O'Kelly and Stedmond)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	TUESDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 2023 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:</b> (for all enquiries)	MANIZE TALUKDAR 07871 982 919

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**STEPHEN BROWN**  
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

AGENDA  
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

1. Declarations of Interest

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*All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 9 and Appendix B of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.*



<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
2.	Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 September 2023	To Follow	-
<b>SCRUTINY CHALLENGE ITEMS</b>			
3.	ICT & Digital Update	1 - 10	All
4.	Public Sector Equality Duty and SBC (Slough Borough Council) Equality Objectives	11 - 36	All
5.	Update on Procurement and Contract Management	37 - 46	All
<b>MATTERS FOR INFORMATION</b>			
6.	Verbal Updates from Chairs of Task & Finish Groups	Verbal Report	All
7.	Forward Work Programme	47 - 62	All
8.	Attendance Report	63 - 64	-
9.	Date of Next Meeting - 28 November 2023	-	-

### Press and Public

**Attendance and accessibility:** You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before any items in the Part II agenda are considered. For those hard of hearing an Induction Loop System is available in the Council Chamber.

**Webcasting and recording:** The public part of the meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The footage will remain on our website for 12 months. A copy of the recording will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. By entering the meeting room and using the public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings.

In addition, the law allows members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record or tweet the proceedings at public meetings. Anyone proposing to do so is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.

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**Slough Borough Council**

<b>Report To:</b>	Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	ICT Improvement
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Michael Edley, Scrutiny and Governance Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No

**ANNEX A:****1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report (ANNEX A) provides an update on the progress of the ICT & Digital modernisation and remediation work approved by Cabinet on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022. It relates to the government direction of having properly functioning IT,
- 1.2 It sets out the first update since the adoption by the Council of the new strategy for ICT & Digital services in March of 2023.
- 1.3 The report updates on work to-date, the changes to the portfolio of projects based on the learning of the past year, and the plans for the coming six to twelve months.
- 1.4 The report will go to Cabinet on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**2. Recommendation**

Members are invited to make recommendations as they think appropriate.

**3. Commissioners Review**

- 3.1 Commissioners have reviewed the report and would like to see a clearer narrative on the impact of the strategy which will provide confidence that these requirements are essential. Commissioners understand this narrative will be included in a forthcoming report to Cabinet.

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# ANNEX A: Draft report to Cabinet

<b>Report To:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	ICT & Digital Update
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Cllr Chandra Muvvala
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Hayward, Executive Director of Strategy & Improvement
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Simon Sharkey Woods, AD Chief Digital & Information Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<u>NO</u>
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	NO
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix A – Milestone charts for the initial and future phases of improvement works

## 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 Linked to the government direction of having properly functioning IT, this report provides an update on the progress of the ICT & Digital modernisation and remediation work approved by Cabinet on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022.
- 1.2 The report is the first update since the adoption by the Council of the new strategy for ICT & Digital services in March of 2023.
- 1.3 The report updates on work to-date, the changes to the portfolio of projects based on the learning of the past year, and the plans for the coming six to twelve months.

### Recommendations:

- 1.4 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - a) Note the update to the modernisation and remediation activities being undertaken by the ICT & Digital Team and the next phase of work, as well as the ongoing risks, issues and challenges as the work continues.
  - b) Approve the next steps as set out in Appendix A, including the adoption of more automated processes, the upskilling of staff in the use of modern technologies and the building of a more coherent digital offer for residents.

### Commissioner Review

- 1.5 To be added for Cabinet Report.

## 2. Report

### Introduction

- 2.1 The directions issued on the 1st of December 2021 to Slough under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 stated the need for “An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority’s IT.” The modernisation programme, approved in the Cabinet meeting of March 2022, continues to resolve the legacy issues to achieve the proper functioning of IT.
- 2.2 Since the commencement of the modernisation programme, the Council has also developed and adopted, an adaptive 3-year ICT and Digital strategy. This new adaptive strategy focuses on capacity, capability, and resilience. It has been written to be flexible enough to cope with rapid changes of focus and priority, and to exploit appropriate technologies as and when they become available. It is also driving changes to the operating model for the provision of ICT and Digital services that will minimise the risk of ever needing this level of intervention again.
- 2.3 When the modernisation programme was approved the ICT and Digital Team was mandated to regularly update Members on progress. Although this and previous updates are the formal response to that mandate, we also provide a monthly update of the work to the lead Member for ICT and Digital, the Deputy Leader, the Lead Commissioner, and the Strategy and Improvement Directorate management team. The milestone charts in Appendix A are routinely updated and shared in the monthly report. In addition, Cyber Security and Data Protection and the Digital Strategy are on the Council’s corporate risk register, which is reported to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

### Update

- 2.4 Overall, the work to improve ICT and Digital services is progressing. The pace of work is linked to the delicate balance of driving change whilst managing risk. There is also, given the financial position of Slough, significant governance to be complied with to ensure that all investments are understood and underpinned with sound business cases before work gets underway.
- 2.5 The table below provides an updated summary of completed works since the modernisation programme was initiated. Some of the items in the table below may not be familiar to members and are provided here for transparency. Item 2.6 below more fully describes some of the elements within the table.

Cloud migration of departmental systems	Cyber security and resilience	End use compute	Replacing aged infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agresso Hosting</li><li>• Capita 1 education</li><li>• Icon (chip and Pin)</li><li>• Modern.Gov migration</li><li>• NEC housing phase 1</li><li>• Paygate upgrade</li><li>• IT Service Management platform</li><li>• Flare and Lalpac data migration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Cyber Security Centre services</li><li>• Review of Cloud back-up options</li><li>• Nessus vulnerability scanning</li><li>• IT healthcheck</li><li>• Bullware ransomware solution</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4G coverage</li><li>• Agresso/Unit 4 support</li><li>• Retirement of Blue Jeans video conferencing</li><li>• Concessionary bus pass system</li><li>• Digistaff robotic process automation</li><li>• Intune/mobile device management</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core switch replacement and migration</li><li>• Crematorium network access</li><li>• Disk storage replacement (Nimble)</li><li>• Firewall upgrade</li><li>• FS Logix (Citrix)</li><li>• Wi-Fi</li><li>• Winnersh Cyxtera closure</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library and people counters (Curve excluded)</li> <li>• New councillor ICT provision</li> <li>• Office 365 rollout</li> <li>• ScanStation implementation</li> <li>• Telephony replacement</li> </ul>	
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2.6 Key works to highlight from the table are:

2.6.1 The move of several systems to Cloud hosted versions lowers the need for expensive infrastructure and improves availability. The IT service management system Astro (Freshservice), NEC Housing system, and new hosting provider for Agresso (our finance and HR system) are examples of this.

2.6.2 Significant progress against cyber resilience works and the completion of the IT health check will enable us to target further improvements to keep Slough operating securely.

2.6.3 End user improvements have included the retirement of the Blue Jeans video conferencing service (move to Microsoft Teams), improving the long-standing issue with the O2 mobile telephony signal at Observatory House, improved management of mobile devices, replacement of the legacy telephony system, and a focus on finalising the rollout and adoption of the full Microsoft 365 suite.

2.6.4 Core infrastructure works have included core networking replacement, replacement of end-of-life storage devices, and firewall upgrades.

2.7 The ICT & Digital Team has also been continuing to seek efficiencies with the contracts it is responsible for during the first quarter of 2023/24. The overall impact for the Council (not just on the ICT and Digital budget) has been tracked by the Procurement Team and is expected to be a saving of £1.2m.

2.8 Since the last update report to Cabinet, the ICT and Digital Team has reviewed the original programme of works that were established for the first phase of modernisation and reflected on what has been learnt and what additional activities will support Slough in having an effective ICT and Digital service.

2.9 This review has led to a second phase of work that has an increased focus on the operating model for technology services including having the right controls, processes, and policies in place to support a culture of continuous improvement.

2.10 On the 25th of September, the new Acceptable Use Policy for users of systems provided by the ICT and Digital Team was approved by the Employment Committee of the Council. This is the first policy of its type for some years and makes the expectation on the limits of use of Council provided equipment clearer than ever. At the time of writing, a campaign to educate staff and members on the policy was being established.

2.11 Some key elements of the ongoing work for members to note are:

2.11.1 **Data Centre move** – the Council uses an off-site data centre to host key services and systems. To save over £100k per year and ensure we can lower costs more rapidly in the future, we will be moving to a secure Crown Hosting environment in November. At the time of writing, the current plan was for the move to take place on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> of November. This will be the largest scale, highest risk change of the modernisation programme.

- 2.11.2 **Move to software designed wide area network (SD-WAN)** - we are replacing all the links to Council locations and the way we connect to the internet through this modern connectivity technology. As well as another significant financial saving, the change will enable us to provide greater resilience to Slough services. Deployment of circuits commenced in October.
- 2.11.3 **Modernising our Wi-Fi service at our locations** – we are working with procurement to acquire a fully managed solution for our office-based Wi-Fi. As well as ensuring the core connectivity service for staff is more reliable, the change will enable us to provide a more reliable public access service. (This was approved at the procurement review board on the 28<sup>th</sup> Sep 2023).
- 2.11.4 **Delivery of end user devices for staff** – creating a consistent, reliable build for the devices our staff use every day remains a key priority. We have a plan to issue to a new, robustly controlled standard, before the end of 2023.
- 2.12 The review of projects being undertaken by the ICT and Digital Team means that the volume of work has increased significantly. The table below provides the current position in terms of projects initiated since the report in March 2022. (As of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023).

<b>Total initiated projects since March 2022</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Currently active</b>	<b>Not started</b>
<b>101</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>

- 2.13 As per 2.5 above, a new phase of work has been created since the last update to Cabinet. The table below highlights some of the most impactful new work and its expected benefits.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
<b>Sustainable funding for ICT&amp;D</b>	Professional & Sustainable Service	ICT&D working with the Councils budgeting process and our finance business partner to achieve a sustainable level of funding for digital and technology services.	Ability to manage the costs of providing appropriate services without the need for large ad-hoc standalone investments.
<b>New Intranet</b>	End User Technology	The current intranet information resource for staff is out of date and end of life. This work will migrate this information to a Microsoft Teams based resource.	Utilising technology we are already invested in to provide excellent quality information that supports the work of Council staff.
<b>New operating procedures in ICT&amp;D</b>	Professional & Sustainable Service	The establishment and testing of new procedures in the ICT&D team to ensure consistent, reliable, service delivery.	Improved efficiency and lower cost.
<b>Refresh of our Digital Services platform</b>	End User Technology	A reset of the way we manage and resource the key digital platform for the Council.	Improved, coherent digital services that encourage more residents to use this channel instead of the more expensive in-person or telephone contacts.
<b>Testing &amp; release management</b>	Professional & sustainable Service	Ensuring all new or upgraded services are implemented and tested properly.	Greater impact of new or upgraded services leading to a better return on investment for the Council



### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### **Financial implications**

- 3.1 The original £4.6m funding provided for phase one of the modernisation programme, approved in March 2022, is expected to be fully spent. From this point forward any new works identified will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The analysis of any proposed work will include an understanding of the full financial implications for the Council, including the ongoing revenue commitment and the envisaged benefits from any new or changed, system or service.
- 3.2 The ICT&D team are engaged with the normal budgeting processes of the Council and will provide information about options for investment through that process. At the time of writing several investment options have been suggested but these must be balanced alongside all requests from across the Council and alongside the reality that Slough needs to save significant money. The team will provide the information required to help senior leaders balance the benefit, risks and needs of residents through the priorities that are set.
- 3.3 Although some of the proposed works are likely to drive efficiencies and will therefore have a clear return-on-investment, some are more about security and stabilisation where the investment is about lowering risk.

