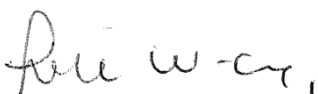


Date of issue: Friday, 8 October 2021

MEETING	CABINET	
	Councillor Swindlehurst	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans
	Councillor Akram	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture & Communities
	Councillor Anderson	Sustainable Transport & The Environment
	Councillor Bains	Regulation & Public Protection
	Councillor Carter	Customer Services & Corporate Support
	Councillor Hulme	Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills
	Councillor Mann	Housing, Highways, Planning & Place
	Councillor Pantelic	Social Care & Public Health
DATE AND TIME:	MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2021 AT 6.30 PM	
VENUE:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NICHOLAS PONTONE	07749 709 868

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.



JOSIE WRAGG
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
1.	Declarations of Interest	-	-
	<i>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.</i>		
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th September 2021	1 - 10	-
3.	Library Services Consultation	11 - 80	All
4.	Bus Service Improvement Plan	81 - 144	All
5.	Professional Services Framework (Place)	145 - 152	All
6.	Covid-19 Decisions Update	153 - 162	All
7.	References from Overview & Scrutiny	To Follow	All
8.	Notification of Key Decisions	163 - 176	All

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.

Emergency procedures: The fire alarm is a continuous siren. If the alarm sounds Immediately vacate the premises by the nearest available exit at either the front or rear of the Chamber and



AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

proceed to the assembly point: The pavement of the service road outside of Westminster House, 31 Windsor Road.

Covid-19: To accommodate social distancing there is significantly restricted capacity of the Council Chamber and places for the public are very limited. We would encourage those wishing to observe the meeting to view the live stream. Any members of the public who do wish to attend in person should be encouraged to contact the Democratic Services Officer.

Key decisions shown in bold.

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 20th September, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Akram (Vice-Chair), Anderson, Bains, Carter (until 7.49pm), Hulme, Mann and Pantelic

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Ali, Gahir and Strutton

PART 1

21. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

22. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th July 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26th July 2021 be approved as a correct record.

23. Adult Social Care Provider Services

The Lead Member for Social Care and Public Health and the Associate Director of Adult Social Care Operations summarised a report on the review of adult social care provider services. The recommendations included the closure of five provider services for older people and people with learning disabilities currently operated by the Council at Lavender Court, Respond, Priors Day Service, Phoenix Day Service and The Pines Day Service. The report set out the feedback from a recent public consultation and the rationale for the recommended option.

The Lead Member stated that the review aimed to improve services and meet the Council's financial obligations. It was recognised that the Council had responsibilities, and a commitment, to meet the needs of vulnerable people and their families but that this need not be achieved by directly delivering services. The centres had already been significantly disrupted by Covid-19 and people had changed the way they accessed services. The Cabinet noted the options, financial and legal implications. It was noted that there were 107 people currently registered to use the services and the closures would directly impact 61 staff. The annual saving was projected to be £1.1m. If the Cabinet agreed to close the centres the needs of service users would be reassessed with more flexible and personalised support provided. The feedback from the consultation and comments of the People Scrutiny Panel were considered, including a petition requesting the Council not to close the centres which had received more than 800 signatures.

Lead Members had a detailed discussion on the proposal and asked a number of questions of the Associate Director to ensure the costs and savings estimates were robust; to seek more information about alternative provision to be assured that service users needs could be adequately met through services not directly operated by Slough Borough Council; the impacts on carers and families of services users; the likely travel distances and costs to

alternative provision; the timescale for carrying out the assessments of service users; and the likely number of redundancies if closures were agreed. Officers responded to each of the points raised and commented that the Council had to balance its statutory duties with its financial strategy in the future. The services recommended for closure were some of few remaining provider services and the strategy for adult social care was to continue to move away from being the direct service provider to focus on strategic commissioning and meeting the needs of people in other ways which could include accessing activities or services from other providers such as community groups and charities, using personal assistants, direct payments or accessing other support networks. In relation to the staff, redeployment opportunities would be sought although it was recognised that there would be a significant number of redundancies.

Speaking under Rule 30 Councillor Strutton commented on a number of aspects of the proposal and expressed his concerns about the impact on service users and the fact that some of the facilities had never reopened following refurbishment. He indicated that he had submitted detailed questions to which a response was awaited and would be provided by Officers outside of the meeting. Officers responded to the points raised by Councillor Strutton. Any specific queries about reassessment of individual cases should be raised through the proper channels.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report. To be provided with assurance that the needs of service users was been adequately met in the future it was agreed that the Cabinet and the People Scrutiny Panel was also receive an update in December or January which should include details of any additional transport costs to alternative provision and the staffing implications. Finally, it was agreed that under the delegated provided to implement the decision that there be budget flexibility, if required, to ensure individual needs could be appropriately met through the transitional period.

Resolved –

(a) That the following Provider Services currently operated by the Council be closed:

- Lavender Court
- Respond (short-term breaks service)
- Priors Day Service
- Phoenix Day Service
- The Pines Day Service

(b) That:

- i. the needs and aspirations of all people who use the services currently be reviewed. To identify alternative options, building on people's strengths, across the provider market and through direct payments.

- ii. flexible and more personalised support be delivered, relying less on providing activities or services that are based at the day centres.
 - iii. individual choice and independence through accessing services that were being delivered by charities, community groups and other organisations in the voluntary and independent sector.
- (c) That the implementation of these recommendations be delegated to the Executive Director of People (Adults), in consultation with the lead member for social care and public health.
- (d) That the comments of the People Scrutiny Panel from its meeting on 13th September 2021 be noted, including the petition requesting the Council not to close the day centres.
- (e) That the Cabinet and People Scrutiny Panel receive an update when the assessment process of service users had been completed to ensure that appropriate alternatives were in place to meet their needs. The update should also include details of transport costs to alternative provision and the redeployment opportunities for staff.
- (f) That there be budgetary flexibility available through the delegation in resolution (c), to continue to meet service users needs through the transitional period.

(Councillor Carter left the meeting)

24. Slough Local Plan - Green Belt Consultation

The Lead Member for Housing, Highways, Planning and Place and the Planning Policy Manager introduced a report that sought approval to commence a consultation on the release of Green Belt land for family housing. The consultation was part of the wider work to develop the Local Plan.

The Lead Member emphasised that consultation was the start of the process and that no decisions on specific sites had been taken. It was recognised that Green Belt release was a sensitive issue and residents were strongly encouraged to respond to the consultation. The Officer highlighted that approximately 90% of new housing units in Slough in recent years had been flats by nature of the sites and developments coming forward. The provision of more family housing was an important priority for the Council to provide a mix of housing in Slough. Any release of Green Belt land would require exceptional reasons.

The Cabinet agreed the consultation and discussed some specific issues relating to some of the sites detailed in the report. Each site had been categorised following an initial assessment although it was recognised a significant amount of technical work would be needed and considered alongside the results of the public consultation. Lead Members commented

Cabinet - 20.09.21

on the importance of securing affordable provision and prioritising local people.

In response to a question from Councillor Strutton under Rule 30 it was confirmed that the Green Belt consultation was not connected to the need to sell land as a result of the Council's financial position.

At the conclusion of the discussion the recommendations were agreed, subject to an amendment to the title of the portfolio holder in (b) and (c) which should be the Lead Member for Housing, Highways, Planning & Place.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Draft Consultation Document in Appendix A be agreed as the basis for public consultation on the proposed release of Green Belt sites for family housing.
- (b) That delegated powers be given to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, to make minor changes to the document.
- (c) That delegated powers be given to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, to make all of the necessary arrangements for a (minimum) six week public consultation exercise on the proposed release of Green Belt sites for family housing.

25. Covid-19 Decisions Update

Details of the significant decisions taken by officers were noted by the Cabinet and ratified insofar as they related to Executive functions, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Significant Decisions taken by Silver as set out in Appendix A be ratified.

26. Recovery and Renewal Plan - Achieving Financial Sustainability

The Leader of the Council and the Section 151 Officer introduced a report that set out the current plans for the Council's recovery and renewal towards a position of financial sustainability following the issuing of the s114 notice on 2nd July 2021.

The Cabinet considered the revised version of the report and appendix issued by the Executive Board on 20th September, as published in the Supplementary Agenda, which superseded the version of the report in the

original agenda pack. The Recovery and Renewal Plan would be referred to Council on 23rd September 2021.

The report explained the approach that would be taken to address the severe financial challenges the Council faced. The current figures indicated a current balance deficit in excess of £200m during the period 2016/17 to 2026/27 if action was not taken. The plan recognised that in order to focus resources on the most vulnerable residents and corporate priorities, fundamental change would be needed which would redefine the role of the Council. A new 5 year plan would be produced for approval by Council in May 2022. The approach would include service reviews, ensure statutory services were being delivered in the most cost effective way, reducing staffing levels, selling the majority of accumulated assets and reducing the size of the capital programme. High level service reviews across the Council would be carried out by Lead Members and Directors by 31 October 2021 to be followed by detailed work on radical service reviews by May 2022. It was proposed that a 'zero based budgeting' approach be taken from 2023/24.

The Leader summarised the intensive work that had been taking place over the summer with Lead Members & Directors making good progress in closing the budget gaps for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and supporting the work to strengthen financial processes and governance. The Cabinet welcomed the clarity and focus that the revised Recovery and Renewal Plan provided and reiterated its commitment to implement the plan and take the decisions necessary to address the financial challenges. The plan provided a much clearer sense of direction and ambition for the Council.

Lead Members highlighted the importance of engaging residents and partners in the process over the coming months and highlighted the opportunities to reassess corporate priorities and 'reimagine' service provision.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton commented on various aspects of the plan and asked a number of questions which the Section 151 Officer and Leader responded to. These included clarification on the value of the Council's assets and proportion that would need to be disposed of. It was noted that a report on this issue would be considered later on the agenda but it was confirmed that that the Council had assets currently valued at £1.2bn and that assets were revalued on a rolling basis. Assurance was provided the processes were in place to achieve Best Value in the disposal of assets.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet agreed to recommend the Recovery and Renewal Plan to full Council on 23rd September 2021.

Resolved – That the revised report and appendix as published prior to the meeting in the Supplementary Agenda be considered and:

- (a) That the plans being developed for the recovery and renewal of Slough Borough Council as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

- (b) That the timelines set out in this report to achieve the ambitious timescales set out in the Council's recovery and renewal plan be noted.
- (c) That the current plans for the Council's recovery and renewal plan be referred to full Council on 23rd September 2021.

27. Debt Repayment/Asset Disposal Strategy

The Section 151 Officer introduced a report that sought Cabinet to consider and approve a Debt Repayment Strategy and to ask Officers to conduct a procurement exercise to obtain the support of external organisations to assist the Council with the programme of asset disposals over the next five years.

The Cabinet recognised that an orderly programme of asset disposals was required to improve the Council's financial position by realising capital receipts which could be used firstly to finance any Capitalisation Directions that may be received from Government and secondly to repay existing external debt. The report highlighted that if capital receipts of circa £600m could be realised over the next five years it could finance a Capitalisation Direction and reduce borrowing from its current level of £760m to circa £335m by 2027. The aim was to make borrowing manageable and reduce pressure on the revenue budget to support services.

Lead Members discussed the historic financial practices that had contributed to the current position since 2016, including an apparent change in approach to borrowing and treasury management reporting that had not been approved by Members. Assurance was sought that the improvements to financial leadership and governance would ensure such a situation could not occur in the future. The Section 151 Officer stated that the new finance team was committed to implementing the Finance Action Plan to be considered elsewhere on the agenda which would address the issues raised. Members would approve any policy changes annually in the treasury management strategy and a six-monthly report would be provided to Cabinet to monitor progress.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton asked about the potential disposal of Housing Revenue Account assets, the total proportion of assets likely to be disposed of and the feasibility of disposing of the required scale of assets. The Leader and Section 151 Officer responded to the points raised and highlighted that the report in front of Cabinet set out the overall approach that would be taken and that all assets would be reviewed as part of the agreed strategy.

The Cabinet agreed the debt repayment strategy and the recommendation to bring in external expertise to assist the Council in implementing the required disposals.

Resolved –

- (a) That a Debt Repayment Strategy be implemented with immediate effect;
- (b) That Officers conduct a procurement exercise in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, to obtain the support of external organisations who can assist the Council with a programme of asset disposals to generate capital receipts;
- (c) That it be agreed that income generated from asset disposals would be used in the first instance to finance any Capitalisation Directions received from the Government, and that additional sale proceeds thereafter would be used to repay existing external debt.

28. Financial Action Plan

The Section 151 Officer introduced a report that provided the first in a series of updates on work planned and being undertaken to improve all aspects of the Council's financial position.

The report set out the current position and work underway in relation to the accounts, budget, review of companies, internal audit, systems, the finance team and financial management. All projects in the plan had nominated finance team leaders and project plans. In relation to the accounts it was noted that there was an aspiration that three sets of accounts for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 would be prepared by March 2022, although it was recognised this was a challenging target given the volume of work required. The management team and Lead Members had been working intensively over the summer to close the revenue budget gap for 2021/22 and 2022/23 with proposals due to be considered by scrutiny in November. Progress had been made with regards to the capital programme and this would be presented to Members when completed. Work was well underway to cleanse outstanding internal audit recommendations and ensure they have been properly responded to and closed. The short and longer term plans to strengthen the finance team were also noted.

In response to a question from Councillor Strutton under Rule 30 the action being taken to improve the effectiveness of the management and reporting of the Council's subsidiary companies was noted.

The Cabinet welcomed the action being taken to strengthen financial management and agreed to recommend the report to Council on 23rd September 2021.

Resolved –

- (a) That the current position of the financial recovery work be noted; and
- (b) That the report be recommended to Council.

29. Performance & Projects Report - Quarter 1 2021/22

The Cabinet received a presentation on the latest performance information for the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year to the end of June 2021, as measured by the corporate balanced scorecard indicators and updates on key projects.

Covid-19 continued to impact on certain performance measures. Fifteen key performance indicators had been assigned RAG ratings of which seven were 'green', five 'amber'; and three 'red'. The report set out performance improvements in several areas including the average street cleanliness inspection score; increased number of licenses for Houses of Multiple Occupation; a reduction in the number of children requiring repeat Child Protection Plans; and a rise in the proportion of 40-74 year olds receiving NHS health checks, which had been achieved following an innovative approach to link checks to the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Areas where performance had deteriorated included the physical activity rates of residents; the proportion of household waste sent for recycling due to a reduction in garden waste collected during the winter; and the fact the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation remained high. Unemployment remained a challenge as the economy recovered from the pandemic and the Cabinet asked that ward level data on employment trends be circulated to Lead Members. A number of other specific issues were raised including the attainment gap in Early Years. Members asked for a briefing note on Universal Credit figures for Slough.

Target setting was problematic for certain indicators following Covid-19. Targets for four indicators – direct payments, temporary accommodation, Business Rates and Council Tax collection – had not yet been set, although performance continued to be measured. The Cabinet also considered and noted the progress made on key projects in the portfolio.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had discussed the report at its meeting held on 16th September and Officers would be responding to various detailed issues raised and requests for further information.

At the conclusion of the discussion the performance and projects report was noted.

Resolved – That the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard and the progress status of the gold projects be noted.

30. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitor Report - Quarter 1 2021/22

The Section 151 Officer summarised a report that set out the estimated forecast position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA),

Cabinet - 20.09.21

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the Capital Programme to the end of June 2021.

The Cabinet noted the considerable work that had been undertaken during this period to verify the 2021/22 budget position and start to address the wide range of financial issues set out in the s114 notice and subsequent reports to Cabinet and Council. The current forecast for the in year position was an overspend of £5.575m, which was an improvement of £1.325m on the previous period. The Cabinet noted the update on DSG and HRA and also noted that work was commencing on the collection fund with an anticipated completion date of 31 October. In view of the scale of work ongoing and to be completed, there was uncertainty in the forecasts and they were likely change from the position reported at the end of first quarter.