#### **Legal implications**

- 3.4 Use of technology brings significant opportunities but also legal risks. Many authorities are utilising technology in innovative ways to reduce the cost-of-service delivery, allow increased self-service, collect, and monitor data to inform decisions and replace the need for manual entry. The Council has legal duties in relation to data security and this requires the Council to consider security at a system and user level. At a system level, security must be designed and implemented at the outset and the Council needs to have robust processes in place to provide resilience in the event of system failure. At a user level, it is necessary to create a cyber security culture, ensuring that all staff understand their role to protect the Council's data. The Council must ensure it learns from previous incidents and from incidents elsewhere in the public sector. Recent serious security failures at other councils and public bodies have included ransomware attacks and release of highly confidential information. Redcar and Cleveland Council has estimated that a cyber-attack in 2020 has cost the authority more than £7million to resolve. Hackney Council's cyber-attack in 2020 was estimated to have cost £12.2million, led to extremely sensitive information being published on the dark web and delays in service delivery to vulnerable residents. The incident has been the subject of lengthy investigations by the National Crime Agency and the Information Commissioner. A serious data breach by the Police Service for Northern Ireland, following mishandling of a freedom of information request, led to details of 10,000 staff being disclosed and initial recovery costs are estimated at £24 to £37million, not taking account of costs of any legal claims for breach of data security.
- 3.5 The impact of successful delivery of the ICT improvement work will be to reduce the risk of service failure across the council, lower the potential for cyber-attacks, and improve our stance in respect of data security.

## **Risk Management Implications**

- 3.6 The ongoing works to improve ICT and Digital services at the Council will continue to carry a level of risk. Two of the corporate risks relate to ICT. However, the risk of major failures of critical services will reduce as some of the key activities progress. The items listed in 2.7 will have a significant positive impact on the levels of risk at the Council.
- 3.7 The ICT and Digital Team has a monthly cycle of risk reporting and maintains regular contact with the Councils risk management team to ensure the overall risk load is well communicated and understood.

## **Environmental Implications**

- 3.8 The work to significantly improve the approach to IT service management will have an impact on managing hardware that will mean we use equipment more efficiently. This should prevent waste and ensure we have the smallest possible footprint in terms of the use of physical devices.
- 3.9 The continuing focus on the use of Cloud/internet-based services will also lower the carbon footprint of what we do as we will be sharing resources with others rather than building infrastructure for ourselves that is only partially utilised.

## **Equality Implications**

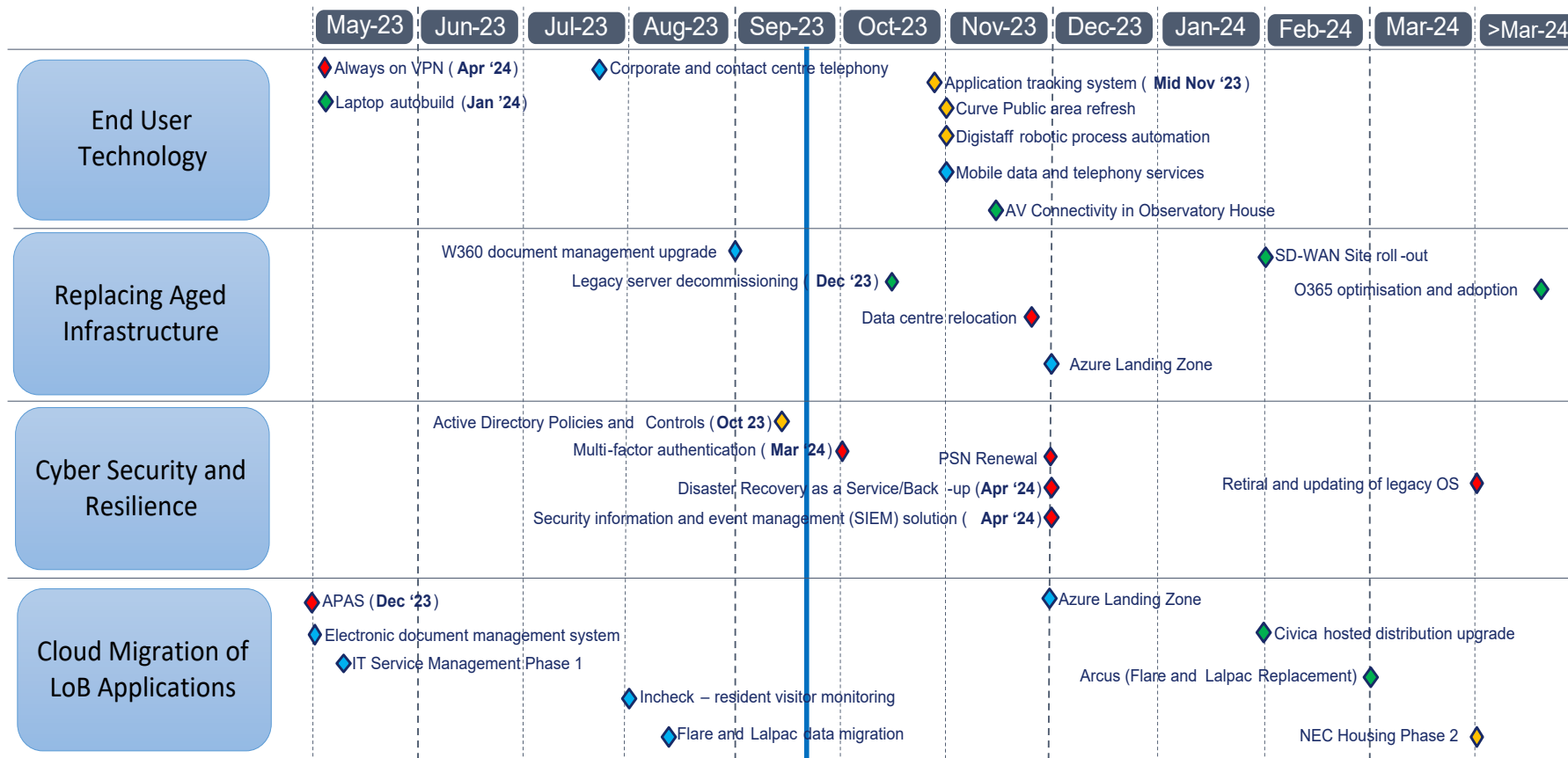
- 3.10 There are no known equality implications because of this strategy. However, the failure of ICT systems is likely to impact certain groups of residents to a greater extent than others, due to these groups being more reliant on Council services. For instance, in Hackney Council following its cyber-attack there were delays to delivery of social care assessments and care packages, a backlog of home repairs and an initial lack of access to children's social care records.

## **4. Background Papers**

[ICT&D Strategy \(March 2023\)](#)

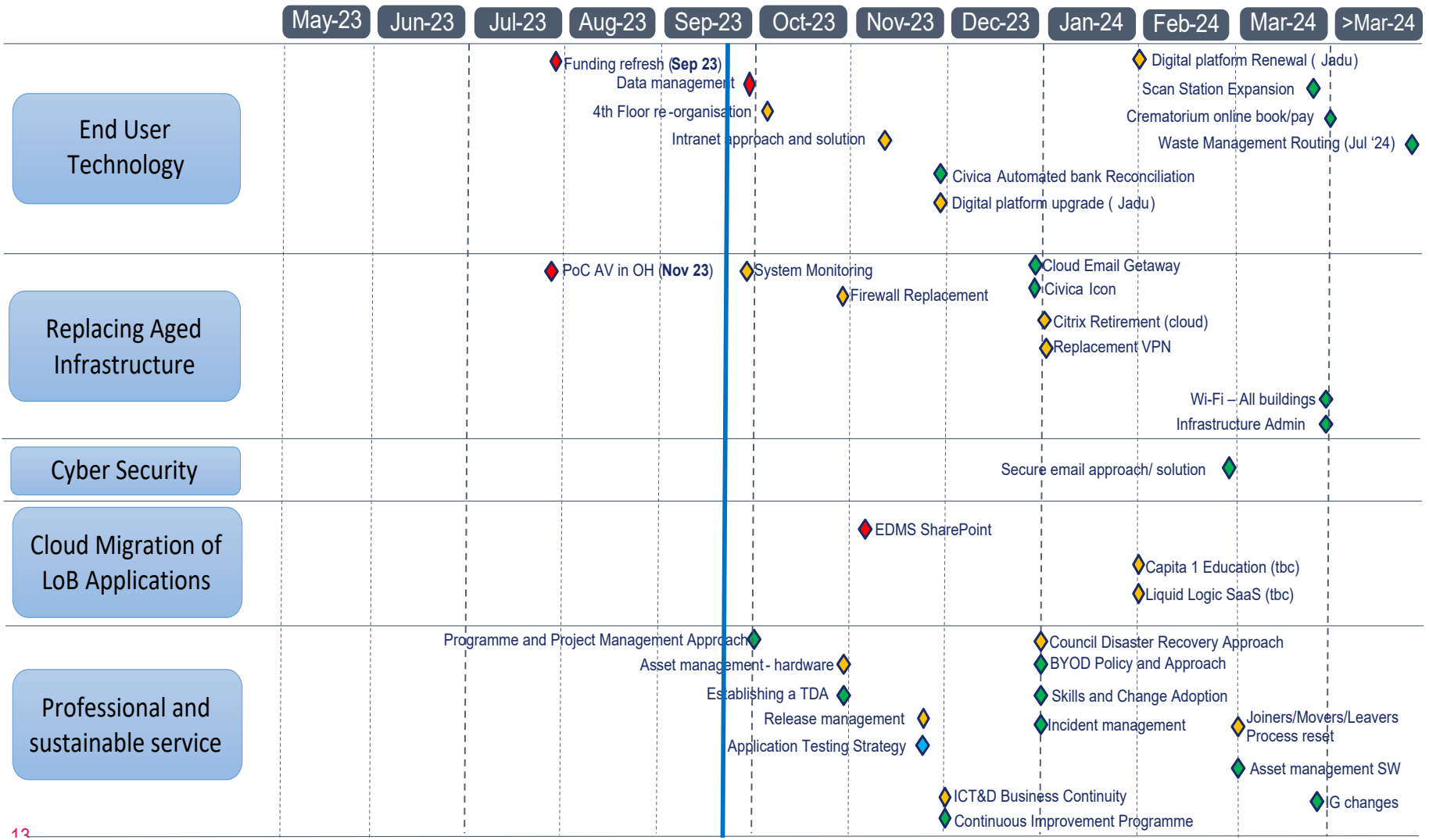
Appendix A: Milestone Charts for all planned works:

Projects in delivery



◆ Complete     
 ◆ No significant issues     
 ◆ Some issues but under management control     
 ◆ Significant issues that may cause further delay

# New Projects in discovery/very early delivery



◆ Complete     
 ◆ No significant issues     
 ◆ Some issues but under management control     
 ◆ Significant issues that may cause further delay

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	24 October 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Public Sector Equality Duty and SBC (Slough Borough Council) Equality Objectives
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Dexter Smith, Leader of the Council
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Hayward
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Surjit Nagra / Dean Tyler
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	NO
<b>Appendices:</b>	A: Detailed Objectives and Indicators B: Equality Impact Assessment

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report (Section n2) provides details to Scrutiny on the proposed 2023-2027 statutory equality objectives for Slough Borough Council in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The objectives cover both employment and service provision.