The Cabinet noted the report.

Resolved – That the current management position on the 2021/22 accounts be noted:

- (a) The council's forecast cumulative deficit and improvement as at the end of June 2021/22 of £1.325m;
- (b) The forecast General Fund revenue position for 2021/22 as at the end of June 2021 was a £5.575m overspend;
- (c) The progress towards the 2021/22 savings programme;
- (d) The work being done by all parties across the Council to verify the savings identified in the 21/22 budget and action being taken to mitigate the budget gap in the current financial year by 30/9/21;
- (e) The current DSG cumulative deficit was £23.775m and in-year forecast as at the end of June 2021/22 was £4.885m deficit.
- (f) The current forecast spend on Transformation to deliver savings;
- (g) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was forecast to spend to budget for as at the end of June 2021;
- (h) Approved the capital budgets carry forward from 2020/21;
- (i) Noted that the current capital programme was unaffordable, and a number of schemes were being reviewed to determine whether they could be stopped or their scope reduced.
- (j) Noted that funding assumptions in some schemes that

had been included in the capital programme as funded from capital receipts had been updated.

- (k) Noted the forecast capital spend for 2021/22, pending review of the programme.
- (l) Noted that the capital schemes that had been missed in the 2021/22 budget process would be passed to Council for approval in November 2021.
- (m) Noted that a number of capital schemes in the programme had already commenced without business cases coming to Cabinet for approval. These would come to future Cabinet meetings for retrospective decisions as financial governance was improved.

31. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The comments of the People Scrutiny Panel on the Provider Services Review were noted in considering the report elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no other references from Overview & Scrutiny.

32. Notification of Key Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Key Decisions published on 20th August 2021 which set out the key decisions expected to be taken by Cabinet over the next three months.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Key Decisions be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.31 pm and closed at 9.43 pm)

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	18 th October 2021
SUBJECT:	Library Services Consultation
CHIEF OFFICER:	Richard West
CONTACT OFFICER:	Liz Jones
WARD(S):	All
PORTFOLIO:	Cllr Hulme (Children’s Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills) Cllr Akram (Leisure, Culture & Communities)
KEY DECISION:	YES
EXEMPT:	NO
DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN:	YES
APPENDICES:	<i>A – Library Service Needs Assessment & appendices</i> <i>B – Library Services Equality Impact Assessment</i> <i>C – Library Services Consultation paper</i> <i>D – Library Services Consultation questions</i>

1 Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out the process that the council will undertake to carry out a review of the public library services offered to the public. The Council has to ensure that this service is fit for the future, is affordable and remains comprehensive and efficient.
- 1.2 Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the Council is required to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. Guidance and case law has determined that if any changes are made to how a library service is delivered, the council must follow a fair process, and this includes considering local needs and working with the public when devising a new way of delivering services.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the contents of the Library Services Needs Assessment 2021 set out in Appendix A and the recommendations contained within it be noted.
- (b) That the options for future Library Service delivery set out in paragraph 4 Appendix C be agreed.

- (c) That a public consultation on the future delivery of library services, as set out in Appendices C and D be agreed.
- (d) That Delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Customer and Communities, following consultation with the Lead Member for Children’s Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills and the Lead Member for Leisure, Culture & Communities to undertake the consultation and prepare a final business case for the future delivery of library services.
- (e) That it be noted that a report will be brought back to Cabinet in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 recommending a proposal for the future delivery of library services.

2 Report

- 2.1 Library services are a statutory service delivered by local authorities under the legal duty described in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. This duty requires councils to deliver a “comprehensive and efficient” library service. Case law has determined that if any changes are made to how a library service is delivered, the council must follow a fair process, and this includes considering local needs and working with the public when devising a new way of delivering services.
- 2.2 Slough’s library services help the Council meet a number of priority outcomes described in the “Five Year Plan”.
 - 2.2.1 Priority 1: Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy, and successful
70% of items borrowed from our 4 main library buildings and online borrowing are for children and young people. We also have 3 satellite libraries in Children’s Centres. Our library service introduces children to the joy of reading for pleasure, improves levels of literacy and encourages parents to engage positively with their children through shared reading experiences.
 - 2.2.2 Priority 2: Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
Library services offer a range of services and activities that decrease loneliness and improves social networks for residents. These include stocking self-help publications, through informal socialising to specific reading-based activities to improve mental health.
 - 2.2.3 Priority 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work, and stay
Our library service offers access to public computers as well as staff acting as digital “ambassadors” supporting residents to enter and navigate around the digital landscape. This work together with volunteering opportunities in the service and activities to improve self-esteem and confidence supports work to help residents access and stay in work.
- 2.3 Over the past 5 years there have been changes to our library service (e.g., the opening of The Curve), changes to how residents use the library service (e.g., decline in visits to library building and an increase in online access) and changes to the council’s finances which mean now is an appropriate time to review how the service is delivered to make sure it is fit for the future.
- 2.4 Needs Assessment: The Library and Hub service has undertaken a Needs Assessment (Appendix A) that considers Slough’s demographics, current library

service usage and the national context to consider in relation to the delivery of library services. The Assessment makes three recommendations:

- Ensure that library services are affordable and deliver value for money
- Ensure library services are accessible and meet local needs
- Support and promote good use of technology including digitalisation of services where appropriate

2.5 Equality Impact Assessment: The Service also carried out a baseline Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (Appendix B) which considered the potential impact of some changes on specific groups with protected characteristics. This EIA will need to be reviewed and the suggested action plan re-written to take the results of the public consultation into account.

2.6 Consultation paper: Based on both the Needs Assessment and EIA a Library Service Consultation paper has been produced which suggests a number of key issues the council should consider when deciding how best to deliver a comprehensive and efficient library service in the future. This is appended at Appendix C. The consultation also proposes 5 possible models for how a future library service could be delivered.

2.7 Key considerations: None of the proposed considerations will be looked at in isolation. In the public consultation we are asking respondents to prioritise how important each one is for the Council to consider (we also ask consultees to suggest any other principles that they think we should also consider when planning a future library service). The 7 considerations are:

2.7.1 Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new hard copy books is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.

2.7.2 Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new eResources is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.

2.7.3 Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently. This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.

2.7.4 Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.

2.7.5 Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.

2.7.6 Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.

2.7.7 Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line.

2.8 Models of delivery: Taking the seven considerations into account the Consultation paper suggests 5 models for future service delivery. Within the paper each model is described together with its possible impact and mitigations that could be implemented

to reduce the negative impacts. The public consultation asks consultees to tell us their preferred three models. The models are:

- 2.8.1 Reduce the money available to spend on buying publications (both hard copy and eResources).
 - 2.8.2 Keep all the main library buildings open but reduce the opening and staffed hours at Langley and Cippenham and reduce the staffed hours at The Curve and Britwell libraries.
 - 2.8.3 Close both Langley and Cippenham library buildings but maintain the staffing and opening hours at The Curve library and at Britwell library.
 - 2.8.4 Keep all library buildings but reduce the hours they are open, the hours they are staffed, and the space dedicated to the library. Attract other users to rent space in the library building alongside the reduced library (co-location).
 - 2.8.5 Move all library services out of the current main library buildings and re-locate services to be delivered from a range of other locations (and on-line) across the borough.
- 2.9 Consultation process: There will be a public consultation for 12-weeks about these proposals. All respondents will be asked to complete an on-line survey either on their own IT equipment or using the publicly available IT at libraries. There will be a number of virtual and face-to-face consultation events held by the Library and Hubs team for residents to attend. Information and guidance will also be available at the libraries from library staff, including a hard copy of all documents for consultees to read in the library. In addition, there will be a number of stakeholder events (on-line and face-to-face) to encourage participation from partners ranging from schools and nurseries to community and special interest groups and other council services.
- 2.10 The results of the consultation will be brought back to Cabinet in early 2022 for consideration and a decision about what changes will be implemented to ensure our library service remains comprehensive, efficient, and affordable.

2.11 Options considered

2.11.1 The needs assessment sets out a number of options and considerations for future delivery of library services. At this stage there is no preferred option, however the Council is not specifically consulting on keeping the library services as the service needs to meet the statutory duty for a “comprehensive and efficient library service”. The Council’s financial situation is such that it needs to make savings to its revenue budgets and the duty to have an efficient service requires the Council to review its library service to ensure it is financially sustainable.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 If no changes are made to how our library services are delivered there is a significant financial risk to the council as the current service is not affordable.

3.1.2 The report to Cabinet feeding back from the consultation will include detailed information about the financial implications of future service delivery recommendations.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 Library services are provided under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, section 10 of which places a duty on the library authority to provide a: “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. Further detail is provided in the Act as follows:

library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability—

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and
(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it.

3.2.2 Case law has interpreted what a “comprehensive and efficient” library service may mean in practice. This includes confirming that it does not mean that every resident lives close to a library, instead meaning that the service is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service should make best use of the assets available in order to meet its core objectives and vision, whilst recognising the constraints on council resources. Any decision about the library service should be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws on evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the area. The availability of resources is highly relevant to the question of what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service and where reductions are required due to a financial crisis, whether on a local or national level, this should be considered in any review of library services.

3.2.3 The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has published guidance, which should be considered and followed. The guidance makes clear that a comprehensive and efficient library service will differ between councils and will depend on the needs of each area. It is the role of councillors and local officials to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their services, but this must be done:

- In consultation with their communities
- Through analysis of evidence around local needs
- In accordance with their statutory duties (these being wider than the specific duty set out above and including wider statutory duties, including duties under the Equality Act and best value duties)

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 If no changes are made to how our library services are delivered there is a significant financial risk to the council as the current service is not affordable.

3.3.2 If a fair and transparent decision-making process (including a public consultation) is not followed there is a significant legal risk to the council which could lead to a “minded to”

letter being issued by the Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport. Ultimately this could lead to the council needing to defend Judicial Review proceedings.

3.3.3 The review of future library service delivery is included on the Directorate Risk Register (Customer and Community).

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 Carrying out a review of library services and a consultation on future delivery does not have any direct environmental implications.

3.4.2 The Needs Assessment does consider the distance residents live from existing library building and how accessible these buildings are by public transport. The report to Cabinet feeding back from the consultation will include more detailed information about the environmental implications of future service delivery recommendations.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 A detailed Equality Impact Assessment considering possible changes to the delivery of library services is attached. This EIA will be refreshed and reviewed in light of the feedback received as part of the public consultation.

3.6 Workforce implications

3.7.1 Carrying out a review of library services and a consultation on future delivery does not have any direct workforce implications.

3.7.2 The report to Cabinet feeding back from the consultation will include more detailed information about workforce implications of future service delivery recommendations.

3.8 Property implications

3.8.1 Carrying out a review of library services and a consultation on future delivery does not have any direct property implications.

3.8.2 The report to Cabinet feeding back from the consultation will include more detailed information about property implications of future service delivery recommendations.

4. Background Papers

None

Changes to Slough Library Services Consultation 2021 Needs Assessment

INDEX

Executive summary	page 2
Background	page 2
Reasons why a review is required	page 2
Making any changes	page 3
Who lives in Slough?	page 6
Current library service in Slough	page 7
Supporting outcome for residents	page 9
Who uses the library service in Slough?	page 13
Volunteering	page 18
Recommendations	page 19
Appendices	
A: Library service budget and staffing	
B: Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964	
C: Equalities Impact Assessment	
D: Slough demographics by ward	
E: CIPFA Comparative Profile – public libraries (Slough)	
F: Slough main library building opening hours	
G: Library spending on publications (newspaper report)	
H: User feedback	
I: Library usage data	
J: Libraries Connected report	

Executive summary

This needs assessment has been undertaken to inform the future direction of library provision in Slough and the need to continue to provide a service that is compliant with statutory obligations, is focused on the needs of the community and relevant demographic groups and is delivered within the budget available. The needs assessment outlines the status of Library Service provision for Slough residents, highlighting how we are currently meeting our statutory duty. It also identifies where further improvements or changes are required to ensure the Library Service is relevant, sustainable, affordable, and fit for purpose now, and in the future.

This needs assessment, including any recommendations for change will be presented to Cabinet in October 2021.

There will then follow a public consultation on the assessment and the proposed changes. The results of this consultation will be presented back to Cabinet in February 2022.

Background

The residents of Slough are served by four main library buildings: The Curve cultural hub in the heart of Slough town centre; and three local community hubs in Britwell, Cippenham and Langley. In addition, there are library services offered in Chalvey Grove, Vicarage Way and Wexham children's centres. In line with the Council's localities model, buildings that have library services also have other services offered from them and other uses. There are no mobile library services offered.

Over 600,000 visits are made to Slough's four main library buildings a year, with residents borrowing just under 500,000 items online and hard copy, and 67,000 attending a group reading activity.

Reasons why a review is required

Over the past 5 years the library service in Slough has undergone several incremental changes. Staff structures have been altered, new teams introduced, and others deleted (see Appendix A). We have seen the opening of The Curve in the centre of the town, and we are currently expanding the Britwell Hub which includes a library service along with a brand-new medical centre (opening early 2022). Of course, the impact of Covid-19 on how we deliver library services has also given us a reason to pause and reflect on how we make sure we meet the needs of current and future library users for the coming 5 to 10 years.

Over the same time frame, Slough Borough Council has reviewed and updated its strategic aims and objectives (see [here](#) for information about Slough 2040 Vision). The council has embedded a locality model for all services, moving away from delivering services centrally from a service-specific building to a model of partnership working from a range of locations close to where the need is. Services in each area are being tailored to the needs of the community, we encourage communities to seek out alternative sources of support (often from within the communities themselves) and to access advice and guidance from the council on-line wherever possible. The council is moving away from a model of directly delivering a broad range of services, to directly delivering focused services and enabling other services to be delivered by partners.

The overarching strategic aims for our new library service will reflect these wider aspirations. We need to ensure that in the future our library service is financially sustainable, based on a locality-based model, delivering a range of services in partnership with others and making full use of the available technology.

During 2021 it became clear that the council was facing extreme financial challenges that resulted in the issue of a Section 114 Notice. The notice was issued because the council did not have enough income and reserves to pay for its planned spending. All council departments are now looking at how they deliver services to the public to ensure that best value for money is being achieved.

Nationally, many local authorities have reviewed the library services that they offer. Other councils have reduced the number of library-only buildings, increased and improved working in partnership with the education sector and voluntary and community groups and made best use of technology. Slough will review and refresh its library service to reflect best practice from elsewhere.

These factors mean that we must make sure our library service is fit for purpose in a changing society by asking ourselves a range of questions including: -

- How can we keep the best parts of the alternative ways of working that were adopted due to Covid?
- What parts of our more traditional ways of working do we need to adapt and build on and how can we do this cost effectively?
- How do we make sure our library service meets the needs of our residents including current library users and future or potential library users?

Making any changes

The library service is run and managed by the local authority. Library services are provided under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, section 10 of which places a duty on the library authority to provide a: “comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof”. Appendix B provides more details of this duty.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) has produced guidance for councils to refer to when deciding if the library service they offer complies with the law (further information and copies of the guidance can be found [here](#)). The guidance makes clear that a comprehensive and efficient library service will differ between councils and will depend on the needs of each area. It is the role of councillors and local officials to determine how much they spend on libraries and how they manage and deliver their services, but this must be done:

- In consultation with their communities
- Through analysis of evidence around local needs
- In accordance with their statutory duties (these being wider than the specific duty set out above and including equality and best value duties)

Local authorities should be able to demonstrate:

- There should be plans to consult with local communities alongside an assessment of their needs (including projections of need)
- Consideration of a range of options (including alternative financing, governance, or delivery models) to sustain library service provision in their area
- A rigorous analysis and assessment of the potential impact of their proposals. A council must be able to evidence the link between the design and delivery of its library service and identified local need.