#### Recommendations:

- 1.2 CISC is requested to make any comments or recommendations on the following equality objectives to inform the consideration of this report by Cabinet and Full Council:
- Objective 1: Improve the collection of employee and applicant equalities data to ensure we are data-led in our actions to improve workforce inclusion and equality. We will use this data to inform all activities to drive better outcomes for Objective 2.
  - Objective 2: Recruit, retain and develop an inclusive workforce, where diversity is valued, and one that is representative of our local communities.

#### Corporate Plan service objectives

- Objective 3: Provide quality services for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Objective 4: Improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people.
- Objective 5: Work with partners to target health inequalities and wellbeing.

## Reason

- 1.3 The council is fully committed to promoting equality in the provision of its services to Slough residents, and in its role as employer to its workforce.
- 1.4 This report and the appendices set out five proposed objectives, to cover both employment and service provision, together with proposed methods to measure progress. Workforce based objectives relate to non-executive functions, which would normally be considered by the Employment Committee. It is recommended that Full Council approve these objectives and has an opportunity to comment on the objectives as a whole.
- 1.5 Under Regulations made under the Equality Act 2010 the council is required to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the duty imposed by Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty/PSED). In addition, it is required to prepare and publish one or more equality objectives it thinks it should achieve to do any of the things mentioned in paragraph (a) to (c) of the PSD. Objectives are expected to be published at least every 4 years and must be specific and measurable.

## Commissioner Review

The report has been cleared by Commissioners with recognition of the good news from the Equality & Human Rights Commission highlighted at paragraph 3.8 in the report. The council is now close to being able to meet its statutory duties having previously and currently being in breach of them.

## 2. Report

### Introduction

- 2.1 We are committed to ensuring that reducing inequality is at the heart of our priorities as a council. We have refreshed the [Corporate Plan](#) to take account of the latest data and most recent Census information. This information can be viewed in the [Slough Insights Pack](#), which includes a wide-ranging set of data that identifies equality and diversity issues within Slough across our residents and service users. This is an important development in addressing the government Direction to enable better and evidence-based decision making.
- 2.2 We are clear that embedding an approach to tackling inequality within our workforce, residents and service users is key to driving our recovery and improvement agenda.
- 2.3 As a listed public authority, the council is subject to additional equality obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations.
- 2.4 Key to our purpose as a local authority will be working with our partners to increase healthy life expectancy. In doing this we will address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing including education, housing, and the economy. The delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan is closely aligned with the [Slough Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy 2020-2025](#).
- 2.5 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has 4 priorities:
  - a. Starting Well
  - b. Integration
  - c. Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods
  - d. Workplace Health

- 2.6** The focus of the equality objectives for both employment and services are set out in the Corporate Plan, which places reducing health inequalities and closing the gaps in healthy life expectancy as a central driver for the work of the council over the next 5 years. The Corporate Plan has a particular focus on delivering this through actions to support children and young people as targeted equality groups, recognising the impact this can have on closing long-term equality gaps across all groups.
- 2.7** The Corporate Plan recognises that the recruitment and retention of a skilled, committed, and diverse workforce is critical to delivering the wider service objectives to Slough's local communities. In accordance with regulations made under the Equality Act, since 2017 the Council has been required to publish annual information relating to pay (referred to as Gender Pay gap reporting). In addition the Council also published a [workforce equality report](#).

### **3 Background**

- 3.1** A series of Government directions issued to the council in December 2021 included making better, evidence-based decisions. The updated Corporate Plan reflects the latest Census and other data sources, which indicate the major equality gaps in Slough. It has particularly highlighted the health inequalities experienced by Slough residents who share protected characteristics.
- 3.2** The council is committed to being an inclusive employer, and to promoting diversity and equality in the workplace. Employee data collection, analysis and equalities profiling is improving. However, there remain significant gaps in the employee equalities data that is voluntarily declared by existing staff, and particularly in recruitment and applicant data. This limits our understanding of where different groups are in the organisation and what actions can be taken to improve representation and equality – both through recruitment and development of existing employees. Lack of comparable employee data sets also impacts our ability to set representation targets in line with local demographic data.
- 3.3** Fostering a clear culture of inclusion - where all employees are able to perform and progress - is crucial if we are to recruit and retain a skilled and committed workforce. It is essential that the workforce feel diversity is valued and that there are equal opportunities to progress. There is now good engagement with a range of staff network groups to improve dialogue around workforce inclusion. However, the April 2023 staff survey indicated that there is more work to be done to ensure all employees feel that the workplace is inclusive.
- 3.4** Whilst the council workforce is ethnically diverse, it has been acknowledged that senior leadership is not reflective of local Slough communities.
- 3.5** Our objectives are as follows:

#### **Workforce**

- Objective 1: Improve the collection of employee and applicant equalities data to ensure we are data-led in our actions to improve workforce inclusion and equality. We will use this data to inform all activities to drive better outcomes for Objective 2; and

- Objective 2: Recruit, retain and develop an inclusive workforce, where diversity is valued, and one that is more representative of our local communities.

## Corporate Plan

- Objective 3: Provide quality services for vulnerable children and those with SEND;
- Objective 4: Improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people; and
- Objective 5: Work with partners to target health inequalities and well-being.

**3.6** Appendix A details the proposed equality objectives and the methods of measuring progress against them.

**3.7** An assessment of progress against these equality objectives will be published on the council's website on an annual basis, in keeping with best practice guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This will also be reported to appropriate member bodies, for instance Employment Committee for workforce objectives.

**3.8** We have been working closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission who are advising a number of local authorities on their work to achieve full compliance. The Commission have just written to us very positively as follows:

*'As you may recall we met earlier this year to discuss the steps that Slough needs to take to meet the requirements of the PSED specific duty obligations. We promised that we would review your website in September to see how you are getting on, and it is clear that you are working very hard to become compliant with the specific duties, considering all of the financial pressures you are under and all the changes you have had to make. This includes the very extensive workforce equality data that you published in March, and the information you have published on your Slough Insights Data Pack in August providing information on the population of Slough. We are also looking forward to the publication of your corporate plan with the equality objectives in the coming months. The publication of equality objectives that are specific and measurable will be the final piece of information that Slough needs to demonstrate its compliance with the PSED specific duties.'*

*Bearing in mind how much you have demonstrated how it is possible to meet your PSED Specific Duties despite all the difficulties you have faced over the last couple of years, on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission I would like to ask if you and/ or colleagues would be interested in participating in an introductory seminar on the Public Sector Equality Duty, to talk about how you are working towards compliance with the duties'.*



## **4 Implications of the Recommendation**

### **Financial implications**

- 4.1** Any actions arising from the recommendations will be funded from within existing budgets.

### **Legal implications**

- 4.2** Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes additional duties on relevant public authorities, known as the Public Sector Equality Duty. This duty applies to 'the relevant protected characteristics' – age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership. There is both a general and specific duty.

The general duty requires all listed authorities, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
  - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 4.3** The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 require public authorities to:
- a. Publish gender pay gap information on their employees
  - b. Publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty ('equality information')
  - c. Prepare and publish of one or more equality objectives which it thinks it should achieve to do any of the things mentioned in the general equality duty ('equality objectives')

The Council reports its gender pay gap to the Employment Committee and has also recently started reporting a wider range of workforce data, including ethnicity pay gap reporting. The Council also includes details of the equality implications of any recommended decision to be decided at a member level.

### **Risk management implications**

- 1.1.** Failure to comply with the Equality Act duties increases the risk of legal challenges to decision-making.

## **Environmental Implications**

- 1.1. There are no direct environmental implications as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

## **Equality implications**

- 4.4 The Equality Act 2010 contains various provisions to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. This includes, but is not limited to, the public sector equality duty, the duty to have up to date equality objectives and to publish equality information. An equality impact assessment is included as Appendix B.
- 4.5 In summary, the objectives are intended to have positive impacts on all groups. For employees and job applicants, the workforce objectives (1 and 2) will have a particularly positive impact on those groups currently under-represented in the council's workforce, including some ethnic minority groups, and those with disabilities. Whilst service objectives 3 and 4 place a focus on children and young people, there is intersectionality with other equality characteristics, and it is recognised that improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for children will have a positive impact on future outcomes for adults from all groups.
- 4.6 The equality objectives do not replace the council's statutory responsibility to eliminate discrimination and promote equality throughout all its day-to-day functions and procedures. They provide a focus on targeted areas of particular concern, where reducing inequalities and closing the gaps will have significant impacts on improving overall equality for employees and residents.

## **Procurement implications**

- 4.7 There are no direct procurement implications as a result of the recommendations contained in this report, however the Public Sector Equality Duty applies to all public procurement decisions. UK procurement regulations are designed to ensure that public procurement decisions are fair and equitable for everyone.

## **Workforce implications**

- 4.8 The council is committed to being an inclusive employer where diversity is valued. There are two equality objectives that relate specifically to the workforce.

## **Property implications**

- 4.9 There are no direct property implications as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

## **5 Background Papers**

None

## Appendix A

### Detailed Objectives and Indicators

We are committed to putting equality and inclusion at the heart of our role as an employer, to support our workforce who help to deliver this plan.

Our objective will be to recruit, retain and develop a skilled, committed, and inclusive workforce, where diversity is valued and, one which is representative of our local communities.

#### Objective 1: Workforce

*Improve the collection of employee and applicant equalities data to ensure we are data-led in our actions to improve workforce inclusion and equality.*

*We will use this data to inform all our activities to drive better outcomes for Objective Two ( see below)*

#### Baseline and Measuring improvement:

Employee Equalities Data:

Measurement will be through the voluntary completion rates of employee diversity information held in the Agresso HR system. Current completion rates are as follows:

Diversity Type	NUMBERS			PERCENTAGES		
	STATED	PREFER NOT TO STAY	NOT STATED	STATED	PREFER NOT TO STAY	NOT STATED
Age	1116	0	0	100%	0%	0%
Gender	1116	0	0	100%	0%	0%
Ethnic	419	0	697	38%	0%	62%
Ethnic Detailed	750	0	366	67%	0%	33%
Disability	250	47	819	22%	4%	73%
Religion	721	56	339	65%	5%	30%
Sexual Orientation	599	165	352	54%	15%	32%

(Agresso, Sept 2023)

**The target will be to get to 90% or above completion rates in all categories by 2027.**

Monitoring is undertaken by regular monthly reports to Corporate Leadership Team. Accurate and complete employee equalities data can then be used to measure representation of different groups at different levels of the organisation, pay gaps between different groups and the impact of HR policies and organisational change on different groups.

#### Applicants Equalities Data:

The council has previously relied on out-dated manual recruitment systems, which has limited our capacity to collect and analyse accurate equalities data on applicants. With the recent implementation of the Talos Applicant Tracking System, we now have a complete tracking process throughout the applicant journey. This will allow accurate reporting on who is applying for jobs (and being appointed) and will allow us to target recruitment advertising and other initiatives to under-

represented groups and ensure all our processes are fair and accessible. It can also provide evidence for actions and initiatives to improve more diversity in senior positions (Objective 2).

Equality, diversity, and inclusion is incorporated into the new recruitment processes and is an integral component of our specifications to external recruitment partners. Baseline and tracking information should commence by the end of 2023.

## Objective 2: Workforce

***Recruit, retain and develop an inclusive workforce, where diversity is valued, and one that is more representative of our local communities.***

Baseline and Measuring Improvement:

The results of the 2023 staff survey included 2 specific diversity-themed questions, where employees were asked if they agreed with the following statements. The response rate was given a score:

At SBC (Slough Borough Council) diversity is valued in the workplace score **68**

At SBC staff from different backgrounds have equal opportunity to progress score **62**

This places them in the **moderate response range** (51-74)

This gives us baseline data for 2023. The survey will be repeated annually, and we can measure changes in these scores over time. Target will be year in year improvement, moving scores into the highest response range (75+) by 2027.

Although as stated above, we lack comprehensive workforce equality data (especially on ethnicity and disability), with improved declarations from staff, a reasonable comparator for a workforce that is representative of the wider Slough community, would be to compare our workforce with the economically active cohort in Slough (data available from Census 2021).

### Baseline Data - SBC profiles versus Slough Economically Active Comparators by Sex, Disability and Ethnicity:

46% of economically active Slough residents are female.

Economic activity and sex	Economically active: Total	SBC Workforce August 2023
Female	46%	59%
Male	54%	41%

### Disability

7% of economically active residents are disabled.

Economic activity and disability	Economically active: Total	SBC Workforce August 2023
Disabled under the Equality Act	7%	6%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	93%	17%
Prefer not to say	NA	4%
Undisclosed *	NA	73%

\* (N.B A large percentage of staff have not disclosed their disability status)

## Ethnicity

85% of the economically active cohort in Slough are from Asian/Asian British or White ethnic backgrounds.

Economic activity and broad ethnic groups	Economically active: Total	SBC Workforce August 2023
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	45%	14%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	8%	5%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	3%	1%
White	40%	17%
Other ethnic group	5%	1%
Undisclosed	*NA	62%

\*(N.B A large percentage of staff have not disclosed their broad ethnic group)

Target would be to see improved correlation between resident profile and SBC workforce profile and help inform actions to improve representation (especially within senior levels of the workforce).

### Service Equality objectives from the Corporate Plan

Slough is ethnically super-diverse, but inequalities exist between different ethnic groups. Slough has lower healthy life expectancy and inequalities in health between different population groups that need to be addressed. It also has a strikingly young population. Experience in early life has a lasting impact on adult health, both directly and indirectly (through influencing adult health behaviours). A child's early development and experience are pivotal in determining future health and wellbeing, with some of the biggest inequalities and poorest outcomes being associated with disadvantage and disability.

The equality objectives' focus on children and young people will have a clear impact on this group in particular – but also longer-term positive impacts on all groups, as the experiences of children are predictors of future inequalities. It should also be noted that equalities characteristics are intersectional and children and young people comprise many of the other groups, leading to multiple positive impacts.

### Objective 3: Provide quality services for vulnerable children and those with SEND (Special Educational Needs or a Disability).

#### Key Indicators

- Percentage of new EHC (Education, Health, and Care) plans issued within 20 weeks (2022 Slough 11.6%; National 50.7%).
- Percentage of child assessments to social care completed on time (2023 Slough x; National x).
- Percentage of children in need visits completed within agreed timescales (2023 Slough x; National x).

- Percentage of children subject to a child protection plan with all reviews completed withing agreed timescales (2023 Slough x; National x).
- Percentage of CLA (Children Looked After) with latest review within timescales (2023 Slough x; National x).
- Homelessness: rate per 1,000 households in temporary accommodation (2021 Slough 7.2; National 4.0).

#### **Objective 4: Improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people.**

##### **Key Indicators**

- Percentage of eligible 2-year-olds receiving 15 hours of free early years education or childcare (Spring 2023 Slough 56%; National 72%).
- Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 to 2½ child development review (2022 Slough 73.6%, National 81.1%)

##### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

- Percentage of children with SEND support achieving a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023 Slough 14.5%; National 24.5%).
- Percentage of children with an EHC plan achieving a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023 Slough 9.1%; National 3.8%).
- Closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils achieving a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage (2023 Slough disadvantage 57.7%; non-disadvantage 68.0%; **gap 10.3%** compared nationally disadvantage 52.1%; non-disadvantage 69.9%; **gap 17.8%**).

##### **Key Stage 2**

- Percentage of children with SEND support achieving the expected level or above in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023 Slough 21.7%; National 23.6%).
- Percentage of children with an EHC plan achieving the expected level or above in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023 Slough 5.6%; National 8.4%).
- Closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected level or above in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 (2023 Slough disadvantage 50.3%; non-disadvantage 67.3%; **gap 17.0%** compared nationally disadvantage 44.0%; non-disadvantage 65.9%; **gap 21.9%**).

##### **Key Stage 4**

- Percentage of children with SEND support achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 (2022 Slough 24.1%; National 22.5%).
- Percentage of children with an EHC plan achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 (2022 Slough 12.3%; National 7.0%).

- Close the disadvantage gap between disadvantage pupils and non-disadvantage pupils achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 (2022 Slough disadvantage 44.6%; non-disadvantage 68.9%; **gap 24.3%** compared nationally disadvantage 29.7%; non-disadvantage 57.2%; **gap 27.5%**).

#### **16–17-year-olds**

- Percentage of 16–17-year-olds with SEND support participating in education, employment, and training (2023 Slough x; National x).
- Percentage of 16–17-year-olds with an EHC plan participating in education, employment, and training (2023 Slough x; National x).
- Percentage of disadvantaged 16–17-year-olds participating in education, employment, and training (2023 Slough x; National x).

#### **Qualifications at age of 19**

- Percentage of 19-year-olds with SEND support qualified to Level 2 including English and Maths (2022 Slough 41.0%; National 42.8%).
- Percentage of 19-year-olds with an EHC plan qualified to Level 2 including English and Maths (2022 Slough 13.1%; National 17.2%).
- Close the gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification including English & Maths by the age of 19 (2022 Slough FSM (Free School Meals) 63.6%; Non-FSM 81.8%; **gap 18.2%** compared nationally FSM 49.1%; Non-FSM 75.6%; **gap 26.5%**).
- Percentage of 19-year-olds with SEND support qualified to Level 3 (2022 Slough 34.0%; National 36.7%).
- Percentage of 19-year-olds with an EHC plan qualified to Level 3 (2022 Slough 9.8%; National 14.0%).
- Close the gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 (2022 Slough FSM 50.3%; Non-FSM 72.8%; **gap 22.5%** compared nationally FSM 39.0%; Non-FSM 64.2%; **gap 25.3%**).

### **Objective 5: Work with partners to target health inequalities and well-being.**

#### **Key Indicators**

- Percentage of children aged 2.5 who received a 2-2.5-year child development review (2022 Slough 85.8%; National 74.0%).
- Percentage of children in reception overweight or obese (2022 Slough 20.8%; National 22.3%).
- Percentage of children in year 6 overweight or obese (2022 Slough 43.3%; National 37.8%)

- Percentage of adults aged 18 plus classified as overweight or obese (2022 Slough 66.0%; National 63.8%).
- Percentage of physically active adults (150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week) aged 19 plus (2022 Slough 51.6%; National 67.3).
- Percentage of eligible population aged 40-64 receiving an NHS health check (2023 Slough 11.4%; National 7.2%).
- Under 75-year mortality rate from cause considered preventable rate per 100,000 (2021 Slough 262.1; National 183.2).



# Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Directorate: Strategy &amp; Improvement</b>	
<b>Service: HR and Strategy and Policy</b>	
<b>Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Christine Ford, Diversity and Inclusion Lead</b>	
<b>Date of Assessment: 20/09/23</b>	
<b>Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Statutory Equality Objectives 2023-2027</b>	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The Corporate Equality Objectives are a statutory requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Equality Act 2010. It is a requirement to have a least one objective, for a period of no longer than 4 years. The aim is to set a focus for the council to improve equality locally, within both its workforce and service delivery. The context for the objectives are linked directly from the Corporate Plan, which outlines the vision for the council and what we hope to deliver in the borough, above and beyond the day to day “business as usual”. The plan includes up to date data, including information from the 2021 Census.</p> <p>The Equality Objectives 2023-2027 are:</p> <p><b><i>Objective 1: Improve the collection of employee and applicant equalities data to ensure we are data-led in our actions to improve workforce inclusion and equality</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Objective 2: Recruit, retain and develop an inclusive workforce, where diversity is valued, and one that is more representative of our local communities.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Objective 3: Provide quality services for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Objective 4: Improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Objective 5: Work with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing.</i></b></p>

	<p>By setting these objectives the council maintains compliance with the PSED and aims to focus activities on reducing inequalities and improving inclusion.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service or function? State if this is undertaken by more than one team, service, and department including any external partners.</p> <p>The equality objectives for services are delivered by all directorates and all services, but with a specific focus on those services working with children and young people, those with disabilities and SEN, and improving public health.</p> <p>The primary delivery of the work-force objectives lies with Human Resources and Corporate Leadership Team</p>