In 2016 DCMS (via the Libraries Taskforce) published “Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021” (see [here](#)).

In “Libraries Deliver” the Library Taskforce describe libraries as vital community hubs. They bring people together and give them access to the services and support they need to help them live better. The report lays out an ambition for everyone to choose to:

- ✓ Use libraries because they see clear benefits from doing so.
- ✓ Understand what library services offer, and how they can make the most of what’s available to them.
- ✓ Be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills, and information they need to improve their quality of life.
- ✓ Receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world.

To achieve these ambitions the Libraries Taskforce identified seven outcomes that are critical to local individuals and communities and that library services should contribute to at a local level:

1. cultural and creative enrichment
2. increased reading and literacy
3. improved digital access and literacy
4. helping everyone achieve their full potential
5. healthier and happier lives
6. greater prosperity
7. stronger, more resilient communities

To deliver the aspirations, set out in the “Ambitions for Libraries” document, local councils are encouraged to address the following principles when reviewing and considering their library service:

- Ensure the legal requirements are met
- Understand local needs and let these shape service delivery
- Focus on public benefits and deliver a high-quality experience for the customer
- Take evidence-based decisions
- Support the delivery of consistent England-wide core library offers
- Promote innovation, enterprise and partnership working
- Make sure public funds are used effectively and efficiently.

Library services in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland are also supported by the Arts Council and by “Libraries Connected”.

Arts Council

The Arts Council role is to develop and advocate for libraries. They do not have any statutory responsibilities for libraries; however, they support and encourage library development under four key headings (see [here](#))

1. Place the library as the hub of the community
2. Make the most of digital technology and creative media
3. Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable
4. Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

Libraries Connected

Libraries Connected is the sector support organisation for libraries partly funded by Arts Council. The organisation works to promote the value of libraries, broker national partnership, share best practice and drive innovation throughout the sector.

Key to library support is the [Universal Library Offers](#) which are critical to a 21st century library service:

Information and Digital – ensure that local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online.

Reading - build a literate and confident society by developing, delivering, and promoting creative reading activities in libraries.

Health and Wellbeing - support the health and wellbeing of local people and communities through services that inform, engage, and connect.

Culture and Creativity - enable local communities to access and participate in a variety of quality and diverse arts and cultural experiences through local libraries.

Whenever a local council is planning and delivering services it must have regard to its wider legal obligations, including the Equality Act 2010 and specifically its public sector equality duty, its Best Value Duty, the Localism Act duties, and the Human Rights Act 1998. This means the council must consider how best to use its limited resources to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and to consider how different people could be affected by the service and make sure that services are accessible to everyone and meets the needs of different people. A separate, detailed Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is available at Appendix C.

Who lives in Slough? (See Appendix D for details by ward)

Age and sex profile: 2011 Census tells us that approximately 150,000 people of all ages live in the borough of Slough. Our population is significantly younger than the England average (our median age is 34.4 years compared with 39.8 years in England). About 10% of our population is aged 65 and over compared to the England figure of approximately 19%. Just over half of our residents are male (50.7%) and just under are female (49.3%).

Ethnic diversity: Slough is one of the most diverse areas in the UK. No single culture or ethnic group is dominant but over 100 languages are spoken.

Disability: In the 2011 Census, 9,322 Slough residents between the ages of 16-64 reported living with a physical disability. Over 1,350 people were also reported to be living with a severe mental health problem. There are an estimated 2,590 people living with sight loss in Slough and 2,696 adults under the age of 65 live with a moderate to severe hearing impairments (more have a profound impairment). Hearing impairments in younger adults in Slough is expected to increase by 20% over the next ten years. Just over 4% of over 65s in Slough have been recorded by their GPs as living with dementia.

Employment: In 2020 the Office for National Statistics estimates that 75% of Slough adults are economically active, compared to 81.6% across the Southeast of UK (and compared to 79.1% across the whole UK). In 2019 the ONS estimates that 10.7% of households in Slough are “workless”, a similar rate for the Southeast (10.2%) and lower than the UK average of 13.9% (see [here](#) for more information).

Education: In 2020 the Office for National Statistics estimates that just over 6% of working age adults in Slough have no formal qualifications, high when compared to other areas in the Southeast of the UK (4.9%). Local people have a lower rate of the higher level qualifications too (NVQ4 and above) at 41.5% compared to both the Southeast (45%) and whole UK (43%) (see [here](#) for more information).

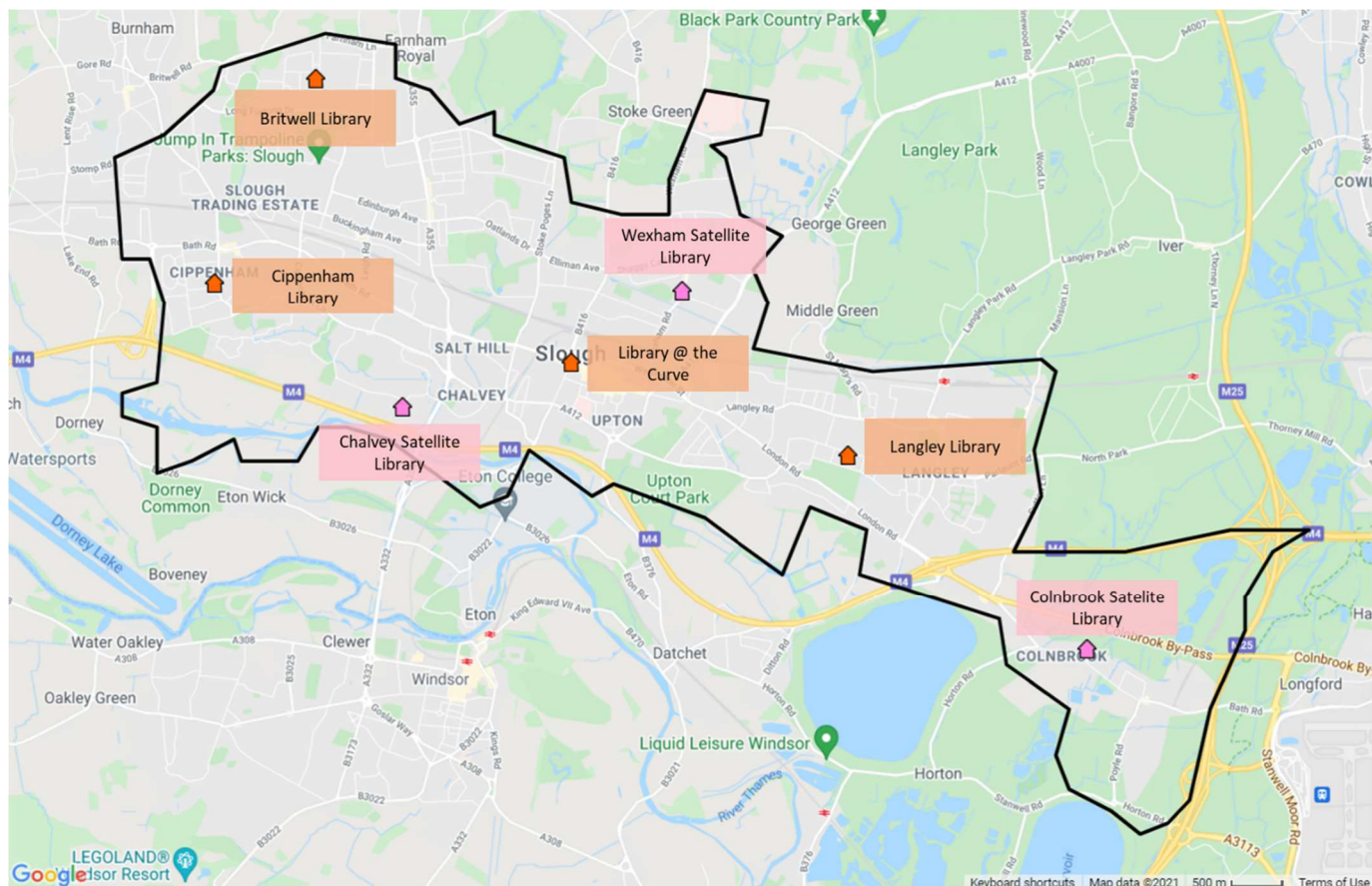
Multiple deprivation: Index of Multiple Deprivation combines seven types of deprivation into a single measure (see [here](#) for more information). This allows us to compare areas with each other across a range of needs and vulnerabilities. Slough has neighbourhoods where there is severe deprivation ranking in the lowest 20% in England. These include areas in Chalvey, Britwell, Elliman and Colnbrook & Poyle wards (see [here](#) for details). The least deprived wards are Langley St Mary’s and Cippenham Green. In general Slough has a higher percentage of children living in poverty compared to the England average and 24% of its older people are living in income deprivation. Poverty, social isolation, and ill-health indicators are all higher than the England average (see [here](#) for more information).

Across England, about ¼ of households have no access to a private car so rely on other forms of transport to move about. In Slough the rate of households without a car is below this England average and sits at just over 23%.

Current library service in Slough

Currently there are 7 buildings with library services within them. Our main, central library building is at The Curve and our other three main library buildings are at Britwell Hub, Langley library and Cippenham library. Our four main library buildings equate to one library building per 37,385 people. This is a lower number of libraries per population compared to the ratio in areas considered most like Slough (see Appendix E for Slough public libraries report from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy [CIPFA] including information about most similar groups).

The three other buildings where library services are delivered are at Chalvey Grove, Vicarage Way and Wexham Children's Centres. These buildings are subject to a children's centre review. See the map below for locations of buildings where library services are currently delivered from.



The library service in Slough offers free access to:

- Physical books for all ages and reading abilities. There are publications suitable for babies, young children, teens, and adults. Books are available in English and foreign languages and for those with sensory disabilities.
- Specialist “Bookstart” packs for babies and toddlers (see [here](#) for more details)
- Home Library service (see [here](#) for more details)
- Downloadable eBooks and eAudio books for children and adults.
- Online versions of newspapers, magazines, local history and learning resources.

- The internet and Wi-Fi connections through public computers and using personal devices.
- Activities and events for children, families and adults including music and rhyme times, story sessions, the national [Summer Reading Challenge](#) Reading Friends scheme, [BBC Novels that Shaped the World](#) and virtual reality experiences both in-person and online.
- Dedicated study space at The Curve.

Our library services also offer volunteering opportunities, spaces for community use, relaxed seating areas to encourage informal socialising and/or quiet reading, visit to schools and nurseries and staff able to guide people through the modern digital landscape.

The Curve library is open 59 hours a week over 6 days (not open on Sundays or Public Holidays).

Britwell library is open 48 hours a week over 6 days (not open on Sundays or Public Holidays).

Cippenham library is open 48 hours a week over 6 days (not open on Sundays or Public Holidays).

Langley library is open 48 hours a week over 6 days (not open on Sundays or Public Holidays).

See Appendix F for details of opening hours of each library.

The table below shows the number of residents living within 1.5 miles of each of our library buildings (2019 population estimates). The children’s centres with library services are shaded blue.

	Residents aged 0 – 15	Residents aged 16 – 64	Residents aged 65+	Total number of residents living within 1.5 miles of the library*
The Curve	9,241	23,100	3,009	35,350
Britwell	7,066	15,477	2,406	24,949
Langley	8,390	20,309	3,796	32,495
Cippenham	5,159	12,403	1,900	19,462
Chalvey Grove	4,074	8,963	1,386	14,423
Wexham	4,687	11,215	1,846	17,748
Vicarage Way	2,917	7,806	1,112	11,835

*Residents often live within more than one catchment area, so totals add up to more than population

This means that over 80% of Slough’s residents currently live within 1.5 miles of a library building, although some of the buildings offer services targeted specifically at young children and families.

Publication’s budget

In 2016 the Press Association estimated (based on FOI requests to every council in UK) that spending on library publications per resident ranged from 5p per head to £1.62 per head. Based on 2020/21 budgets and population estimates, Slough spent £1.47 per head and the median spend per head of population in the UK is 78p per head (Appendix G).

Data from 2018 CIPFA report (Appendix E) suggests Slough libraries spend £1,293 on publications per 1,000 population and this is significantly higher than the councils in the comparator group (average of £982 per 1,000 population). This level of spending puts Slough at 26th highest out of a total of 125 library services across the UK (UK average spend is £1,042 per 1,000 population).

Supporting outcomes for residents

The table below outlines how Slough’s current library offer supports the 7 outcomes described by the Libraries Taskforce.

Taskforce outcome	Slough libraries offer	Customer outcome
Cultural and creative enrichment	<p>Art exhibitions & activities for children, young people & adults (example: Alexander Sadlo exhibition and National Poetry Day activities)</p> <p>Music events & activities for children, young people & adults (example: Story & Rhyme Time and Little Listeners classical music performance)</p> <p>Local author showcases providing a platform for writers to share their work with an audience and network with each other.</p> <p>Author & poet talks and events (example: Slough Summer Reading Challenge Ambassadors – Berkshire writers delivered events to inspire children and provided motivational videos and quotes encouraging them to join the challenge)</p> <p>The library service is an Arts Award Supporter, Artsmark Partner, and member of Slough Cultural Education Partnership</p> <p>Animation workshops</p> <p>Theatre workshops and performances</p> <p>Local history information and resources.</p>	<p>Increased participation in local community activities.</p> <p>Increased exposure to social networks and increased interaction with social networks.</p> <p>Decreased loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Improved motivation and confidence to take up social, employment, training, or skills-based opportunities.</p> <p>Opportunities for residents to share skills with the community</p> <p>More likely to volunteer.</p> <p>Providing support for partners to deliver cultural experiences for young people</p> <p>Supporting the local creative sector to thrive</p> <p>Inspiration and encouragement for young people to take up creative careers.</p>
Increased reading and literacy	General & specialist book collections.	Improved literacy skills for children, young people and adults.