3.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc.? Please consider all of the Protected Characteristics listed (more information is available in the background information). Bear in mind that people affected by the proposals may well have more than one protected characteristic.</p> <p>All employees of the council will be impacted Prospective employees (job applicants).</p> <p>There is a primary focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged <b>children and young people</b>. Slough has a strikingly young population, with ¼ of the population under the age of 15 (see demographic charts below). 22% of Slough's under 16's lived in relative low –income families in 2020/21 (JSNA Feb 2023) and this number is increasing. However, this is intersectional and children and young people will comprise many of the other equality groups. There is additionally a specific objective focus around children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who face poorer outcomes than those without SEND.</p> <p>Reducing health inequalities will impact on all residents who will potentially comprise all equality groups, but particularly those with disabilities</p> <p><b>It is important to note that these objectives do not replace the legal responsibilities of the council to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in the day to day activities of the council. The focus on children and young people and wider equality promotion for adults (of all equality characteristics) is not mutually exclusive. Indeed research indicates that the targeting of inequalities for children and young people can have a profound positive impact on closing future equality gaps for adults.</b></p>
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4.	What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? You may wish to refer to the Equalities Duties detailed in the background information.		
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive , Negative, Neutral or Unknown Impact</b>	<b>Rationale for Assessment</b>	
<b>Age</b>	Positive.	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2): positive impact on working age applicants and current employees.</p> <p>For service objectives (3 and 4) : positive for children and young people</p> <p>For service objective (5) – positive for all age groups, but particularly older residents who are more likely to suffer from poor health</p>	
<b>Disability</b>	Positive	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2), positive impact on applicants with a disability and employees with a disability.</p> <p>A significantly lower portion of the economically active cohort of Slough has a disability and there remain significant barriers for disabled people to access employment. The objective commits to improving inclusion for disabled employees and having a diverse and representative workforce.</p> <p>For service objectives (3) –positive impact on children and young people with SEND</p> <p>For service objective (5) disabled people often suffer significantly from multiple health inequalities. For example, the King’s Fund has found that during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic in England, 60 per cent of those who died from Covid-19 were disabled. People with learning disabilities were eight times more likely to die of Covid-19 than the general population.</p>	
<b>Gender Reassignment:</b>	Positive or neutral	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2) the workforce objectives support inclusion for all characteristics, including Tran’s employees and those whose gender is non-binary. Applicants and employees many comprise this group.</p> <p>Service Objectives (3-5) - whilst there are no specifically -targeted actions, service users (including children and young people) may comprise this group.</p>	

	<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership:</b>	Positive or Neutral	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2), the workforce objectives support inclusion for all characteristics. Applicants and employees many comprise this group.</p> <p>Service Objectives (3-5) - whilst there are no specifically - targeted actions, service users (including children and young people) may comprise this group.</p>
	<b>Pregnancy and maternity:</b>	Positive or Neutral	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2,) Employees - the workforce objectives support inclusion for all characteristics. Applicants and employees many comprise this group.</p> <p>Service Objectives (2, 3, 5) - whilst there are no specifically- targeted actions, service users (including children and young people) may comprise this group.</p>
	<b>Race:</b>	Positive	<p>For employment objectives (1 and 2) – positive impact on race. It is recognised that the council workforce should be reflective of the local slough communities and in particular, ethnic diversity should be improved at senior levels. These objectives should have a positive impact on those employees and applicants from ethnic groups currently under-represented in the workforce and particularly in senior positions.</p> <p>For service objectives ( , 5) Slough has inequalities in health between different population groups which need to be addressed – and there is a commitment to work with partners to target these. EG, The prevalence of hypertension and diabetes is significantly higher in Black/Black British and Asian/Asian British groups respectively. In over 50's and over 70's, the prevalence of both these chronic conditions is higher amongst BAME groups than the average for Slough and White ethnic groups.</p> <p>For service objective (3 and 4)) whilst disadvantage and gender may be a stronger predictor for poorer educational outcomes in children and young people, there is also disparity between different ethnic groups (correlated to disadvantage). Closing these gaps may lead to improved outcomes for some ethnic groups. Certain ethnicities may be over-represented in SEND and vulnerable children cohorts.</p>
	<b>Religion and Belief:</b>	Neutral or positive	<p>Employees - the workforce objectives support inclusion for all characteristics. Applicants and employees many comprise this group.</p> <p>Service Objectives - whilst there are no specifically- targeted actions, service users ( including children and young people ) may comprise this group</p>

<b>Sex</b>	Positive	<p>Employment Objectives (1 and 2). Whilst the council is 60% female, women are still over-represented in the lowest pay grades and under-represented in the most senior positions. These objectives should support great equality and inclusion for women in the workforce.</p> <p>Service objective (5) Men typically have poorer health outcomes than women. A major health inequality exists between men and women in terms of health life expectancy: the number of years a person can typically expect to live in full health without disabling illness or injury. Healthy life expectancy for men in Slough is 58.1 years– compared to a regional average of 65.5 years. Healthy life expectancy for women in Slough is 60.3 years, compared to a regional average of 65.9 years.</p> <p>Whilst service objectives (3 and 4) focus on improving outcomes for disadvantage and SEN/disability, there are clear gender gaps in areas such as educational outcomes. Focus on closing these gaps may lead to improved outcomes for boys.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation:</b>	Neutral or positive	<p>Employees - the workforce objectives support inclusion for all characteristics. Applicants and employees many comprise this group.</p> <p>Service Objectives - whilst there are no specifically- targeted actions, service users ( including children and young people ) may comprise this group</p>
<b>Other: those on low income</b>  <b>Care Experienced Young People/ Children Looked After</b>	Neutral /Positive  Positive	<p>Those on low income face multiple disadvantage. The focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged children will have a positive impact on those groups.</p> <p>Employment (objectives 1 and 2) – the council will improve monitoring of these groups in employment and job applications to improve inclusion and identify any barriers.</p> <p>Service Objectives 1 and 2 will focus on providing quality services and improving outcomes for these groups</p>

5.	<p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above? If so then are any particular groups affected more than others and why?</p> <p>There are no anticipated negative impacts.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Please state evidence sources and conclusions drawn (e.g. survey results, customer complaints, monitoring data etc.).</p> <p><a href="#">JSNA Project workstreams: JSNA skeleton (berkshirepublichealth.co.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Berkshire Observatory – Slough – Welcome to the Slough Observatory</a></p> <p><a href="#">Workforce equality data – Slough Borough Council</a></p> <p><a href="#">Education and early years equality data – Slough Borough Council</a></p> <p><a href="#">Slough Insights Data pack – Slough Borough Council</a></p> <p>JSNA 2023/ Berkshire Observatory local data Workforce Equality Data Report 2023 Service Equality Data – Education and Early years 2023 SBC Staff Survey 2023</p>

7. Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results, e.g. have the staff forums/unions/ community groups been involved?

Consultation on the workforce objectives ( 1 and 2) has been undertaken with the following staff network groups:

Slough Borough Council's Women's Network  
Employees with Disabilities Forum  
REACH ( Race equality and celebrating heritage) Network

Feedback was positive and in support of the objectives. Members emphasised the need to ensure regular monitoring to ensure progress was being made and communication of activities and progress with wider workforce.

The service objectives (3, 4, and 5) were part of wider consultation on the Corporate Plan. Full details of these can be found in the accompanying Cabinet Report to the Corporate Plan – September 2018.

The following equalities issues were highlighted:

Some respondents were concerned that the focus on children and young people would disadvantage elderly residents and other vulnerable residents, such as those with disabilities.

Five respondents raised the theme of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services.  
Eight respondents raised issues relating to support for parents.

One respondent highlighted the need to tackle inequality, by tailoring services to meet the needs of different communities. Another respondent commented on specific health challenges faced by those of Asian ethnicity in Slough.



8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>Promoting equality and diversity in employment and service delivery will promote good relations between people of different characteristics. Perceptions of fairness and inclusion in both access to public services and employment are crucial components of improving community cohesion.</p>
9.	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? For example what plans, if any, will be put in place to reduce the impact?</p> <p>N/A</p>
10.	<p>What plans do you have in place to monitor the impact of the proposals once they have been implemented? (The full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented). Please see action plan below.</p> <p>Key performance indicators have been identified against the equality objectives. These will be reviewed and amended as appropriate during the life of the objectives (4 years).</p>

<b>What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply</b>	✓
<b>Outcome 1: No major change required.</b> The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	X
<b>Outcome 2: Adjust the policy</b> to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better promote equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified? (Complete action plan).	
<b>Outcome 3: Continue the policy</b> despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality identified. You will need to ensure that the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact (see questions below). (Complete action plan).	
<b>Outcome 4: Stop and rethink</b> the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (Complete action plan).	

**Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation**

At this stage a timetabled Action Plan should be developed to address any concerns/issues related to equality in the existing or proposed policy/service or function. This plan will need to be integrated into the appropriate Service/Business Plan.

Action	Target Groups	Lead Responsibility	Outcomes/Success Criteria	Monitoring & Evaluation	Target Date	Progress to Date
<b>Name Christine Ford</b> <b>Signed: .....</b> (Person completing the EIA)  <b>Name: Same as above.....</b> <b>Signed: .....</b> ( Policy Lead if not same as above) <b>Date : 20.09.23</b>						

## Slough Demographic Profile

### Population

Slough's population in the 2021 census was 158,500.

### Age

Age groups	Number of residents	% of population
<b>0-15</b>	39,568	25.0%
<b>16-24</b>	16,587	10.5%
<b>25-39</b>	38,001	24.0%
<b>40-49</b>	24,839	15.7%
<b>50-59</b>	17,548	11.1%
<b>60-69</b>	11,754	7.4%
<b>70 and over</b>	10,201	6.4%

### Care experience

There is no data from the 2021 census on residents who have spent time in care. Slough has higher than average rates of Children in Need and children receiving Targeted Early Help and Child Protection Plans – 145 per 10,000 people aged 0-17, compared to regional average of 125. Slough has a lower rate of Children Looked After than the England average, but is similar to the South East average.

### Disability

Disability	Number of residents	% of population
<b>Disabled</b>	17,975	11.3%
<b>Not disabled</b>	140,523	88.7%

### Ethnicity

Broad ethnic groups	Number of residents	% of population
<b>Asian</b>	74,093	46.7%
<b>Black</b>	11,992	7.6%
<b>Mixed</b>	6,311	4.0%
<b>Other</b>	8,970	5.7%
<b>White</b>	57,134	36.0%

### Gender identity

Gender identity	Number of residents	% of population
Gender identity is the same as sex registered at birth	107,503	90.4%
Gender identity is different to sex registered at birth	1,081	0.9%
Not known	10,351	8.7%

This data applies only to residents aged 16 or over (118,930 residents).

### Marital and civil partnership status

Marital and civil partnerships status	Number of residents	% of population
Single	41,898	35.2%
Married	60,001	50.4%
Civil partnership	158	0.1%
Separated	2,925	2.5%
Divorced or dissolved civil partnership	8,799	7.4%
Widowed or surviving civil partner	5,151	4.3%

This data applies only to residents aged 16 or over (118,930 residents).

### Religion, faith, or belief

Religion, faith, or belief	Number of residents	% of population
No religion	20,726	13.1%
Christian	50,664	32.0%
Buddhist	776	0.5%
Hindu	12,343	7.8%
Jewish	85	0.1%
Muslim	46,661	29.4%
Sikh	17,985	11.3%
Other religion	716	0.5%
Not known	8,544	5.4%

**Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>% of population</b>
<b>Female</b>	80,005	50.5%
<b>Male</b>	78,495	49.5%

**Sexual orientation**

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Number of residents</b>	<b>% of population</b>
<b>Straight or Heterosexual</b>	104,943	88.2%
<b>Gay or Lesbian</b>	806	0.7%
<b>Bisexual</b>	1,095	0.9%
<b>All other sexual orientations</b>	412	0.3%
<b>Not known</b>	11,677	9.8%

The 2021 Census data applies only to residents aged 16 or over (118,930 residents).

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Update on procurement and contract management
<b>CHIEF OFFICER:</b>	Adele Taylor – Director of Finance/Section 151
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Clare Priest – Head of Commercial services
<b>WARD(S):</b>	All
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Lead Member for Financial Oversight, Council Assets, Procurement and Revenues & Benefits – Councillor Chahal

**1 Summary and Recommendation**

1.1 To update the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee on:

- the improvements to procurement and contract management at Slough Borough Council, since the Directions issued by the Secretary of State on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021
- implementation of the recommendations from the overview and scrutiny task and finish group on contract management
- further planned improvements to be made to the Commercial service for 2023/24

**Recommendations**

The Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment and make recommendations if appropriate.

**Reason**

1.2 To ensure that there is a fully embedded Commercial function at Slough Borough council, that continuously improves.

**Commissioner Review**

The Directions issued by the Secretary of State sought to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the procurement and contract management function which includes an independent review.

Procurement and contract management is an essential tool to deliver the Councils wider financial, social, economic, and environmental aims and as such the Commissioners are pleased to note the progress made to improve procurement and contract management, since the establishment of the service in April 2021.

We welcome the proposed development of a commercial strategy for procurement, which should align to the updated corporate plan and provide an indication of how the objectives will be achieved and deliver wider best value (as outlined above) to the Council and stakeholders, through its procurement and contract management activities. Consideration should also be given to the timing and approach to the independent review that will be required.

## **2 Report**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The purpose of the Commercial function is to ensure that the Council achieves best value for money for Slough's residents through procurement, contract management and commercial activities. This includes the need for transparent processes and ensuring that procurement activity is planned and undertaken in a timely manner.

### **Background**

- 2.2 The Commercial service was established in April 2021 following the Our Futures restructure, at that time the procurement function was outsourced to RSM an external consultancy company (since May 2019). The service lacked strategic oversight of procurement and contracts and there was no centralised contracts register in place. This was the cause of the lack of forward planning in procurement and contract management resulting in rushed procurement, missed exit opportunities and poor value for money as well as not being compliant with the local government transparency code.
- 2.3 On establishment of the service, the Group Manager – Commercial (now Head of Commercial services) implemented an improvement plan and the service has:
- Reviewed and improved the council's contract procedure rules. The revised rules improve decision making at the appropriate levels;
  - Improved procurement and contract management governance by ensuring that authorisation for procurement activities is at the correct level and any new contract that is entered to is scrutinised, to confirm that it is appropriate, best value for the council, and there is sufficient budget;
  - Implemented a training programme for staff to inform and engage them about their roles and responsibilities around the contract procedure rules and governance processes;
  - Implemented a centralised contracts register which has not been in place for 10 years. This has improved the management and oversight of contracts and allows the council to plan procurement activity more effectively;
  - Improved procurement pipeline planning to ensure that procurement activity is undertaken in a timely way;
  - Moved away from relying on expensive consultancy support from rsm, by recruiting to a permanent in-house team and procuring cheaper consultancy support to use for specialist procurement support where no there are no in house resources; and
  - Reviewed all council contracts to identify opportunities to drive savings and value for money through stopping unnecessary contracts, re-scoping existing contracts and identifying opportunities of combining contracts of a similar nature. As a result of the reviews, savings of £1.8m have been identified and built into the medium term financial strategy across 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.



2.4 The above improvements were reported to Cabinet in October 2022.

### **Developments in the last 12 months**

2.5 In the last 12 months, further improvements have been implemented and the service has:

- Embedded the training programme, 120 staff have been trained to date. The training ensures those who are involved in procurement are aware of the council's contract procedure rules, thresholds and governance processes;
- Developed a framework to ensure there is a co-ordinated and consistent approach to contract management, this has included learning from other local authorities and guidance from local partnerships;
- Completed procurement process mapping with local partnerships, this work was fed-back to the london procurement network in september and recommendations have been implemented, regarding streamlining of processes and procedures;
- Embedded sustainable improvement in the service by successfully recruiting a commercial strategy and analysis professional, procurement officer, contract management support lead and procurement category manager;
- Engaged in the london procurement network to share learning and best practice, including feedback on the experiences at slough borough council;
- Re-invigorated the berkshire procurement network, with an initial meeting held in september, the network aims to collaborate on regional opportunities and sharing best practice including the implications of the procurement legislation coming into effect in 2024;
- Piloted a social value policy in the procurement team, to ensure it is fit for purpose before rolling out more widely; and
- Engaged with small and medium enterprises at an sme event at arbour park to ensure sme's have visibility on how to do business with the council and oversight of its procurement forward plan.

### **Update on the recommendations of the CISC task and finish group**

2.6 The Head of Commercial services assisted an overview and scrutiny committee task and finish group on a review of contract management, the task and finish group made 12 recommendations which were reported to the committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 and approved by cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The recommendations are being implemented by the Commercial service, an update on each recommendation is as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** The start of the procurement process must be well managed, with clear outcomes and deliverables in the procurement specification, which include outcomes-based deliverables, gateways, monitoring, timelines, milestones and reporting.

and

**Recommendation 2:** When assessing tenders for work they should be scored against the outcomes and deliverables in the specification and the results retained as evidence.

The Commercial service works closely with service areas to plan timely procurement activity which is assisted by a robust forward plan, this ensures that the procurement

process is well managed and tenders are scored against the outcomes and deliverables in the specification. The service ensures that comprehensive records are maintained including a register of the progress of live procurements.

**Recommendation 3:** Where authority is delegated to Officers for the award of a high value/high risk contract, this should be in consultation with the lead member. Members must be properly consulted with evidence of decisions in writing and their agreement clearly sought.

The Council has updated its constitution with a list of significant officer decisions which require a formal decision report to be published. This includes contracts over the financial threshold of £180k and any decision exercised following specific delegation from Cabinet. Such record should record the consultation process and comments from the consultee. This takes place during briefings between the appropriate lead member and executive director. Where a record of the consultation is required for contract sealing purposes, an email confirming the outcome of the briefing between the lead member and executive director is requested.

**Recommendation 4:** Council staff must follow a proper governance process, as set out in the updated Contract Procedure Rules, including having an effective and up to date forward procurement plan.

The Council has an annual procurement plan agreed by Cabinet and this is updated throughout the year as required, with the last one approved at September cabinet.

**Recommendation 5:** Cabinet reports for procurement must set out the evidence base for a particular recommendation and have an effective options appraisal as part of the report. Consideration should be given to phasing procurement and reserving future decisions to Cabinet for high value / high impact commissioning.

All procurement activity that require a cabinet report, have an options appraisal, however it is important that a business case methodology is used and cabinet authority is sought at the most appropriate time during the procurement cycle. Where cabinet authority is not required, a full business case is developed which sets out case for change, the options appraisal and the cost/benefit of the proposal. In addition, the forward plan report to cabinet in April and September provides an outline of the procurement including deliverables and outcomes.

**Recommendation 6:** Contracts on the Council's contract register must be risk assessed to identify the scale of the risk for each contract. This should be done using a standardised risk assessment matrix that considers contract value, business value and impact, sourcing and contractual complexity, and performance. This will ensure that mitigations are put in place to proactively manage risks.

and

**Recommendation 7:** There must be a dedicated contract manager for high-value/impact contracts identified through the risk assessment process. This officer should be appropriately trained and should have responsibility for monitoring the contract and ensuring compliance with the contractual requirements. The officer should keep records of contract meetings and should convene formal monitoring meetings as required by the contract. The officer should raise any risks with the relevant Executive Director. The officer should have access to legal and finance advice, as required, to assist with their role.

These actions are underway as part of the development of the contract management strategy and toolkit, which will assist contract managers to appropriately contract manage high risk contracts. This is due to be in place by the end of October 2023.

**Recommendation 8:** Meaningful Key Performance Indicators must be developed for contracts and reviewed and followed up regularly at contract review meetings to ensure that any performance issues are discussed and challenged accordingly. For more significant commissioning arrangements, contract review meetings should include operational and strategic meetings with key officers in attendance. These meetings should be confidential to allow for full and frank discussion, with opportunity to agree minutes to be put in the public domain where updates are to be provided to a formal member meeting. If a contractor is invited to attend a formal Member meeting, consideration should be given to allowing this to take place in Part 2 to allow for a more detailed discussion about any issues.

and

**Recommendation 9:** A standardised framework for contracts should be implemented, which includes a contract management plan for each contract, tailored to take account of value and impact of the contract. This considers important mechanisms for the management of a contract, including roles, responsibilities and governance, dispute resolution, key performance indicators, and exit plans.

This action is underway as part of the development of the contract management framework. The council's contract management support lead is involved at the earliest stages of procurement of high risk contracts to ensure that appropriate KPI's are identified and a contract management plan is in place to monitor them. This is due to be in place by the end of March 2024.

**Recommendation 10:** When commissioning management consultancy, consideration should be given to the payment mechanism and if this is on a time and materials basis, there should be close monitoring of the value being delivered via this arrangement and consideration of alternatives, such as recruiting in-house resource.

Careful consideration is given to the commissioning of management consultancy and consideration of the options through development of the procurement business case that is scrutinised at procurement review board.

**Recommendation 11:** When commissioning services, ensure that decisions are informed by data, including benchmarking data where available, to demonstrate value for money for Slough's residents.

and

**Recommendation 12:** Ensure there is an effective mechanism to review commissioning activity, including reviewing whether the arrangement delivered on the intended strategic aims and capturing any lessons learned. Regular reports should be presented to CLT and the Lead Member responsible for contract management.

This is done through improvement of business cases and cabinet reporting. Business cases are scrutinised at internal strategic boards to ensure that they meet the intended strategic aims.

## Challenges

2.7 Whilst improvements have been made in the service it continues to address a number of challenges:

### **Recruitment**

2.7.1 Whilst it is encouraging for SBC to see that recent hires described above are either interim officers interested in becoming permanent members of staff or choosing to return to Slough Borough Council after working elsewhere, two procurement category manager roles remain vacant. This is a challenging space to recruit to and it is a national issue, not unique to SBC. The service continues to work with colleagues in Human Resources to develop innovative ways to attract candidates to Slough including active use of social media and networks to raise the Council's profile and encourage applications. If a further recruitment round is unsuccessful, it may be necessary to engage specialist agencies to assist with finding suitable candidates which will attract a small cost but mitigate the need to spend money on interim staff.

### Regional Networks

2.7.2 Historically there have been few opportunities to collaborate with other local authorities on joint procurements. There are practical and operational reasons for this, including the challenges in alignment of contract end dates to facilitate jointly procuring new contracts. It is hoped that the establishment of more regional networks will recognise more opportunities including identification of categories of procurement that lend themselves to collaboration on a regional level.

### Social value

2.7.3 As referenced above, the Commercial service have developed and implemented internally, a social value policy. The policy is currently being piloted to ensure that it is fit for purpose, the pilot commenced in August 2023 and is due to be completed by February 2024. At this point, the Strategic Procurement review board will review the outcome of the pilot and make the decision on formal roll out.

2.7.4 The policy sets out when social value should be considered in the tender process and what types of social value should be considered. It is important to ensure that social value applied, is measurable, links directly to the residents of Slough and included in the key performance indicators, monitored as part of contract management. The contract management support lead has been actively involved in development and implementation to ensure it is built into contract management plans as part of the contract management framework developed.