	<p>Library at Home service.</p> <p>Targeted literacy programmes.</p> <p>Adult literacy support.</p> <p>Reading groups for all ages & abilities</p> <p>Bookstart gifting scheme</p> <p>Story and rhyme time sessions.</p> <p>Reading and literacy events (example: Summer Reading Challenge and Reading Friends)</p> <p>Library tours and presentations for adult learners</p> <p>Reading recommendations (online and in person) and displays</p> <p>Accessible stock in a range of formats (example: digital, audio, multi-sensory, graphic novels, Pictures to Share)</p> <p>Diverse and inclusive stock collections.</p> <p>Hosting class visits to support the school curriculum.</p>	<p>Increased enjoyment of reading for children, young people, and adults.</p> <p>Improved confidence in reading. Instil a love of words, reading and literacy for babies and young children.</p> <p>Promotes and supports development of children's speech and language</p> <p>Expanded range of parent/child bonding skills by using reading aloud.</p> <p>Staff modelling good practice with sharing books and providing advice and recommendations to encourage and enable families to select appropriate books</p> <p>Children supported and inspired to explore books and make choices.</p>
<p>Improved digital access and literacy</p>	<p>Delivery of Adult Learning courses from libraries.</p> <p>Staff act as Digital Champions to guide residents in how to access and use digital platforms.</p> <p>Free use of computers and access to Wi-Fi.</p> <p>Interactive whiteboards at The Curve</p> <p>Children's Coding club</p> <p>Access to Hopster early learning app</p> <p>On-line library service offering eBooks, eAudio and eNewspapers/magazines.</p>	<p>Increased confidence in using digital platforms.</p> <p>Increased comfort using SBC website instead of calling Contact Centre or officers directly.</p> <p>Increased confidence to look for work which requires digital literacy.</p> <p>Improved ability to look for work on-line.</p> <p>Enabling independent access to services.</p>

	<p>Showcasing digital technologies (example: virtual reality, augmented reality, and 3D printing)</p> <p>Self-service kiosks and online access to library accounts</p> <p>Free access to online learning and research resources</p> <p>Use of social media to connect and engage with our audience and raise awareness of our services</p> <p>“Magic Table” specialist equipment providing enriching and stimulating activities for people with disabilities and people with dementia.</p>	
Helping everyone achieve their full potential	<p>Offering reading & literacy support.</p> <p>Signposting to health & wellbeing services/providers.</p> <p>Learning, skills & employability services offered from library buildings.</p> <p>Free access to computers and Wi-Fi to open digital landscape for residents.</p> <p>Quiet study spaces.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Providing advice and resources to learning partners</p>	<p>Increased participation in local community activities.</p> <p>Increased exposure to social networks and increased interaction with social networks.</p> <p>Decreased loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Improved motivation and confidence to take up social, employment, training, or skills-based opportunities.</p> <p>More likely to volunteer.</p> <p>Improved motivation to study, carry out self-directed learning and research.</p>
Healthier and happier lives	<p>Offer safe & welcoming community spaces available without booking and free at point of use.</p> <p>Specialist book formats.</p> <p>Self-help book collections.</p> <p>Home Library service.</p> <p>Social activities and groups.</p> <p>Health promotion activities.</p>	<p>Increased participation in local community activities.</p> <p>Increased exposure to social networks and increased interaction with social networks.</p> <p>Decreased loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Improved motivation and confidence to take up social, employment, training, or skills-based opportunities.</p>

	<p>Dementia and Autism friendly libraries.</p> <p>Some library staff trained to communicate using Makaton.</p> <p>Quiet study spaces available.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Staff Making Every Contact Count trained and provide accurate and appropriate signposting</p> <p>Opportunities to get physically active (example: seated exercise, seated yoga and story dancers)</p>	<p>More likely to volunteer.</p> <p>Improved motivation to study, carry out self-directed learning and research.</p> <p>Residents better informed and enabled to make healthy lifestyle choices</p> <p>Reading increases wellbeing, promotes relaxation, improves confidence and self-esteem, and reduces cognitive decline</p> <p>Story times contribute to positive maternal mental health and wellbeing by providing structure, belonging and routine, reducing stress and increasing confidence and developing social and support networks.</p>
<p>Greater prosperity</p>	<p>Adult learning and skills courses delivered from libraries.</p> <p>Staff act as Digital Champions to guide residents in how to access and use digital platforms.</p> <p>Range of social and wellbeing activities.</p> <p>Free use of computers and access to Wi-Fi.</p> <p>Study spaces.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities.</p>	<p>Increased motivation to learn and/or look for work.</p> <p>Increased motivation and opportunity to study/carry out research.</p> <p>Increased confidence and motivation and decreased isolation and loneliness increasing likelihood of securing employment.</p> <p>Increased confidence in accessing digital platforms to look for work/training and more likely to apply for jobs requiring digital literacy.</p>
<p>Stronger, more resilient communities</p>	<p>Range of reading & literacy support (formal and informal).</p> <p>Free health and wellbeing reading resources.</p> <p>Staff offering signposting to range of local services.</p> <p>Staff are digital champions encouraging users to be digitally literate.</p> <p>Welcoming and supportive staff and safe, welcoming, accessible and comfortable</p>	<p>Increased participation in local community activities.</p> <p>Increased exposure to social networks and increased interaction with social networks.</p> <p>Decreased loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>Improved motivation and confidence to take up social, employment, training, or skills-based opportunities.</p> <p>More likely to volunteer.</p>

	spaces where people can feel connected to their community. Libraries promote community events (example: Great Get Together and Fun Day)	Improved motivation to study, carry out self-directed learning and research. Reading builds empathy – a vital social and emotional skill that increases tolerance and understanding of others.
--	--	---

Who currently uses Slough libraries?

To understand how the libraries are currently being used, we have looked at data we have about:

- The number of items borrowed at each library¹
- The number of people visiting each library building²
- The number of active borrowers³
- The number of hours public computers are used⁴
- The numbers of people attending activities and events⁵

Across the UK how libraries are used has changed over the past decade. There has been a steady downward trend in borrowing physical books, and in people visiting a library for a variety of reasons including accessing the internet, attending an activity, meetings, and socialising with other people, and using a range of e-resources (Appendix E). Slough's library usage pattern follows these general trends. However, when we compare ourselves to other library services in the 12 most similar authorities (Appendix E), Slough has the third highest number of visits and books borrowed.

The opening of The Curve in 2016 increased the number of visits to our “central library” compared to the library it replaced (located less than 50 meters away but in a 1960s building). The Curve attracts 44% of overall library visits and 54% of all active borrowers take items from here (see Appendix I).

Items borrowed from each library

In Slough (2019/20) just under 500,000 physical books were borrowed/renewed from all our libraries and 70% of these were from our specialised children's sections of libraries. In addition, over 100,000 eBooks and eNewspapers/magazines were borrowed. In 2018/19 (most recent CIPFA data) we were in the top 3 of our 12 most similar councils for items borrowed.

¹ Number of physical books and eResources borrowed and/or renewed via a library membership card. E-Resources include eBooks, eAudio, eNewspapers/magazines.

² Number of people visiting statutory library location for any reason, captured by electronic counters at entrance/exit doors.

³ A library member who has visited and borrowed/renewed at least once in a 12-month period.

⁴ Number of hours public computers are booked to use.

⁵ Number of adults and children attending a specific event organised by library staff.

However, the total number of items available for people to borrow across all our libraries is 150,902 and this puts us 8th in our most similar group. The average book stock levels across the group are 1,127 per 1,000 population and Slough's level is 1,012.

Slough is ranked 4th highest in terms of total number of books purchased for the service and is second for the number of children's books purchased. In 2017 just over 16% of the publications budget was spent on digital materials. This rose to 26% in 19/20 (£164,690 spent on physical books and £60,500 on digital resources). In 2020/21, with libraries in lockdown, spending on digital materials in Slough rose to 51% of the overall publications budget (£110,274 spent on physical books and £117,983 on digital resources).

Our internal finance systems demonstrate that the average cost for libraries of purchasing a physical book is £8 compared to an average eBook cost of £28. Bulk purchasing discounts for libraries are only currently available for hard copy items and not for eBooks.

A recent report from Libraries Connected highlights (pg. 5 Appendix J) the impact on publications budgets of the cost of digital borrowing. In July 2021 they estimated that the costs of digital borrowing added at least 25% to the cost of lending for libraries. Digital content can be an option to supplement physical resources but are too expensive to fully replace hard-copy publications.

The impact of Covid-19 was dramatic in relation to items being borrowed from Slough libraries. From March 2020 to June 2021 all our libraries were either completely closed or only open on a limited basis. In 2020/21 the number of eResources borrowed/renewed rose from 100,000 items in the previous year to almost 300,000 items. Over the same period the number of physical items issued or renewed (online, or in person) dropped from 500,000 to 54,350. This demonstrates that many of our customers were able to shift from using physical libraries to using on-line services.

Before and during lockdown, The Curve remained the busiest for item lending/renewing accounting for 41% of all items issued. Langley accounts for 24% of all items lent, Cippenham accounts for 21% and Britwell only 14%.

Most items (70%) borrowed across all 4 main library buildings are those for babies, children, and young people (100% of satellite library issues are for children and young people).

Number of people visiting each library building

Over 2019/20 the number of people visiting our main libraries increased by 9% compared to the previous year (to a total of 629,922 visits). However, in 2017/18 the total number of visits per year was significantly higher at 705,461.

Our data does not allow us to break down why people visit our libraries or how many individual visitors we had (i.e., we are unable to identify repeat visitors). Cross referencing with data from people attending activities, we know that 67,000 of the 629,922 visits were made to attend an event or activity. Total visits to The Curve will also include people who are visiting the Registrar service, attending a non-library event including exhibitions and productions at The Venue.

The CIPFA comparisons show that in 2018/19 Slough had 4,000 library visits per 1,000 residents which ranks us 3rd in our comparator group. The average across our most similar councils was 3,326 library visits per 1,000 residents. The cost per visit for Slough libraries in 19/20 was low at £2.18 compared to the average across the similar group of council libraries of £3.08.

Some of our library users are unable to access our physical library buildings or our on-line offer (due to age and/or infirmity). To cater for this specific group of users we offer a Home Library Service. Volunteers take library services to residents in their homes where they can borrow, return, and renew items. However, the rate of housebound library users (those who access the library via the Home Library Service) is low in Slough (0.1 per 1,000 population, the second lowest in our CIPFA group) compared to our similar areas. The average for our group is 0.9 per 1,000 and is over 2.5 per 1,000 residents in Reading.

We recognise that this is an area of service delivery that can be improved and expanded to benefit the library service but also to spread the benefits of volunteering to residents.

Number of active borrowers

An “active borrower” is defined as a library member who has borrowed or renewed from a library at least once in a 12-month period. The number of active borrowers in Slough has followed the national trend and declined steadily over the past three years from 20,457 in 2017/18 to 17,347 in 2019/20⁶. However, compared to our CIPFA peers, Slough performs relatively well and is ranked 6th in this group for active borrowers. Just over half (53%) of the active borrowers in Slough are aged under 18 (this detail is not captured by CIPFA so no comparisons can be made).

54% of active borrowers were from The Curve, 20% were from Langley, 15% from Cippenham and 11% from Britwell.

The table below shows the percentage spread of active borrowers from each library from each ward. The wards highlighted in red are those where a main library is situated. For each library the top 3 wards for active borrowers are highlighted in green.

	The Curve library	Britwell library	Cippenham library	Langley library
WARD				
Baylis and Stoke	8.3%	4.3%	1.6%	0.4%
Britwell and Northborough	3.6%	52.4%	5.3%	0.5%
Central	14%	1.4%	0.8%	5.4%
Chalvey	14.4%	1.4%	6.5%	1.0%
Cippenham Green	3.3%	1.7%	45.0%	0.6%
Cippenham Meadows	6.9%	1.3%	20.5%	0.8%
Colnbrook with Poyle	1.9%	0.5%	0.0%	7.7%
Elliman	10.4%	1.8%	0.9%	1.1%
Farnham	7.2%	17.5%	2.7%	0.7%
Foxborough	1.3%	0.0%	0.2%	7.8%
Haymill and Lynch Hill	2.7%	15.2%	14.1%	0.5%

⁶ This is the number of users who have borrowed at least once in the 12-month period as shown by transactions against individual membership cards.

Langley Kedermister	4.2%	0.6%	0.5%	33.8%
Langley St Mary's	3.7%	0.0%	0.4%	24.2%
Upton	9.7%	0.9%	0.5%	14.4%
Wexham Lea	9.1%	1.7%	1.0%	1.3%

The second table (below) highlights the age profile of active borrowers for each library.

	2018/19				2019/20			
	The Curve	Britwell library	Cippenham library	Langley library	The Curve	Britwell library	Cippenham library	Langley library
0-10	2,159 21.4%	1,114 31.7%	925 37%	673 36%	2,395 26%	1,395 40%	1,062 42%	803 43%
11-13	1,383 13%	637 18%	377 15%	349 18.6%	1,188 13%	611 17%	355 14%	333 18%
14-17	1,074 10.6%	403 11.5%	226 9%	225 12%	819 9%	277 8%	179 7%	174 9.5%
18-59	5,028 49.9%	1,247 35.6%	865 35%	584 31%	4,309 47%	1,117 32%	779 31%	489 26.4%
60+	426 4.2%	103 3%	104 4%	45 2.4%	442 5%	113 3%	125 5%	51 3%
Total	10,070	3,504	2,497	1,876	9,153	3,513	2,500	1,850

The number of active borrowers using our 3 community libraries has remained static. However, there has been an almost 10% reduction in the number of active borrowers making use of The Curve. This may be an effect of Covid lockdowns on the town centre; active borrowers using The Curve may have been using the location because of passing-by when they are making use of other town centre facilities.

Use of public computers

Across the 4 main libraries we offer 62 public computers. These are free to use for residents and can be booked for 2-hour sessions (the average session length is 1 hour). All the computers have access to the Internet and Microsoft Office programmes (all upgraded to Windows 10 in 2020). Only library members can book computer sessions.

The Curve has 37 public computers available across the three floors of the building.

Langley library has 10 public computers.

Britwell library has 9 public computers.

Cippenham library has 6 public computers.

In 2018/19 63,896 hours were booked and of those 71% were at the Curve, 11% at Langley, 8.5% at Cippenham and 9.5% at Britwell. Over 66,000 computer hours were booked in 2019/20. Of these 67% were booked at The Curve, 13.5% at Langley, 10% at Cippenham and 10% at Britwell.

Library members can print documents at all 4 libraries for a small fee (30 pence for A4 black and white). Income from printing in 2018/19 was £19,636 which was 42% of the total library income for that year. In 2019/20 the print income was £22,577 which was 45% of the total income received for all libraries for that year. The Curve in 2018/19 made up 58% of that print income, this dropped to 48% in 2019/20.

Free, unlimited Wi-Fi is also available at all libraries. This allows visitors to use their own equipment in the locations and print from their own devices.

The CIPFA comparison with our most similar councils shows that the number of publicly available computers (called electronic workstations by CIPFA) per 100,000 residents is about average for the group in Slough. We have 56.3 computers per 100,000 residents and the group average is 60 per 100,000.

Number attending events and activities

Approximately 67,000 visits to our main library buildings in 2019/20 were primarily to attend an event or activity. These events included:

- Regular, weekly Story and Rhyme sessions for babies and young children
- Lego clubs (at The Curve)
- Summer Reading Challenge activities
- Introduction to “Bookstart” packs and activities
- Author talks
- Poetry evenings
- Reading groups/Book Clubs
- Get Creative and Fun Palace events for children and young people
- Seated exercise programmes
- Choir evenings

Anecdotal feedback from participants describes how these events have helped to reduce feeling of isolation and loneliness. Users comment about how their mental and physical health and wellbeing has been improved by coming to library-based events (Appendix H).

During 2019/20 67,609 adults and children attended library events and activities. Of these, 39% were events at The Curve, 21% were at Cippenham Library, 18% were at Langley and 13% at Britwell.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, Slough library service moved these activities and events on-line. In general, take up of these on-line resources was low compared to face-to-face activities of previous years. An example of the impact of moving events to on-line only was the national Summer Reading Challenge:

- In 2019 (pre Covid) 3,604 children in Slough took part in the challenge offered from all 4 main library buildings.
- In 2020 (during Covid lockdown) only 200 children in Slough took part in the on-line only challenge
- In 2021 (Covid lockdown restrictions lifting) 1,980 Slough children participated in the face-to-face challenge offered from the 4 main libraries.

Supporting our communities through face-to-face events will remain an important part of our service delivery. A challenge we will rise to is developing a programme of library service engagement within our localities model which may mean taking these programmes out of libraries and into other community settings.

Volunteering at Slough libraries

Slough libraries offer opportunities for volunteering. Volunteers help paid staff deliver services and individual volunteers gain useful skills and health and wellbeing benefits (see [here](#)).

Currently (2021), Slough libraries have 21 volunteers; 17 are general volunteers and 4 specialise in offering a [Home Library Service](#). Our general volunteers offer meeting and greeting at library buildings and offer support at events. In addition to this cohort, we also have several seasonal volunteers who offer their time at specific times of the year. Usually this is school-aged young people completing their Duke of Edinburgh challenge.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers has proved challenging in the past. The Library Service used to have a Volunteer Officer role, but this was removed as part of a council-wide transformation programme in April 2021. The challenge to attract volunteers is not restricted to Slough. Information about our most similar councils reported by CIPFA show that approximately 6% of total hours worked in Slough libraries were worked by volunteers. The average for our group is only 5.6% putting us slightly higher than average.