2.7.5 The council has developed a set of example social value questions to be used as reference during a tender for Council Services. These questions aim to assess the bidder's commitment to social value and community impact, aligning with the Council's corporate plan and strategic aims.

2.7.6 To facilitate the measurement of social value, providers will be asked for outcomes, KPI's and measures. Providers bidding for a service will be asked to provide examples of specific outcomes, key performance indicators (KPIs), and measurement methods that can be used to evaluate the bidder's responses to the social value questions in the tender:

2.7.7 These specific outcomes, KPIs, and measurement methods will provide the Council with quantifiable indicators to assess the bidder's commitment to social value and

community impact. Bidders should be prepared to provide data, evidence, and regular reporting on these aspects as part of their proposal and this will be monitored as per the contract management plan for the relevant contract.

### **Contract management**

2.7.8 Whilst the Commercial service is implementing a corporate contract management strategy and toolkit, it is important to ensure this is tailored to Slough Borough Council, and it does not take a “one size fits all” approach to all contracts. To ensure that resources are concentrated on the right contracts, contracts will be categorised and risk assessed, to ensure Directorate’s know which contracts to pay most attention to and time is spent on those that are highest risk to the council. In addition, options for management of the contract register on council systems is being addressed, and the service is considering utilising MSOffice tools to assist with this task. This is due to be in place by the end of March 2024.

### **Further improvements to be implemented in 2023/24**

2.8 In addition to the above, the service is undertaking improvement to processes and procedures which will be completed by the end of the financial year including:

- development of a commercial strategy which expands on the strategy developed in 2021, to include commercialisation and contract management, this will be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.
- driving up contract management standards by developing assurance processes, such as contract management plans.
- review of the contract procedures rules to ensure they are fit for purpose in relation to the council's governance arrangements, the service will also consider the impact of the procurement legislation coming into effect in 2024. The current legislation is planned to be in place by October 2024 (although this is subject to progression through parliament) so the revised rules will go to July or September Council in 2024.
- enhancements to internal systems and processes supported by the Procurement officer and IT systems.
- continuing the staff training programme, courses take place every two months with the next date programmed for 8 November 2023.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

2.9 The service has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators to determine whether improvements in the service are embedding in the council, see Appendix A. The key findings from this data is as follows:

- only 16% of procurement business cases sought an exemption during the first quarter of 2023/24 and none were rated Red. Most exemptions were because of demonstrable best interest, sole supplier or single tender action. Exemptions are tracked and monitored as a “corporate health” indicator.
- the largest contract values came from the former Place and Community directorate and this was due to tenders going out for the green waste contract and for the DSO leased fleet.
- the majority of savings were achieved through IT contracts where opportunities for making savings through contract re-procurement are

identified through the scope of new contracts and efficiencies identified as part of the modernisation programme.

- procurement are working closely with directorates to ensure that services are re-procured within their budget envelope.
- the majority of procurement is either through an external framework or open tender to ensure that best value is achieved.

### **3 Implications of the Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Financial implications**

3.1.1 The plans are supported by the key elements of the Council's Constitution most notably Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedural Rules.

#### **3.2 Legal implications**

3.2.1 The Council is under a general Duty of Best Value<sup>1</sup> to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness." The improvement of the Commercial function, will enable the Council to fulfil its best value duties. These arrangements will secure continuous improvement regarding economy, efficiency and effectiveness and overall value, including social value and will be considered in the procurement and contract management process.

#### **3.3 Risk management implications**

3.3.1 The Council takes a risk-based approach to the management of contracts. Contracts are risk assessed to ensure that those highest risk contracts have a robust contract plan in place, which is managed by the contract owner, and supported by the contract management support lead in the commercial team.

3.3.2 The commercial team uses the council's risk management framework to ensure that any risks of strategic importance are escalated to the directorate or corporate risk register and mitigating actions are managed accordingly.

#### **3.4 Environmental implications**

3.4.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising directly from this report.

#### **3.5 Equality implications**

3.5.1 The Best Value Statutory Guidance states that authorities should avoid "gold plating" the Equality Act 2010 and should not impose contractual requirements on private and voluntary sector contractors over and above the obligations in the Act. This includes seeking to remove unnecessary paperwork and obstacles to contract compliance thereby making it easier for small and medium firms and the voluntary sector to apply and bid for contracts, and lowering costs to taxpayers.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by s137 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)

### 3.6 Procurement implications

3.6.1 All procurement projects will consider the best procurement option and procurement route. This will ensure that best value is demonstrated in each procurement undertaken.

### 3.7 Workforce implications

3.7.1 The restructure of the Finance and Commercial Directorate, that took place in summer 2022 took into account the need for sufficient capacity to be built into the structure to ensure there is a team to lead and manage procurement and contract management.

### 3.8 Property implications

3.8.1 Property implications will be considered upon the letting of each contract.

## **4 Appendices**

'A' - Quarter 1 performance indicators

## **5 Background Papers**

None

## Appendix 'A' Quarter 1 Performance indicators

Quarter 1 20223/24					
Number of Procurements by Directorate	Totals Q1 2023/24				
Directorate	Number	Percentage	Value	Saving	Target
Strategy and Improvement	11		£ 668,121	£ 1,197,105	
Finance and Commercial	3		£ 1,863,811	£ -	
Place and Community	4		£ 4,111,070	£ -	
Housing and Property	9		£ 157,869	£ -	
People (Adults)	10		£ 2,454,932	£ 9,320	
People (Children)	0		£ -	£ -	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>		<b>£ 9,255,803</b>	<b>£ 1,206,425</b>	
Procurement approach			Value		
Contract Extension Request	0		£ -		
Exemption Request	6		£ 954,251		
Negotiated Procedure	0		£ -		
Request to Quote	0		£ -		
Request to Tender	5		£ 2,746,181		
Use of External Framework	9		£ 5,291,596		
Proforma	17		£ 263,775		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>		<b>£ 9,255,803</b>		
Number & Percentage of Red RAG'd exemptions	0	0%	£ -		0%
Number & Percentage of Amber RAG'd exemptions	4	67%	£ 853,251		40%
Number & Percentage of Green RAG'd exemptions	2	33%	£ 101,000		60%
Total	6	100%	£ 954,251		

Contract Exemptions - further details					
April					
Look Ahead direct award	Single tender action	Exceptional circumstances	People (Adults)	£ 138,750	Amber
YMCA direct award	Single tender action	Exceptional circumstances	People (Adults)	£ 83,250	Amber
SCVS	Demonstrable best interest	Required for a new model to be developed	People (Adults)	£ 473,251	Amber
May					
Colliers as managing agents on the HRA shops portfolio.	Direct award Demonstrable best interest	Linked to asset disposal	Housing and Property	£ 36,000	Green
Liquid logic LAS and LCS renewal	Direct award Sole Supplier	Clause 14.9a in the CPRs	Strategy and Improvement	£ 158,000	Amber
June					
Assistive technology	Direct award Sole Supplier	Specialist Consultancy Service Hampshire	People (Adults)	£ 65,000.00	Green



**Slough Borough Council**

**Report To:** Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
**Subject:** Forward Work Programme  
**Chief Officer:** Stephen Taylor, Monitoring Officer  
**Contact Officer:** Michael Edley, Scrutiny and Governance Officer  
**Ward(s):** All  
**Exempt:** No

**ANNEX A:**

**1. Summary**

1.1 This is the Forward work programme (Appendix A) for CISC.

**2. Recommendation**

Members are invited to make review the forward plan and consider any changes necessary in the light of new information/events.

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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

item	Priority Area, Reference / Directions	Topic / Issue	Purpose	Type of Scrutiny	Responsibility
	<p>Council-wide <b>Improvement and Recovery</b> monitoring following Government Directions.</p> <p>Financial sustainability; closure of long-term budget gap across the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and balanced financial forecast for 2023/24. <b>(Annex A, Paragraph 3a of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a>)</b></p> <p>Proper functioning of scrutiny. <b>(Annex A, Paragraph 3c of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a>)</b></p>	<p><b>Scrutiny Challenge – Quarterly Improvement and Recovery</b></p> <p><b>Budget Monitoring Q1 23/24 and Budget Outturn 22/23</b></p> <p><b>Revised Scrutiny Forward Work Programme</b></p>	<p>To receive a report – scrutinise key areas and monitor progress of actions relating to improvement and recovery.</p> <p>Strategic scrutiny and budget monitoring of 23/24 and 22/23 Outturn as this will inform the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 24/25 and beyond which will underpin the Council's budget proposals.</p> <p>To agree the revised CISC Forward Work Programme after Commissioners' feedback.</p>	<p>Holding to account – oversight, monitoring and scrutiny</p> <p>Holding to account – oversight, monitoring and scrutiny.</p> <p>Critical friend role.</p> <p>Forward Planning</p>	<p>Stephen Brown, Chief Executive</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement</p> <p>Adele Taylor, S151 Officer and Executive Director</p> <p>Alex Polak, Statutory Scrutiny Officer Kunwar Khan, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager</p>

# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 24 October 2023

<p>Implement an <b>ICT strategy that enables service delivery</b> and communications with residents.</p> <p>Improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the procurement and contract management function. (<b>Annex A, Paragraph 3e of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></b>)</p> <p>To meet the Council's <b>statutory responsibility</b> to publish equality information and objectives.</p>	<p><b>Direction Deep Dive on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ICT; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Procurement</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Council Decision-making (compliance and new objectives)</b></p>	<p>To receive a report about the Council's ICT and procurement (including contract management) functions as identified in the priority area/reference column by the Government and Commissioners.</p> <p>To receive a report providing assurance to CISC on the Council's specific duties under the Equality Act to help comply with the public sector equality duty. Public authorities must publish equality information at least once a year to show how they've complied with the equality duty; they must prepare and publish equality objectives at least every 4 years.</p>	<p>In-depth review of the progress against the directions. Holding to account – oversight, monitoring and scrutiny.</p> <p>Pre-decision scrutiny and policy development. Critical friend role.</p>	<p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement</p> <p>Clare Priest, Head of Commercial Services</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement</p>
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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 28 November 2023

4	<p>Financial sustainability; closure of long-term budget gap across the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and balanced financial forecast for 2023/24. <b>(Annex A, Paragraph 3a of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></b></p>	<p><b>Scrutiny of Council’s 2024/25 Budget setting process</b></p>	<p>To receive a report about the budget setting process 2024/25. Seeking assurance in line with Directions relating to finance, MTFS and budget. Final details of the item to be confirmed by finance.</p>	<p>Oversight, monitoring and policy development. Pre decision scrutiny, oversight and monitoring. Policy</p>	<p>Adele Taylor, Executive Director and S151 Officer</p>
5	<p><b>ASC CQC new inspection regime – The ASC assurance programme touches a number of key improvement and recovery areas.</b> CQC will place a lot of emphasis on the importance of good Leadership and Culture as well as on Customer Service and experience. The initial internal assessment suggested that this area requires attention and therefore a focussed T&amp;F can add value by reviewing the methodology and outputs from the ASC/CQC workstream.</p>	<p><b>Adult Social Care and the new CQC Regime – Report back from T&amp;F 1</b></p>	<p>To receive a report with recommendations from the ASC T&amp;F as the parent committee before it goes to Cabinet.</p>	<p>development; in-depth review and critical friend role.</p>	<p>T&amp;F Chair Marc Gadsby, Executive Director, Adult Social Care Amanda Halliwell, CQC Project Manager</p>

# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

**Chair:** Cllr Manku | **Statutory Scrutiny Officer:** Alex Polak | **Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager:** Kunwar Khan

6	<b>Improving public trust and engagement with residents to enable better service delivery as part of wider organisational change.</b>	<b>Launch T&amp;F 2 – Resident Engagement and Building Public Trust</b>	To agree topic and scope of the T&F work.	Sarah Hayward, Executive Director Strategy and Development Caroline Adlem, Head of Communications and Resident Engagement Cllr Manku – Chair of CISC
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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 4 January 2024

3	Council-wide Improvement and Recovery monitoring following Government Directions.	<b>Quarterly Scrutiny Challenge – Improvement and Recovery</b>	To receive a report – scrutinise key areas and monitor progress of actions relating to improvement and recovery.	Holding to account – oversight and monitoring	Stephen Brown, Chief Executive  Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement
4	Assurance that <b>HR function is fit for purpose</b>	<b>Deep Dive on Human Resources – Direction of travel and ‘fit for purpose’</b>	To receive a report providing assurance and progress ensuring that business support services such as HR are ‘fit for purpose’	Holding to account – oversight and monitoring.	Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement

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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 30 January 2024

3	To mitigate the risk of poor <b>CQC inspection</b> outcome for Adult Social Care (ASC) services.	<b>Adult Social Care Transformation Programme</b>	To scrutinise key areas and seek assurance that Adult Social Care Service is undertaking the necessary improvement work to reduce the risk of poor CQC inspection outcome.	Oversight, monitoring and critical friend. Policy development.	Marc Gadsby Executive Director, Adults (People)
4	Financial sustainability; closure of long-term budget gap across the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and balanced financial forecast for 2023/24. <b>(Annex A, Paragraph 3a of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a>)</b>	<b>Scrutiny of Council's Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25 (Capital and Revenue – Savings, Growth, EqIA, Risks and MTFS)</b>	To receive a report about the Council Draft Budget Plan 2024/25.	Pre decision scrutiny Critical friend and budget recommendations to Cabinet.	Adele Taylor, S151 Officer and Executive Director

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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24



Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

### 22 February 2024

	<p>Practice improvement for Children with SEND – <b>Ofsted</b></p> <p>Improving public trust and engagement with residents to enable better service delivery as part of wider organisational change.</p>	<p><b>Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).</b></p> <p><b>Report from the T&amp;F 2 (Resident engagement and building public trust) launched in October 2023.</b></p>	<p>Report on practice improvement for children with SEND – monitoring of actions taken and progress made to address the priorities identified by Ofsted and CQC in their inspection report</p> <p>Reporting progress to the parent committee.</p>	<p>Oversight and monitoring.</p> <p>In depth review; policy development and monitoring</p>	<p>Sue Butcher Executive Director – Children’s Services Chief Executive, Slough Children First</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement</p> <p>Chair of T&amp;F Cllr Manku, Chair of CISC</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director, Strategy and Improvement.</p>
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### 26 March 2024

1	<p><b>Ofsted inspection report and improvements in Children Services.</b> Participation/engagement is identified as an area of development by Ofsted.</p>	<p><b>Launch of Task and Finish Group 3 – Journey to Good – SCF</b></p>	<p>To provide input to develop community involvement plan and engagement in improving children services.</p>	<p>Policy development and critical friend role.</p>	<p>Sue Butcher Executive Director – Children’s Services, Chief Executive, Slough Children First.</p> <p>Chair of CISC, Cllr Manku</p>
2	<p>Implementation of an estates strategy to make clear how the Council will use its assets to enable service delivery. <b>(Annex B, 2b of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a>)</b></p>	<p><b>Scrutiny of Council’s Estate Strategy and its implementation</b></p>	<p>To receive a report on the implementation of the Council’s estates strategy to review how the Council is using its assets to enable service delivery; value for money; impact on resident and council’s finances – what external validation or checks are in place; what have been/are the key challenges and opportunities.</p>	<p>Oversight, monitoring and critical friend.</p>	<p>Patrick Hayes, Executive Director Housing and Property</p>

# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

<p>23 Apr il 20 24</p>	<p>Council-wide Improvement and Recovery monitoring following Government Directions.</p> <p><b>Statutory scrutiny responsibility</b> for crime and disorder functions.</p>	<p><b>Quarterly Scrutiny Challenge –Improvement and recovery progress</b></p> <p><b>Crime and Disorder/Policing Report</b> (Timing TBC, subject to all Member briefing)</p>	<p>To scrutinise key areas and gain wider insight into progress of actions relating to improvement and recovery.</p> <p>To receive a report with a view to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.</p>	<p>Oversight, monitoring and policy development.</p> <p>Monitoring and oversight. Annual attendance at scrutiny.</p>	<p>Stephen Brown, Chief Executive</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director for Strategy and Improvement</p> <p>Superintendent Lee Barnham</p> <p>Matthew Barber, Police and Crime Commissioner</p>
<p><b>Ma y 20 24 on wa rds</b></p>	<p><b>Annex A, Paragraph 6 of <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></b></p>	<p><b>Governance and operation of subsidiary companies</b></p>	<p>To receive a report demonstrating that Council has compiled or adequately progressing with the letter and spirit of the Direction 6 relating to review by Authority of its companies, including any subsidiaries but excluding Slough Children First (SCF). For</p>	<p>Oversight and Monitoring.</p>	<p>Patrick Hayes, Executive Director Housing and Property</p>

**Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)  
Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24**

**Chair:** Cllr Manku | **Statutory Scrutiny Officer:** Alex Polak | **Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager:** Kunwar Khan

	<p><b>Annex A, Paragraph 7 of</b> <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></p> <p><b>Annex A, Paragraph 3f of</b> <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></p>	<p><b>Data and Insight Report</b></p> <p><b>Progress against Directions: Scrutiny of ICT and HR improvements progress</b></p> <p><b>Quarterly Corporate Performance Report</b></p>	<p>those companies that it is agreed to continue, make sure that the Directors appointed by the Authority are appropriately skilled in either technical or company governance matters to make sure each Board functions effectively. For those companies which it is determined not to continue with in this form, to establish a plan to internalise, close or sell as appropriate.</p> <p>To appraise and reassure the Committee as to what steps have been taken to enable evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions to enable more effective decision making.</p> <p>To review and scrutinise progress relating to HR and</p>	<p>Oversight and monitoring.</p> <p>Oversight and monitoring.</p>	<p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director for Strategy and Improvement</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director for Strategy and Improvement.</p>
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**Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)  
Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24**

**Chair:** Cllr Manku | **Statutory Scrutiny Officer:** Alex Polak | **Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager:** Kunwar Khan

	<p><b>Monitoring of Corporate Performance</b></p>	<p><b>Organisational Culture Change Programme –</b> <i>Flexibility to be taken as a report or a T&amp;F.</i></p>	<p>ICT directions/commentary/report by Commissioners.</p> <p>To receive a quarterly performance report in order to review and scrutinise council's performance. A report to the main item or a T&amp;F – TBC.</p>	<p>Oversight and monitoring.</p> <p>Policy development. Critical friend role.</p>	<p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director for Strategy and Improvement.</p> <p>Sarah Hayward, Executive Director for Strategy and Improvement.</p>
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# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC) Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

## Appendix 1 to Scrutiny Forward Work Programme

Task and Finish Group Topics 'Taxi-rank' in Priority Order	
Topic / Issue	Comments
Adult Social Care (ASC) Assurance Programme/New CQC regime	<p>The ASC assurance programme touches a number of key improvement and recovery areas.</p> <p>CQC will place a lot of emphasis on the importance of good Leadership and Culture as well as on Customer Service and experience.</p> <p>The initial assessment suggests opportunity for value to be added through scrutiny/T&amp;F. Timely scrutiny engagement, through this Task and Finish Group will help assure that the service is focussing on the right priorities and making required improvements. This will also offer critical friend challenge around assurance programme and delivery of the outcomes through an action plan. Starting in September 2023.</p>
Resident Engagement and Building Trust	<p>Building and maintaining public trust through resident engagement is an important component for SBC. Agreement in principle with the service.</p>
Journey to Good – Slough Children First	<p>Participation/engagement is identified as an area of development by Ofsted so a T&amp;F can add real value.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Group focussing on developing community and faith groups involvement in improving children services. This will ensure that</p>

# Appendix A: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

## Forward Work Programme (FWP) 2023/24

Chair: Cllr Manku | Statutory Scrutiny Officer: Alex Polak | Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager: Kunwar Khan

	<p>enhanced partnerships bring different skillsets and experiences. Agreement in principle with the service.</p>
<p>Organisational Culture Change Programme – <i>Flexibility to be taken as a report to the main committee if it was felt more appropriate.</i></p>	<p>Paragraphs 5 of the Commissioners’ letter of 14 August 2023 as well as <a href="#">Government Directions to Slough on 1 September 2022</a></p> <p>Culture and behaviour change Task and Finish Group to review progress and provide input to comply with implementation of a programme of cultural change to rebuild trust between officers and members, to the satisfaction of the Commissioners. This should make sure both Members and Officers understand the scale of the challenge and their respective roles in driving improvement and the way in which the Authority and its activities are regulated; governed and the way in which this is monitored, and breaches rectified. Introduction/review of (a credible and comprehensive) culture change programme with targets and measures of success (5f). Timing and the form to be confirmed in consultation with the service.</p>
<p><i>Any appropriate deep dive items can be suggested as a proposal for a future T&amp;F Group subject to the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Alignment with the Directions/Council’s Corporate Plan (Improvement and Recovery Plan);</i></li> <li>• <i>Slough’s progress and direction of travel;</i></li> <li>• <i>Commitment and support from the CISC Chair and relevant Executive Director to enable effective and efficient delivery to add value – ‘But-For/So-What’ test.</i></li> <li>• <i>Statutory guidance/constitution/remit.</i></li> </ul>	<p>TBC.</p>

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**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2023/24**  
**CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT SCRUTINY PANEL**

	<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>27 June</b>	<b>25 July</b>	<b>26 Sept</b>	<b>24 Oct</b>	<b>28 Nov</b>	<b>04 Jan</b>	<b>30 Jan</b>	<b>22 Feb</b>	<b>26 March</b>
1.	Manku (Chair)	P	P	P						
2.	Shaik(Vice-Chair)	P	P	P						
3.	Escott	AP	P	P						
4.	Hulme	P	P	P						
5.	Iftakhar	P	P	P						
6.	Mann	P	P	P						
7.	Matloob	P	P	P						
8.	Mohindra	P	P	P						
9.	O'Kelly	P	P	P						
10.	Stedmond	P	P	AP						
11. <sup>1</sup>										

**P** = Present for whole meeting      **As** =Apologies, substituted  
**P\*** = Present for part of meeting      **S** = Substitute  
**Ap** = Apologies given                      **C** = Co-optee  
**Ab** = Absent, no apologies given

<sup>1</sup> Co-optees

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