Recommendations

Based on the issues discussed in the needs assessment the following recommendations are being made.

Ensure that library services are affordable and deliver value for money

According to CIPFA, Slough libraries spend on materials is £1,293 per 1,000 population and this is significantly higher than the comparator group average of £982 per 1,000 population. This level of spending puts Slough at 26th highest out of a total of 125 library services across the UK (UK average spend is £1,042 per 1,000 population).

The comparisons on staffing costs in the CIPFA report are not as useful because since the data collection the number of full-time equivalent staff in Slough library service has fallen by 25% (from 28.78 FTE to 22.22 FTE). This will place the revenue expenditure on staff per 1,000 population below the comparator group average of £5,437 per 1,000 population.

The CIPFA data for building costs for Slough is missing some information so can't be used as a comparison to similar councils. However, Slough libraries spend £125,900 per annum on building costs (for Langley and Cippenham libraries as these are the only stand-alone library buildings).

The council should consider options to improve value for money in terms of the publications budget which should not exclude the option to reduce the budget from £220,500 per annum to between £117,000 and £147,000 per annum to bring us in line with the average spend across the UK (lower figure is taken from 2016 FOI costs for UK and higher figure is from CIPFA comparator group).

In addition, although staff numbers have declined since 2018 there is still scope for the council to assess whether expanded volunteering and embedding the shift (accelerated through Covid lockdown) to digital and self-serve customer service could allow for a reduction in dedicated staff in all library buildings at all times. Part of this review will need to consider the opportunities for services and their staff to co-locate meaning that staff could be more multidisciplinary and deliver a range of support and guidance services for customers.

Ensure library services are accessible and meet local needs

As discussed in recommendation 1 above, there is an opportunity to review the current publications budget as part of the move to ensure the library service is still affordable.

Over the Covid lockdown period the volume of on-line lending activity in Slough rose by 300%, demonstrating a willingness from some customers to move to a predominantly on-line service. However, the Library Connected research suggests that moving to a totally on-line offer can make services less affordable. In addition, the participation in events was significantly lower when they were exclusively offered on-line compared to both face-to-face only and a mix of on-line and face-to-face.

In light of this it is recommended that Slough focusses on planning and delivering a hybrid model of service delivery for both material resources and event delivery.

As mentioned in recommendation 1 there is opportunity to expand the volunteer cohort in libraries which would be a critical resource to allow events and activities to be held in face-to-face settings. The activities on offer need to be carefully planned to serve all members of our community and be explicit in how they will support current library users but also how they will attract new users to the library service. One specific aspect of volunteering which needs to be expanded is the provision and marketing of the Home Library Service to bring the library into the homes of residents who are unable to go to a building.

It is also recommended that the library service reviews the range of locations where different lending and outreach activities could be offered from. An expansion to beyond the traditional library setting into more/different Children's Centres, locality hubs, community buildings, health settings, leisure centres etc could result in an increase in library users and an expansion of the range of communities using and engaging with this important resource.

Support and promote good use of technology including digitalisation of services where appropriate.

Slough Borough Council is moving to a general service delivery model of "digital by default". This move will include the provision of library services, but also creates an opportunity for the library service to be a valued gateway into the digital world for customers who are reluctant to embrace this new technology.

This needs assessment highlights that libraries currently play an important role in promoting eResources whether this is by on-line book borrowing, or by running coding clubs for young people or helping adults access the Internet for free. Libraries in Slough are an important resource to ensure residents are not digitally excluded.

It is recommended that this role undertaken by the library service is enhanced. The council should ensure that there is adequate IT equipment available for residents in community locations, including at libraries. Staff and volunteers across the borough in a range of organisations, including libraries, should be able to provide first level guidance and support to a resident who might be struggling to enter the digital world. Libraries and services delivering post-16 skills and training need to build upon existing links to ensure they work effectively together to promote and deliver digital skills opportunities for residents.

Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Customer and Community
Service: Library Service
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Liz McMillan /Liz Jones
Date of Assessment: September 2021
Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Slough library service - review of services
<p>1. What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The library service will be undertaking a review of the way SBC delivers library services to a) ensure they are fit for purpose and continue to be compliant with statutory obligations, b) review the advantages and disadvantages seen through the change in delivery during COVID-19 lockdown and c) achieve value for money by driving out savings to support action associated with issuing of Section 114 Notice.</p> <p>The library service in Slough has four (statutory) libraries: The Curve cultural hub in the heart of Slough town centre; and three community libraries in Britwell, Cippenham and Langley. In addition, there are three satellite non-staffed (non-statutory) libraries in Chalvey Grove, Vicarage Way and Wexham children's centres. All of our libraries are free at the point of use for all users. We also offer a small Home Library Service supported by volunteers who take library books to the homes of people who are unable to come to a library. During 2020 and 2021 the service was forced (due to COVID-19 restrictions) to close all physical library buildings. The service moved on-line and directed customers to eBooks/eAudio books, on-line "click and collect" and on-line activities and events.</p> <p>Library services provide access to books, online resources, computers with WiFi and Internet as well as a programme of events and activities for adults and children. Britwell and The Curve are also locality hubs which accommodate other services including Registrar Service, Learning & Skills services, Housing Demand and council customer services. The library service also provides outreach events including visits to schools.</p> <p>Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, local councils in England have a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service for all people working, living, or studying full-time in the area who want to make use of it.</p>

2.	<p>Who implements or delivers the policy, service, or function?</p> <p>Library services are funded, delivered and managed by a dedicated team within Slough Borough Council.</p> <p>The service is part of the Locality and Neighbourhoods Group under the Customer and Community Directorate.</p> <p>The Service Manager is the Locality Hubs and Library Services Manager who is supported by an Operational Lead and a Children's and Young People's Officer. This is the library services management team.</p> <p>The operational delivery is made through a number of Supervisors, Assistant Supervisors, library customer service assistants and volunteers.</p> <p>Early Years Teams based at the Children's Centres support the delivery of the three satellite (non-statutory) libraries in Chalvey Grove, Vicarage Way and Wexham.</p>
3.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal?</p> <p>The proposal to review and reconfigure how we deliver the library service in Slough will have the potential to affect all residents of the borough as the service is universal and free at the point of use.</p> <p>Sloughs total resident population is 149,539.</p> <p>Total library membership in the borough is 40,000 people and of this, 21,000 are active borrowers (borrowing at least once a year and including on-line borrowing). The total membership accounts for 27% of the resident population and active borrowers account for 14% of the total resident population.</p> <p>Slough currently has 4 libraries the lowest number per population of our CIPFA "Most Similar Group" of 12 other local authorities with the most similar demographics to us. Reducing that number could have a negative impact on residents' ability to access library services.</p>

These proposals could impact on residents, current library users and potential users of the service who will all fall into one or more of the protected characteristics groups.

Affected groups could include

- all residents of Slough,
- library staff,
- other council and hub staff,
- current library users,
- partner organisations and stakeholders including schools, Early Years provision, and post-16 education, learning and skills services.

Library Users data

Age

A high percentage of library users are children and young people. 70% of all users across all sites are aged under 15 and under. All of the attendees of activities such as story reading and, Baby and Rhyme sessions are carers with babies and pre-school children.

Older residents attend libraries to reduce social isolation, borrow books and attend events such as seated exercise sessions and reading groups.

The breakdown of active library users by age:

	% of active library users	Number of active library users
Child (0 – 10 y/o)	20.6%	4,394
Child (11 – 13 y/o)	9.2%	1,970
Young person (14 – 17 y/o)	7.6%	1,630
Adult (18 – 59 y/o)	58.7%	12,480
Senior citizen (60+)	3.6%	777

Sex

A slightly higher percentage of library members are female rather than male.

	Numbers of members	% of members
Female	10,945	55%
Male	8,868	45%

Gender reassignment and gender self-identification

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on gender reassignment or gender self-identification from membership records as this is not a legal requirement to hold this information. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services.

There is no accurate information on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) people in Slough. Several estimates for the nationwide percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals exist, with the Office for National Statistics estimating approximately 2% of the total UK population (2016). The LGBT Foundation places it higher at between 5% and 7%. The Office for National Statistics has concluded that there is a need for greater information about LGBT individuals and is currently consulting about how best to generate this information.

Sexual orientation

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on sexual orientation from membership records as this is not a legal requirement to hold this information. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services.

There is no accurate information on the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) people in Slough. Several estimates for the nationwide percentage of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals exist, with the Office for National Statistics estimating approximately 2% of the total UK population (2016). The LGBT Foundation places it higher at between 5% and 7%. The Office for National Statistics has concluded that there is a need for greater information about LGBT individuals and is currently consulting about how best to generate this information.

Disability

The Library Service does not hold full and comprehensive data on the disability needs of its customers. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services.

In the 2011 Census, 9,322 Slough residents between the ages of 16-64 reported living with a physical disability. Over 1,350 people were also reported to be living with a severe mental health problem. There are an estimated 2,590 people living with sight loss in Slough and 2,696 adults under the age of 65 live with a moderate to severe hearing impairments (more have a profound impairment). Hearing impairments in younger adults in Slough is expected to increase by 20% over the next ten years. Just over 4% of over 65s in Slough have been recorded by their GPs as living with dementia.

In April 2021 it was estimated ([here](#)) that the un-employment rate for disabled people across the UK was 8.4% (compared to 4.6% for non-disabled) whilst for economic inactivity the rate for disabled people was 42.9% compared to only 14.9% for non-disabled people. This indicates that unemployment, economic inactivity and associated lack of disposable income for items like books, magazines, newspapers and Internet access (all services provided free by libraries) will disproportionately affect people with disabilities. It is fair to assume that reducing or removing access to these services in our libraries will negatively impact residents with disabilities.

In recognition of this the library service provides a range of resources to support residents with disability needs. This includes large print books, Talking Books and on-line resources with the ability to zoom into enlarge print size. We also offer targeted resources including Books on Prescription and "Reading Well" collections that support general health and wellbeing (self-help).

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on the status of its users from membership records as this is not a legal requirement. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services.

Pregnancy and maternity

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on the pregnancy/maternity status of its users from membership records as this is not a legal requirement. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services. Anecdotal observations suggest that parents-to-be and new parents are a high proportion of those who use the service in particular Baby Rhyme Time sessions.

Race

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on the ethnic status of its users from membership records as this is not a legal requirement. However, from observations of attendance at activities, feedback from library staff and anecdotal observations the majority of those using the service are Asian British, followed by White British and White other. This mirrors the general ethnic breakdown of Slough's resident population.

Ethnic breakdown of Slough resident population		
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	549	0.6% of population
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	797	0.6% of population
Asian/Asian British: Indian	21,922	15.6% of population
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	7,560	5.4% of population
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	24,869	17.7% of population
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	7,548	5.4% of population
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	3,096	2.2% of population
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other	1,471	1.0% of population
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	4,429	1.0% of population
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	607	0.4% of population
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1,667	1.2% of population
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	1,055	0.8% of population
Other ethnic group: Arab	928	0.7% of population
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	2,654	1.9% of population
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	48,401	34.5% of population
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	220	0.2% of population

White: Irish	1,607	1.1%	1,607	1.1% of population
White: Other White	13,825	9.9%	13,825	9.9% of population

Religion and Belief

The Library Service does not hold comprehensive data on the pregnancy/maternity status of its users from membership records as this is not a legal requirement. However, this is a universal offer supporting the needs of the total population by offering a range of free services.

Religious belief breakdown of Slough resident population

Buddhist	743	0.6% of population
Christian	57,726	43.6% of population
Hindu	8,643	6.5% of population
Jewish	87	0.1% of population
Muslim	32,655	24.7% of population
Sikh	14,889	11.3% of population
Other religion	482	0.4% of population
No religion	17,024	12.9% of population

Library Users data

A separate Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out with staff if the outcome of the review and consultation results in changes for staff numbers, hours of work, type of role etc.

4. What are any likely positive impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above?

Publication budget

If the Publication budget is reduced there will still be a mix of hard copy and on-line resources available for all users. During Covid-19 restrictions the numbers of items borrowed on-line increased by 300% showing that there is a demand for this type of borrowing.

	<p><u>Changes to hours the libraries are open/hours that libraries are staffed by library customer service assistants</u></p> <p>If the hours when library staff are available at libraries do change/reduce we will still have a 24/7 on-line offer which proved popular with users over Covid-19 lockdown. Anecdotal feedback has been that some users (unidentified protected characteristics) prefer the anonymity of using on-line resources and reduced interaction with staff rather than coming into a building and interacting with staff. This change may also present further volunteering opportunities for residents to take advantage of which could improve confidence, skills and wellbeing.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>What are the likely negative impacts for the group/s identified in (3) above?</p> <p><u>Age</u> Children and young people make up the highest percentage of our library users both for book borrowing and attending events/activities. Reducing the publications budget could limit the number and range of books/eResources for children and young people. Reducing opening hours could limit the times young people are able to access physical library buildings, especially if self-service alternatives are used that may not be available for children/young people to access. Many of our activities and events are aimed at children and young people and there may be a reduction in the number of events available and/or they may be restricted to one or two libraries rather than being offered from all libraries across the borough.</p> <p>Anecdotal feedback from library staff suggest that older residents often go to a local library as a way of informally socialising with others, reducing their social isolation, and improving their social networks, health, and wellbeing. Feedback from adults using library-based activities (e.g., reading groups, seated exercises) support this staff feedback. Reducing the hours when library staff are available for people to talk to and get advice from could increase feelings of loneliness and social isolation. This would also reduce the availability of staff to work with older users to help reduce digital isolation – currently staff offer hands-on support and guidance to residents who are not confident using or accessing Internet in general and a range of council self-serve service as part of the “digital by default” transformation.</p> <p><u>Sex</u> A higher percentage of females than males are library users so any reductions in service may have a disproportionate impact on female users.</p>

Gender reassignment and gender self-identification

Although we have no data specifically on library usage by residents who have had/are having gender reassignment, the reduction in publications budget could have a disproportionate impact on these users and those who don't identify as gender-binary. A reduced publication budget would limit the range of publications available and would focus on mainstream items. This would reduce the opportunity of stocking resources by, or for people in this group.

Sexual orientation

Although we have no data specifically about sexual orientation of library users or the general resident population, the reduction in publications budget could have a disproportionate impact on LGBT+ users and potential users. A reduced publication budget would limit the range of publications available and would focus on mainstream items. This would reduce the opportunity of stocking resources by, or for people in this group.

Disability

A reduction in the publications budget could affect users and potential users with disabilities as this would limit the number and range of large print, Talking Books and eResources (books where print size can be increased and audio books) available. It may also reduce the number and range of health and wellbeing resources being stocked to allow users to follow a "self-help" route to improve/maintain their own health.

Whilst some users/residents with disability may use on-line libraries/Home Library Service rather than physical buildings (e.g., those with limited mobility), others may find the loss of or reduced opening hours of library buildings more difficult. Residents with early stages of dementia, are neuro-atypical, have some mental health conditions etc. may be able to (and get benefits from) use a familiar library at times when they are less busy. If libraries are closed at quiet times this may disadvantage this group although we have no current library usage data on this issue.

Pregnancy and maternity

Several activities at libraries are specifically aimed at parents/carers of babies (e.g., Baby Rhyme Time, story times etc) to help babies get a first introduction to books and allow socialisation for both them and their parents. Spend on books/publications for babies is relatively high because the items are used often and suffer more wear and tear than books for older users. Free access to a range of books supports early years development. This means that reductions to the publication fund, reduced opening hours for libraries and reduced

	<p>staff resource to deliver activities would have a specific impact on this group.</p> <p>New parents also use libraries to collect Bookstart packs for babies. Reduction in opening hours and hours when staff are available could limit the opportunities for parents to collect this resource.</p> <p>Race Almost 1/3rd (27%) of our total resident population do not have English as their main language (2011 Census). Reducing the publications budget would limit the range of publications available to allow focus on mainstream items meaning there may be a reduction in publications in languages other than English. Reducing the hours when staff are available to help and guide those who are not confident in reading English may also negatively impact this group.</p>
6.	<p>Have the impacts identified in (4) and (5) above been assessed using up to date and reliable evidence and data? Data used is from Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). ONS data is from 2011 Census. CIPFA data (most similar groups) is from 2019 report using 2018 data.</p> <p>Where Slough library usage data has been used this has been taken from the library management system.</p> <p>Further, more detailed analysis about impacts of service changes will be carried out after the 12-week public consultation which will include collection of equalities data and asking residents for their assessment of the proposals.</p>
7.	<p>Have you engaged or consulted with any identified groups or individuals if necessary and what were the results? These service changes will be consulted on during a 12-week public engagement exercise. This public consultation will seek current library user's views and the views of people who do not currently use libraries but may do in the future. The consultation will include an on-line and hard copy survey, several face-to-face focus groups at each library (carried out at different times of day) and on-line sessions for residents and stakeholder groups.</p> <p>Information collected from this consultation will be analysed and included in the final recommendations so decision makers can fully understand the impact on different parts of our community.</p>

	<p>If changes have an impact on staff there will then be a separate consultation exercise with staff affected, other council services and unions. The results of this consultation exercise will be analysed and included in the final implementation plan.</p>
8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations? As part of the public consultation, we are ensuring that we actively seek the views of community, voluntary and third sector organisations that represent different community groups. We will be encouraging members of these groups to take part in the consultation. In addition, there will be face-to-face and on-line stakeholder engagement sessions to understand the impact of the proposals on community relations.</p>
9.	<p>What plans do you have in place, or are developing, that will mitigate any likely identified negative impacts? Each option being considered has a detailed mitigations plan associated with it. The mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking the views of residents and stakeholders about alternative proposals to ensure the service is fit for the future and delivers excellent value for money. • Ensuring that there is a robust and transparent process for deciding on the ratio of physical vs on-line resources purchased through the publications fund. • Ensuring there is a robust and transparent process for purchasing hard copy and eResources to mitigate the impact of publications available to users in a protected group (e.g., English language vs non-English language, children/young people vs adults etc.) • Ensuring there is a robust and transparent process for deciding what activities and events will be hosted by libraries and library staff. • Explore alternative venues for hosting library events and services (e.g., Children’s Centres, schools, pop-up community locations etc) and also opportunities for libraries to co-locate in alternative venues and other services to co-locate in library buildings. • Develop a strong volunteer recruitment and retention scheme to support the delivery of events and services including Home Library Service. • Explore the further use of technology to allow library buildings to be accessible without staff needing to be on-site (e.g., Open+) • Develop a multi-media communications strategy to advertise opening hours, staffing hours and where and when activities will be happening. • Ensure that on-line resources remain available 24/7. • Actively seek out and make bids for external funding streams that will allow libraries to deliver specific projects. • Explore opportunities for sharing skills and knowledge with staff from other services/organisations to allow residents to still receive support even if not from specialist library staff. Also, explore opportunities for library staff to adopt new skills and knowledge to allow them to work efficiently with possible co-located services.
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). Continue to collect user data via library management system and feed this to CIPFA as requested to allow us to review our services and</p>

their impact in comparison to our most similar local authority library services.

We will develop a process (on-line surveys, staff feedback and consultation events) to regularly collect feedback from users, residents, staff and stakeholders. This "light touch" EIA process will take place annually.

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy 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).	✓
Outcome 3: Continue the policy 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).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink 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
Complete needs assessment using library data and demographics	All residents including library users and non-users	Liz Jones/Liz McMillan	Completed and used to shape consultation and options paper		Sept 2021	
Carry out public consultation to help shape outcomes and	All residents including library users	Liz Jones/Liz McMillan	Completed and clear picture of needs of library users and non-users		December 2021	

library review and enable full assessment of impact on Slough Community	and non-users and targeted groups with protected characteristics					
Hold series of face-to-face consultation drop ins at each library and online events and with stakeholder groups and staff to provide feedback – communications plan	All residents including library users and non-users and targeted groups with protected characteristics	Liz McMillan	Completed with good numbers attending and actively engaging. Feedback analysed and included in final needs assessment and recommendations for SBC decision makers.	February 2022		
Update EIA following consultation	As above	Liz McMillan/ Liz Jones	EIA reflects the findings from the consultation and mitigates negative impacts on protected groups.	January 2022		
Carry out annual “light touch” EIA with service users to monitor the impact of changes	Library users including targets groups with protected characteristics	Liz McMillan/Patsy To/Alison Beer	Ongoing impacts of changes are understood and used to fine tune and/or further review service delivery.	From Sept 2022		
Develop a library outcomes and strategic plan	Internal staff, Directors, cllrs, all residents	Liz McMillan/Liz Jones	New strategic plan linking clearly to Slough 2040 vision for future priorities for library service.	July 2022		

Name: Liz McMillan/ Liz Jones

Signed:

Date: 20th September 2021

Consultation on proposed changes to Slough Library Service

This consultation is open from **Thursday 28th October** to **Thursday 20th January 2022**.

1. Introduction

1.1 This consultation is about proposed changes to the statutory provision of library services in Slough. Elements of Slough Library services are delivered through The Curve, Britwell, Cippenham and Langley libraries with Children's centres also playing an important role along with access to online services and library-based events and activities.

1.2 Slough Libraries are asking for residents' and stakeholders views on a range of considerations that we need to make sure are at the heart of how these services are delivered in future. We want your help in assessing these and finding out if there are other suggestions you can make to make sure our libraries are fit for the future. We are specifically interested in:

- Your views about the key issues we should consider when designing our future library service.
- Are some of these considerations more important to you than others?
- What other issues should we consider that we haven't included?
- If you use our library service, how do you use it and what do you use it for?
- If you do not use our library service, why is this and what could encourage you to use it in future?

1.3 There is a survey ([survey and link will be live from 28th October](#)) for residents and other stakeholders to complete and this will be the way we will collect your feedback.

2. Background

2.1 Slough libraries, and the services offered from them are at the heart of our community. The staff, volunteers, services, and programmes help and support residents through the different stages of their lives. Our staff are passionate about opening up opportunities for the people of Slough, through reading for pleasure, access to information and informal learning in safe, secure, and welcoming spaces, and supporting residents to enhance their digital skills.

2.2 Our library service is also dynamic and innovative. We know we can't stand still, and this is why we carried out a Needs Assessment [Needs Assessment](#) to understand how we offer services today and how we can continue to deliver comprehensive services in an accessible and affordable way in the future.

2.3 How our library service and library users responded to the changes introduced due to Covid-19 lockdowns is one factor that encouraged us to look at how and what we deliver in the future. Over the past two years, the council has also reviewed and refreshed its strategic vision and worked with key stakeholders to develop a borough-wide set of strategic goals in the 2040 vision. This work has led to services across the authority (including library services) being re-configured. Finally, in 2021 the council issued a Section 114 Notice in response to the financial challenges it faced. All services delivered by the council will be reviewed to ensure it can balance its budget in the future.

2.4 We have a legal duty under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to make sure that the council provides a comprehensive and efficient library service. Guidance and case law has determined that if any changes are made to how our library service is delivered, we must follow a fair process, and this includes considering local needs and working with the public when devising a new way of delivering services. To do this we have carried out a Needs Assessment together with an Equality Impact Assessment. This consultation is how we will work with residents and other stakeholders to shape what a new service will look like and how it will deliver efficient and effective library services to local people.

2.5 We currently deliver library services from two buildings that host several other services (The Curve and Britwell Hub), two library-only buildings (Cippenham and Langley libraries) and three Children's Centres.

2.6 The recent Needs Assessment recommended that the council should consider how it will deliver these three strategic aims:

- Ensuring that library services are affordable and deliver value for money
- Ensure library services are accessible and meet local needs
- Supporting and promoting good use of technology including digitalisation of services where appropriate.

2.7 From these recommendations the council has suggested 7 considerations have to be taken into account to allow us to continue to deliver a comprehensive library service that meets the needs of our community now and in the future in the most cost-effective way.

2.8 The 7 key considerations that we need to make sure are at the heart of how these services are delivered in future are:

1: Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new hard copy books is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.

2: Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new eResources is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.

3: Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently. This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.

4: Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.

5: Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.

6: Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.

7: Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line

2.9 None of these considerations will be looked at on their own, but you may feel some are more important than others. In this consultation we will ask you to prioritise how important you think each thing is for us to consider, plus ask you if there are other principles we need to consider too.

3. How will this consultation be used to inform decision making?

3.1 We are asking you 4 sets of questions in the consultation, and all will help us make decisions on the future of library services in Slough.

Part 1: These questions will help us understand how and why you currently use the library service. There is also a specific question to help us understand why some people don't use our current library service.

Part 2: These questions will help us understand which library services you value most right now, and which do you think you will value in the future. We also ask about which times of day you would like to see library services open and when you would like to see library staff being available.

Part 3: Some of these questions will help us to understand which of the 7 considerations you think are most important to the future of the library service. We have also included some possible ways of working in the future that would help us achieve all or some of the considerations. We are asking you to say which of these future ways of working are most attractive to you (there may be more than one and we are happy for you to have more than one preferred option).

In parts 1, 2 and 3 we also ask you for any other suggestions that we didn't think of. Please suggest alternatives if you can think of ways to make sure library services remain comprehensive and affordable.

Part 4: We want to make sure that we have responses from right across our community, to do this we are asking some questions about you, including some equality questions. This part of the survey is not compulsory, but it helps us understand if some proposals disproportionately affect particular communities.

3.2 Decision makers (including senior managers, Cabinet members and all council members) will take the Needs Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and results of this consultation into account when deciding on the future of the services.

3.3 The Council is not consulting on keeping the library service the same as it is now, as we have assessed that this does not meet our strategic aims. The option to remain the same does not save any money and it therefore not affordable nor does it provide value for money. The status quo also does not permit investment in future technology to enhance service delivery. Consultees will have the option to provide ideas for delivering savings and for delivering the library service in a different way.

4. Possible future ways of working in more detail

4.1 To make sure our 7 considerations are at the heart of our future library service we have worked on some options for future models of working. You will be asked to prioritise which model (or models) you think are the most important one for us to consider in the survey.

A	Reduce the money available to spend on buying publications (both hard copy and eResources)
	<p><u>Description</u> The Needs Assessment found that the budget available to purchase publications (hard copy and eResources) in Slough is relatively high when compared to other library services. According to the most recent report by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) (Appendix E in Needs Assessment) Slough is in the highest quarter of all library services across the UK in terms of publications spending per 1,000 population (26th out of 125 services). The report groups councils together based on their similar features – within Slough’s comparator group of 13 authorities we are the second highest spending per 1,000 population.</p> <p>In 2016 the Press Association estimated (based on FOI requests to every council in UK) that spending on library publications per resident ranged from 5p per head to £1.62 per head. Based on 2020/21 budgets and population estimates, Slough spent £1.47 per head and the median spend per head of population in the UK is 78p per head (Appendix G in Needs Assessment).</p>
	<p><u>Impacts</u> Reducing the publications budget will reduce the number of hard copy and eResources available for users. This could mean that fewer, new “specialist” publications are purchased that are in non-English languages, large print, graphic novels etc.</p> <p>Our most active borrowers are children and young people and hard copy books for this age group tend to suffer more wear and tear than books for adults, currently this means we can purchase multiple copies of publications and under this proposal we will have to limit these multiple purchases.</p> <p>Currently we can buy multiple copies of publications (hard copy and eResources) that are likely to be popular with borrowers (e.g., best-sellers, new publications in popular series such as Hilary Mantel’s “Thomas Cromwell trilogy”). This keeps waiting times for borrowers low. With a reduced budget we will need to limit purchases to single or two copies which will increase waiting times for some borrowers.</p> <p>Our data shows us that purchasing eResources is in general more expensive than buying hard copy items (see Needs Assessment). However, our experience during Covid restrictions was that many customers were happy to move to an on-line only borrowing service.</p> <p><u>Mitigations</u> We will use the data we have collected in the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix C in Needs Assessment) to allow us to focus purchases of “specialist” publications on evidence of need. Our Equalities Impact Assessment action plan commits us to carrying out regular “light touch” equalities assessments each year to ensure that we are still responding appropriately to the needs of our users.</p>

	<p>Because library publications are so important to the early life of children and young people, and because of the high usage publications get from this age group we will ensure an appropriate proportion of our budget each year is dedicated to purchase materials for this customer group.</p> <p>We will develop a clear communications strategy to explain the reason for delays in waiting times for the most popular new purchases. This will include staff/volunteers offering recommendations for alternative materials and requests for book donations from residents.</p> <p>Budget allocations to specific types of publications will be kept under review by library managers, in collaboration with other library services across the UK (especially those in our CIPFA comparison councils) to ensure we are learning from others how to spread the resource most effectively.</p>
	<p><u>Key considerations met</u></p> <p>1: Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new hard copy books is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.</p> <p>2: Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new eResources is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.</p>

B	<p>Keep all library buildings but reduce the hours they are open, the hours they are staffed, and the space dedicated to the library. Attract other users to rent space in the building alongside a reduced library (co-location).</p>
	<p><u>Description and explanation</u></p> <p>The Needs Assessment recommends that the council considers a hybrid model of service delivery for both material resources and community events, using a blend of on-line and face-to-face provision. The Assessment also recommends a new approach to where these services are delivered from should be considered – traditionally our library services have been delivered predominantly from library buildings.</p> <p>Slough’s experience of library services being used during Covid restrictions suggests that many customers are comfortable using on-line borrowing facilities. However, participation in activities reduced significantly if they were offered on-line. It is recognised in the Needs Assessment that the library service has a significant role to play in reducing social isolation and improving access to the new digital landscape.</p> <p>This option keeps all 4 main library buildings open to the public for at least some of the time during every week. Each physical library building/section will only be open for some days, or part days. Staff will only be available to provide social interactions, guidance, advice, and library-based activities for a limited time each week.</p>

	<p>This option will shrink the physical space available for library services at The Curve, Britwell, Cippenham and Langley. This will result in opportunities for other services/organisations to rent space in these buildings so the buildings become multi-functional hubs in each locality.</p>
	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Closing library buildings part-time will reduce the availability of physical, traditional library buildings across the borough. These library buildings are well-used by active borrowers, people attending events and using public computers.</p> <p>Over 80% of residents live within 1.5 miles of a current library building.</p> <p>Current library users may not understand or know when the library buildings are open and when staff may be available. This could cause frustration that could result in a reduction in users across the service. This model would remove the ability to flexibly “drop-in” to a library building.</p> <p>An important feature of the current physical use of library buildings is the ability for them to host school and nursery visits to introduce children to reading and literacy. These visits already need to be carefully planned around the school day, reducing the hours when the library building can host these sessions could impact on local young people.</p> <p>Library-building based events will have to be carefully programmed (timings and staff/volunteer availability) to fit with the reduced hours that buildings are open, and staff are available.</p> <p>Reducing the space used by library services may not create enough space to attract alternative uses (or the space may not be suitable or be too expensive for some community groups to use).</p> <p><u>Mitigations</u></p> <p>The public consultation exercise is specifically asking respondents to tell us when they would prefer library buildings to be open and staffed. We will use this feedback to tailor opening times to the local needs.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment action plan commits the library service to seek feedback from library users more often and in a more systematic way to allow us to keep opening and staffing times under review.</p> <p>As part of the council’s locality working model, opportunities for delivering library services from other settings in the borough will be explored. This could mean library services being delivered in locations more convenient to some residents.</p>

	<p>An expansion of volunteering opportunities will allow activities and events to be delivered by the library service either exclusively by volunteers or by staff supported by volunteers.</p> <p>Self-service methods of service access will be available at The Curve and Britwell Hub whenever the buildings are open as these do not require library staff input. This would include borrowing, returning, and renewing books, using public computers, Wi-Fi, and printing/photocopying.</p> <p>The council will explore how to use technology effectively to allow full access to library services and even library buildings even when no staff are on site (e.g., Open + technology).</p> <p>Relationships and links with the council's adult learning and skills service will be developed further to ensure that as an authority we are using every opportunity to help residents make full use of digital technology.</p> <p>In-depth discussions with partner agencies and council services will be undertaken to understand their requirements to support co-location. New Locality Plans will highlight particular issues faced by communities and services will be approached that can address issues in a bespoke way for each locality.</p>
	<p><u>Key considerations met</u></p> <p>3: Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently. This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.</p> <p>4: Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.</p> <p>5: Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.</p> <p>6: Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.</p> <p>7: Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line</p>
C	<p>Keep all the main library buildings open but reduce the opening and staffed hours at Langley and Cippenham and reduce the staffed hours at The Curve and Britwell libraries.</p>

	<p><u>Description and explanation</u></p> <p>The Needs Assessment recommends that the council considers a hybrid model of service delivery for both material resources and community events, using a blend of on-line and face-to-face provision. The Assessment also recommends a new approach to where these services are delivered from should be considered – traditionally our library services have been delivered predominantly from library buildings.</p> <p>Slough’s experience of library services being used during Covid restrictions suggests that many customers are comfortable using on-line borrowing facilities. However, participation in activities reduced significantly if they were offered on-line. It is recognised in the Needs Assessment that the library service has a significant role to play in reducing social isolation and improving access to the new digital landscape. Langley and Cippenham account for almost 25% of all computer hours booked by residents.</p> <p>This option keeps all 4 main library buildings open to the public for at least some of the time during every week. The opening hours at The Curve and Britwell Hub remain unchanged because the buildings are used by several services. Langley and Cippenham library buildings will only be open for some days, or part days. Library staff will only be available to provide social interactions, guidance, advice, and library-based activities for a limited time each week at all 4 main locations.</p> <p>Other community locations will be sought to deliver library services from. These other sites will complement the library service offered from the main library buildings as the current satellite libraries at Children’s Centres already do.</p>
	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Closing Cippenham and Langley library buildings part-time will reduce the availability of physical, traditional library buildings in both the south-west of the borough (Cippenham) and the south-east of the borough (Langley and Colnbrook & Poyle area). These library buildings are well-used with 20% of our active borrowers using Langley library and 15% using Cippenham. Between them they account for just under ¼ of all computer hours booked (23.5%).</p> <p>Reducing the times that library staff are available across all 4 main library buildings may create frustration in library users if they do not understand or know when the library buildings are open and when staff may be available. This could cause frustration that could result in a reduction in users across the service. This model would remove the ability to flexibly “drop-in” to a library building and be able to interact with a member of library staff.</p> <p>An important feature of the current physical use of library buildings is the ability for them to host school and nursery visits to introduce children to reading and literacy. These visits already need to be carefully planned around the school day, reducing the hours when the library building can host these sessions could impact on local young people.</p>

Library-building based events will have to be carefully programmed (timings and staff/volunteer availability) to fit with the reduced hours that buildings are open, and staff are available.

Mitigations

The public consultation exercise is specifically asking respondents to tell us when they would prefer library buildings to be open and staffed. We will use this feedback to tailor opening times to the local needs.

The Equality Impact Assessment action plan commits the library service to seek feedback from library users more often and in a more systematic way to allow us to keep opening and staffing times under review.

As part of the council's locality working model, opportunities for delivering library services from other settings in the borough will be explored. This could mean library services being delivered in locations more convenient to some residents.

An expansion of volunteering opportunities will allow activities and events to be delivered by the library service either exclusively by volunteers or by staff supported by volunteers.

Self-service methods of service access will be available at The Curve and Britwell Hub whenever the buildings are open as these do not require library staff input. This would include borrowing, returning, and renewing books, using public computers, Wi-Fi, and printing/photocopying.

The council will explore how to use technology effectively to allow full access to library services and even library buildings even when no staff are on site (e.g., [Open + technology](#)).

Relationships and links with the council's adult learning and skills service will be developed further to ensure that as an authority we are using every opportunity to help residents make full use of digital technology.

Key considerations met

4: Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.

5: Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.

6: Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.

	7: Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line
--	--

D	Close both Langley and Cippenham library buildings but maintain the staffing and opening hours at The Curve library and at Britwell library.
	<p><u>Description and explanation</u></p> <p>The Needs Assessment recommends that the council considers a hybrid model of service delivery for both material resources and community events, using a blend of on-line and face-to-face provision. The Assessment also recommends a new approach to where these services are delivered from should be considered – traditionally our library services have been delivered predominantly from library buildings.</p> <p>An innovative hybrid delivery model could reduce the need for traditional library buildings. In Slough the library buildings in Langley and Cippenham are “stand alone” library buildings with only a small customer service function being offered alongside the library function. Our other libraries are delivered out of multi-functional buildings with several services working from each one. If closing library buildings is the preferred option, it is easier to focus on the buildings not used by other services.</p> <p>Closing Cippenham and Langley libraries whilst offering a hybrid model of service delivery would suggest that the opening hours and the hours when library staff are available to help customers at The Curve and Britwell should remain unchanged. This would give the greatest opportunity for customers to continue to use face-to-face library services.</p> <p>Closing Cippenham and Langley libraries may offer an opportunity to the council to sell or lease one or both buildings to generate income for the authority.</p>
	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>Closing two libraries will reduce the availability of physical, traditional library buildings in both the south-west of the borough (Cippenham) and the south-east of the borough (Langley and Colnbrook & Poyle area). These libraries are well-used with 20% of our active borrowers using Langley library and 15% using Cippenham. Between them they account for just under ¼ of all computer hours booked (23.5%).</p> <p>Nearly 32,500 residents live within 1.5 miles of Langley library building and just under 19,500 live within 1.5 miles of Cippenham library building.</p> <p>The distance from Langley library to Britwell library is 6.4 miles and takes approximately 20 minutes to drive and 40 minutes on a bus. The distance between Langley library to The Curve is 2.2 miles and takes about 15 minutes to drive and 20 minutes on a bus. This is a significant increase in journey times to a physical library building.</p>

	<p>The distance from Cippenham library to Britwell library is 2.3 miles and takes approximately 8 minutes to drive; there is not a direct bus route between the two locations. The distance from Cippenham library to The Curve is 3.3 miles and takes approximately 18 minutes to drive and 20 minutes on a bus. This is a significant increase in journey times to a physical library building.</p> <p>The distance from Colnbrook & Poyle (Colnbrook village hall) to Langley library is 2.3 miles and takes approximately 10 minutes to drive and 20 minutes by bus. If Langley library closed the distance from Colnbrook & Poyle to The Curve (much closer than Britwell) is 4 miles and takes about 20 minutes to drive and almost 30 minutes on a bus. This is a significant increase in journey times to a physical library building for residents in this ward who already need to travel in a car/bus to access their nearest library in the borough.</p> <p>An important feature of the current physical use of libraries is the ability to host school and nursery visits to introduce children to reading and literacy. These visits already need to be carefully planned around the school day, asking schools to arrange for young people to travel long distances/times will reduce the likelihood of some schools and nurseries making use of this opportunity.</p> <p><u>Mitigations</u></p> <p>The remaining library buildings at The Curve and at Britwell are well served by public transport so will be accessible to residents from other areas (Britwell served by 5 bus routes covering the borough north of the A4 here and Slough town centre served by 24 separate routes covering most of the borough here). Library staff, public computers and reading/literacy based face-to-face activities would still be available at both The Curve and Britwell.</p> <p>The library service will continue to offer on-line borrowing for all residents.</p> <p>A range of library services could be delivered from other locations in the south-east and south-west of the borough, making use of opportunities at other buildings such as leisure centres, Children’s Centres (where appropriate) schools, health settings etc (although there may be a cost to doing this in some locations).</p> <p>The library service is committed to reviewing how it recruits, uses and retains volunteers meaning that the Home Library Service in these areas could be increased and/or volunteers could support staff to provide reading/literacy-based activities in alternative locations on a permanent or ad hoc basis (although there may be a cost to doing this).</p>
	<p><u>Key considerations met</u></p> <p>3: Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently. This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.</p> <p>4: Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.</p>

	<p>5: Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.</p> <p>6: Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.</p> <p>7: Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line</p>
--	--

E	<p>Move all library services out of the current main library buildings and re-locate services to be delivered from a range of other locations (and on-line) across the borough.</p>
	<p><u>Description and explanation</u></p> <p>The council's financial position is such that we may need to consider closing our dedicated library buildings (Langley and Cippenham) so we can sell them or repurpose the buildings to include other services to the exclusion of a library. In this option we would also remove library services from Britwell Hub and The Curve.</p> <p>Library services (in-person book lending, events and activities, access to public computers/IT, advice from staff and informal socialising) will be delivered from a range of other locations across the borough. This physical delivery of services will be delivered alongside on-line services to allow the council to deliver a hybrid library service.</p>
	<p><u>Impact</u></p> <p>In addition to the impacts already noted in options B, C and D the transfer of lending, events, and other services from The Curve to other locations in Slough town centre could have an impact on the accessibility and availability of library services around the borough.</p> <p>Specific impacts would be determined in any options appraisal undertaken when deciding on which alternative locations are being considered. However, any move away from delivering services from our 4 main library buildings will have an impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of study space (currently only offered from The Curve building) • Access to free public computers and IT (most public computers are available at The Curve) • Access to the Slough Museum local history information pods at The Curve • Interrelationship between library service and cultural events currently held at The Venue (performance space within The Curve building) <p>Any alternative locations may incur costs to the council to rent space/business rates/pay for storage of books and equipment etc.</p>

	<p><u>Mitigations</u></p> <p>Any alternative locations would be assessed for suitability and value for money and must have their own Equality Impact Assessment completed.</p> <p>Slough is a small-town centre well served by car parks and bus routes in addition to the mainline train station, so any other town centre locations used will remain accessible from across the borough.</p> <p>The Locality Model now embedded in Slough Borough Council's new operating model is strengthening relationships with partner organisations in the public and private sector and building on relationships with partners in the Third/voluntary sector. Options for alternative locations will be explored through these routes to identify places where residents are already comfortable using as possible sites to deliver services from.</p>
	<p><u>Key considerations met</u></p> <p>3: Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently. This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.</p> <p>4: Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.</p> <p>5: Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.</p> <p>6: Ensure that library staff are available to deliver services at times when they are most needed, and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.</p> <p>7: Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line</p>

5. How to respond to this consultation and give your feedback

5.1 We are opening this consultation to all Slough residents, and library users from outside the borough. We welcome responses both from those who use the library service and those who currently do not.

5.2 We would like to hear your views on the options we have proposed and to hear any alternative options that we haven't considered.

5.3 You can respond to this consultation document through the following methods:

Completing the survey

This is available online ([survey and link will be live from 28th October](#)) or by emailing libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk

You can complete the survey up to **Thursday 20th January 2022**

- ✓ Complete this survey for yourself, or on behalf of your children, or those you care for and share your views on the options proposed.
- ✓ Paper copies of the survey will also be available from libraries and from other locations across the borough. Please check our website for more information [Library Consultation webpage](#)
- ✓ For children and young people under the age of 13, the survey must be completed by a parent/carer.
- ✓ If have any queries or issues, contact libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk or ask at your local library.
- ✓ If you need a copy of the consultation pack /survey in easy read accessible format, please find [Library Consultation webpage](#) or email libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk

Attend a drop-in session

- ✓ As well as completing the survey online you can attend a drop-in session at one of our libraries.
- ✓ These will provide a more informal way for you to feedback your views, and complete the online survey.
- ✓ The timetable for drop-in sessions can be found here [Library Consultation webpage](#)

Attend an online consultation event

- ✓ We will also be holding 2 online consultation events for residents and specific groups
- ✓ To attend one of the resident's events you will need to book in advance

If you are interested in attending one of these events, or would like to find out more, please email libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk or book via Eventbrite using the link [Eventbrite booking](#)

There will be a series of separate information sessions with partner organisations

5.4 If you cannot access the Internet at home or need help to complete the survey you can visit your local library for access to public computers and staff support to complete the online survey. Paper copies of this form will be available at all libraries and hubs

- ✓ 5.5 The full Information pack, needs assessment and Equalities Impact Assessment can be found at [Library Consultation webpage](#)

Consultation on proposed changes to Slough Library Service

This consultation is open for **12 weeks from Thursday 28th October 2021 to Thursday 20th January 2022**

This consultation is about proposed changes to Slough libraries statutory services delivered through The Curve, Britwell, Cippenham and Langley libraries, and access to online services.

Slough Library service is asking for residents' and stakeholders views on several proposed options which will make changes to the library service. We need your help to know how you use the library service now, what your views are on the proposed changes, and what impacts the changes might have on how you use the service. We want to hear from current library users but also from people who don't use the services at the moment. We also want your ideas on alternative ways that we can deliver the library service and achieve savings.

Before completing this survey, please read the accompanying **Consultation Pack** on [Library Consultation webpage](#)

If you have any queries about this consultation, please contact libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk

Completing the survey

This is available online from the 28th October or by emailing libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk. You can complete the survey up to Thursday 20th January 2022.

- ✓ Complete this survey for yourself or on behalf of your children or those you care for and share your views on the options proposed.
- ✓ Paper copies of the survey will also be available from libraries and from other locations across the borough.
- ✓ For children and young people under the age of 13 the survey must be completed by a parent/carer.
- ✓ If have any queries or issues, contact libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk
- ✓ If you need a copy of the consultation pack /survey in easy read accessible format please go to [Library Consultation webpage](#) or email libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk

Attend a drop-in session

- ✓ As well as completing the survey online you can attend a drop-in session at one of the 4 libraries.
- ✓ These will be held at The Curve, Britwell, Cippenham and Langley libraries.
- ✓ These will provide a more informal way for you to feedback your views, and complete the online survey
- ✓ The timetable for drop-in sessions can be found here [Library Consultation webpage](#)

Attend an online Consultation event

- ✓ We will also be holding two online consultation events for residents and specific groups

To attend one of the resident's events you will need to book in advance. If you are interested in attending one of these events, or would like to find out more, please email libraryconsultation@slough.gov.uk or book via Eventbrite [Eventbrite booking](#)

These will be themed discussions including guided sessions on completing the survey.

- ✓ There will be a separate series of information sessions with partner organisations.

Your Data Privacy notice

Slough Borough Council is seeking your views, comments, and information about you in order to inform its decisions about changes to the library service. The information you provide in this survey is being collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest in the exercise of official authority vested in Slough Borough Council, and for reasons of substantial public interest. We will use the information to understand what people's views are about the proposed options. Your data will not be shared with any third parties. We will keep your personal information securely for one year, after which it will be deleted or destroyed. Data will be stored on Survey Monkey.

You have some legal rights in respect of the personal information we collect from you. Please see [Data protection information](#)

You can contact the Council's Data Protection Officer dataprotectionofficer@slough.gov.uk

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance

Library Consultation

Please answer the following questions about Slough Library Services. We want to hear from people who use libraries and those who don't.

PART 1

1. Do you have a membership card or borrower number for Slough Libraries? *(Please choose one option)*

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

2. Do you live in Slough? *(Choose one option)*

Yes	
No	

3. Which of the following Slough libraries do you use? *(Choose all that apply)*

The Curve	
Britwell	
Cippenham	
Langley	
A library at a Children's Centre	
Online library	
I don't currently use any library services	Go to Q7

4. In a typical year how often would you use library buildings in Slough? *(Choose one only)*

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	
A few times year	
Seldom, maybe once or twice	
Never	Go to Q7

5. In a typical year how often would you use on-line library services in Slough? *(Choose one only)*

Daily	
Weekly	
Monthly	
A few times year	
Seldom, maybe once or twice	
Never	Go to Q7

6. When you visit a library, how do you normally travel there? *(Choose one that covers most of your journey)*

By car	
By bus	
By train	
I walk	
I cycle	
Other	Free text

7. What are the main reasons you don't use the library service? (Please select up to 4 choices)

I didn't know there were libraries in Slough/ I don't know where the libraries are	
I didn't know there is an on-line library	
I don't have time to visit a library	
I don't think there is anything for me at a library	
I'm worried about getting overdue fines	
I can't travel to a library easily	
Libraries aren't open when I need them	
I have computer, WiFi and/or printers at home	
I don't know how to find out when they are open and what they offer	
I don't know about the events and activities	
The choice of books isn't good enough	
I don't feel safe in a library	
I don't feel welcome in libraries	
Other reason	Free text

PART 2

8. Which of the following library services do you use now, and which would you like to use in the future? (Choose the top 5 that apply in each column)

	Now	Future
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return books from the general library		
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return books from the children's section of a library		
Visit a Children's Centre to browse, borrow or return books		
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return books that are not in English		
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return large print/Talking Books		
Use a library in a location within walking distance from my home		
Use a library in a location within driving distance (10 to 20-minute drive time) from my home		
Use a library in a location that I can get to easily & cheaply on public transport.		
Go on-line to borrow		

eBooks/eAudio books		
Go on-line to borrow eMagazines/eNewspapers		
Go on-line to use learning resources - for example Driver Theory Test, Slough History Online, Citizenship learning, learn a new language		
Go on-line to attend an event – for example Storytime, Curve Club, Reading Friends, seated exercises, Summer Reading Challenge		
Visit a library to use free computers or to use free Wi-Fi		
Visit a library to attend an event – for example Story and Rhyme, seated exercises, Summer Reading Challenge		
Visit a library to do your own printing or photocopying		
Visit a library with a school or nursery visit		
Visit a library to use quiet study spaces		
Visit a library to use the toilets		
Attend an event taking place in a meeting room at a library		
Visit a library to have an informal meet up with friends		
Visit a library to collect a Bookstart pack		
Visit a library to carryout research – for example, family history		
Library at Home service (volunteers bring library books to you)		
Go on-line to carryout research – for example, family history		
Be a library volunteer		
Other	Free text	Free text

9. From the same list, please score your top 3 most important things that we should make sure we offer in our library service in future. Score 1 for the most important, 2 for the second most and 3 for the third most important.

	1	2	3
Visit a library to browse,			

borrow or return books from the general library			
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return books from the children's library			
Visit a Children's Centre to browse, borrow or return books			
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return books that are not in English			
Visit a library to browse, borrow or return large print/Talking Books			
Use a library in a location within walking distance from my home			
Use a library in a location within driving distance (10 to 20-minute drive time) from my home			
Use a library in a location that I can get to easily & cheaply on public transport.			
Go on-line to borrow eBooks/eAudio books			
Go on-line to borrow eMagazines/eNewspapers			
Go on-line to use learning resources - for example Driver Theory Test, Slough History Online, Citizenship learning, learn a new language			
Go on-line to attend an event – for example Storytime, Curve Club, Reading Friends, seated exercises, Summer Reading Challenge			
Visit a library to use free computers or to use free Wi-Fi			
Visit a library to attend an event – for example Story and Rhyme, seated exercises, Summer Reading Challenge			
Visit a library to do your own printing or photocopying			
Visit a library with a school or nursery visit			
Visit a library to use quiet study spaces			
Visit a library to use the			

toilets			
Attend an event taking place in a meeting room at a library			
Visit a library to have an informal meet up with friends			
Visit a library to collect a Bookstart pack			
Visit a library to carryout research – for example, family history			
Library at Home service (volunteers bring library books to you)			
Go on-line to carryout research – for example, family history			
Be a library volunteer			
Other	Free text		Free text

10. What are your top 3 preferred times for visiting a library? (Please choose 3 that apply)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning 8am -10am							
Mid-morning 10am-12pm							
Lunch 12pm -2pm							
Afternoon 2-5pm							
Evening 5pm-7pm							

We may be able to offer self-service times in our libraries. You would be able to use your membership card to go into the library and borrow/return/renew books and use the computers, WiFi and printers/photocopiers. There would be no staff available at these times.

11. Please choose the top 3 times you would prefer to have a self-service offer (choose 3 that apply)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning 8am -10am							
Mid-morning 10am-12pm							
Lunch 12pm -2pm							

Afternoon 2-5pm							
Evening 5pm-7pm							

Part 3

We think we need to take 7 specific considerations into account when designing our future library service. Please tell us how important each of these are to you, score 1 for your most important down to 7 for your least important. All seven considerations need to have a different score.

12. Please choose a different score for each of the issues we need to consider

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new hard copy books is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7
Make sure the amount of money spent on buying new eResources is in line with the average amount spent by other councils which are most like Slough.	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7
Make sure that library buildings are used efficiently.	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7

<p>This will include seeing if other services can be offered from library buildings with, or instead of the current library service.</p>							
<p>Make sure that there is careful consideration of all opportunities to deliver library services from other locations in communities if this is efficient and effective.</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>
<p>Ensure that library services are open and available at times when they are most needed and understand that this may reduce the numbers of hours physical libraries are open each week.</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>
<p>Ensure that library staff are available to deliver</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>	<p>Drop down menu 1-7</p>

services at times when they are most needed , and that this may reduce the numbers of hours library staff are available each week whether that is on-line or in person.							
Make sure that wherever possible and practical, services are provided virtually and on-line	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7	Drop down menu 1-7

13. Are there other considerations you think we need to also take into account?

Free text (character limit)

We have suggested 5 possible ways we could continue to deliver a comprehensive, affordable library service that meet our considerations. Please tell us which THREE of these you think are the best ones to try to deliver.

14. Please chose the 3 priority models you think are the best ones to try to deliver.

A	Reduce the money available to spend on buying publications (both hard copy and eResources).	
B	Keep all library buildings but reduce the hours they are open, the hours they are staffed, and the space dedicated to the library. Attract other users to rent space in the building alongside a reduced library (co-location).	

C	Keep all the main library buildings open but reduce the opening and staffed hours at Langley and Cippenham and reduce the staffed hours at The Curve and Britwell libraries.	
D	Close both Langley and Cippenham library buildings but maintain the staffing and opening hours at The Curve library and at Britwell library.	
E	Move all library services out of the current main library buildings and re-locate services to be delivered from a range of other locations (and on-line) across the borough.	

15. Please use the box below to add any further comments or feedback you have including any comments on your choices above or ideas on alternative ways that we can deliver the library service and achieve savings.

free text box (character limit)

16. Are you are interested in supporting the service as a library volunteer or just finding out more? Please leave your email address below so we can contact you about our volunteering opportunities.

(Your email will only be used by the library team to contact you and will not be shared with any third party)

Part 4

Thank you for completing this survey. To help us make sure we understand the different people who use the library service or who might use it in the future we'd like you to complete the short monitoring survey.

17. Are you responding as (choose 1)

An individual (adult)	
A parent/guardian/carer for someone else	
A representative of a group, school, nursery, business	
A local councillor/MP	
A library volunteer	
An employee of Slough Borough Council	
Other	Free text

18. Do have any regular access to the Internet? (Choose 1)

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

19. How do you connect to the Internet? (choose all that apply)

Computer/smart phone/tablet at home, work, or school	
Public computer or laptop at a library using library Wi-Fi	
Your own laptop/smart phone/tablet using library Wi-Fi	
Your own laptop/smart phone/tablet using Wi-Fi somewhere else like a coffee shop	
None of the above	Free text

20. Please provide your postcode in the box below (optional)

Your postcode will help us to understand the impact of the proposed options on different parts of the borough. By providing your postcode you are consenting to SBC using this information to profile and analyse the response to the consultation to understand how views differ by area.

If you are replying on behalf of a group/school/business, please give the postcode of your main address.

21. To help us improve access to future consultations, please tell us where you first heard about this consultation (Please choose one option)

At a Slough library	
Through a group that I attend	
On social media	
Online (please specify)	Free text
Via an email	
You saw a poster or leaflet	
In a resident's newsletter (printed or online)	
Through my school/nursery, or my child's school/nursery	
Through my employer	
I saw an article in a local paper/heard about it on local radio	
Word of mouth/someone told me about it	
Other	Free text

Slough Borough Council is committed to improving its services, eliminating unlawful discrimination, and promoting equality of opportunity for all people. The following questions

are optional, but we would be grateful if you could answer to help us understand the views of, and potential impacts on, different people within Slough.

I (or the person I am responding on behalf of) describe my sex as

Male	
Female	
Prefer not to say	

Is your gender (or the person you are responding on behalf of) the same as that assigned at birth / your sex assigned at birth?

Yes	
No	

My age (or the person I am responding on behalf of) is

Under 16	
16 – 24	
25 – 39	
40 – 49	
50 – 59	
60 – 69	
69+	
Prefer not to say	

How would you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) describe your ethnic origin?

Arab/British Arab	
Asian/British Asian - Bangladeshi - Chinese - Indian - Pakistani - Other	
Black/Black British - African - Caribbean - Other	
Gypsy/Traveller/Roma	
Mixed Heritage	
White/White British - British - English - Welsh - Scottish - Northern Irish - Irish - Other	
European	
Self-describe as	Free text
Prefer not to say	

Do you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) consider yourself to have a disability? (please select one option only)

No	
Yes – limits my day-to-day life a lot	
Yes – limits my day-to-day life a little	
Prefer not to say	

How would you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) describe your sexual orientation?

Straight/heterosexual	
Lesbian, gay, bi, trans/formerly transgender, + / LGBT+	
Self-describe as	Free text
Other	
Prefer not to say	

What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) religion or belief?

Buddhist	
Christian	
Hindu	
Humanist	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
No religion/belief	
Self-describe as	
Prefer not to say	

Is English the language you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) most comfortable using?

Yes	
No – please specify	Free text
Prefer not to say	

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 18th October 2021

SUBJECT: Bus Service Improvement Plan

CHIEF OFFICER: Executive Director of Place

CONTACT OFFICER: Savio DeCruz (AD Place Operations)

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Sustainable Transport and the Environment

KEY DECISION: YES

EXEMPT: NO

DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN: YES

APPENDICES:

- A. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP – version 4, draft)
- B. BSIP – Outline Funding Template
- C. Equality Impact Assessment

1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out the general principles and core elements of the proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan (“BSIP”), including a summary of the main elements within the plan, along with the proposal to refine the document subject to further research and analysis, and subsequently to submit the BSIP to the Department for Transport (DfT) by the DfT deadline of 31st October 2021.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Consider and approve the draft BSIP.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director - Place and Communities, in consultation with the Lead Member for Sustainable Transport and the Environment, to:
 - (a) approve the final version of the BSIP and submit this to the DfT,
 - (b) subject to approval of the BSIP, commence preparation of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (EPP).
3. Note that a report will be presented to Cabinet for approval of the EPP.

Reason:

The submission of the BSIP is an essential next step in the Council's response to the National Bus Strategy. This response also includes the development of an Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators in Slough. The overall requirement is to establish and commit to a joint plan to improve reliability and quality of services, increase bus passenger levels and improve bus passenger satisfaction. The timescale allowed by the government for Local Transport Authorities to develop this Enhanced Partnership and BSIP has been extremely tight, hence the draft status currently accorded to the BSIP document presented here for review. This draft BSIP follows the establishment of the Enhanced Partnership in June 2021 (more details are included in section 2.3). Assuming the general principles of the BSIP are approved by Cabinet, the plan will be finalised, including reference to any data analysis not yet completed, and any other necessary content, including further reference to financial implications, costs and potential opportunities. Subsequently, there will be an opportunity for the Cabinet member with responsibility for Sustainable Transport and the Environment to review the final draft and request any amendments prior to submission.

Assuming Cabinet approval of the BSIP, and following subsequent DfT review of the BSIP, the next stage will be the development of the Enhanced Partnership Plan. This will be a much more detailed plan containing proposals for specific schemes within the overall EPP. However, in line with the principles of the BSIP, all proposals within the EPP will again be subject to feasibility, availability of funding, and consultation responses. Hence, the EPP will be presented to Cabinet for approval before progressing any schemes.

2 Report

2.1 Approval of the BSIP in principle will allow the Transport team to prepare submission of the final plan to the DfT. The BSIP document presented with this report is in draft form, and work is continuing on the plan prior to submission. This will include responding to any comments raised in this Cabinet meeting, along with all further analysis and conclusions. As presented, the structure and main contents of the BSIP are as follows:

- Review of the current bus services 'offer' in Slough
- The headline targets for improvement, specifying journey time, journey reliability, passenger numbers and passenger satisfaction as the main features to be addressed.
- Proposed measures and how they can be delivered, including (but not limited to) bus priority, service frequency, fares, ticketing, modal integration and so forth.
- A proposed reporting mechanism.
- Reference to DfT guidance throughout.

The following general principals apply to the BSIP:

- The DfT has instructed local authorities and bus operators to be ambitious in their plans.
- All the measures proposed in this plan are subject to feasibility and availability of funding, and also to satisfactory consultation outcomes.
- The proposals also depend upon thorough cooperation between the Council as Local Transport Authority and the bus operators in Slough.

- The BSIP is the first phase of the overall plan. Subsequently, as the second phase, an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) will be prepared, again in partnership with the bus operators, for submission to the DfT. This will include more detailed, scheme specific content for the purpose of requesting funding.

As proposed, the BSIP does not include any immediate financial commitments. However, given the requirements of the government and the DfT, it is necessary to have a BSIP in place, along with an Enhanced Partnership with the bus operators, in order to support the improvement of services and infrastructure. In the absence of a satisfactory BSIP, a range of negative financial implications for the Council would be expected to arise.

The Department for Transport has allocated a fund to support Local Transport Authorities in response to the National Bus Strategy. The value of this total fund is £3 billion over the lifetime covered by the strategy, currently expected to be the next three years. This fund includes grants for local authorities to develop their responses. Further, this fund will also cover the DfT's costs of running a newly established Centre of Excellence for all National Bus Strategy related matters. This same fund will be used for the ZEBRA initiative (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas), and also for contributions in response to successful bids for specific schemes proposed by Local Authorities as part of their Enhanced Partnership Plans. Given the administrative costs referred to above, it is not clear how much will be available in due course for scheme contributions. However, currently, the only way to have the opportunity to formally seek any such funding is to have an Enhanced Partnership in place.

Section 6 in the BSIP provides a table of all proposed measures, which are all designed to have positive impacts on the four key government targets:

- Improved journey times
- Improved journey time reliability
- Increased Bus patronage
- Increased Passenger Satisfaction

This table of measures links to and is supported by a summarised outline funding template. This is provided as Appendix B. The prioritisation for each summarised package of measures is yet to be determined. The total estimated cost for all measures is approximately £54m. It is stressed, however, that all such proposals are subject to funding, feasibility and consultation.

The DfT has said that it will welcome bids to other funds / sources, e.g. Levelling Up, to contribute to the success of the EP. We are expecting guidance from DfT as to how the funding will be broken down. SBC officers will negotiate agreements with bus operators that are conditional on the level of funding that can be secured.

2.2 The BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership have been designed to align with all Transport and wider Council policies. They will support all outcomes of the Five Year Plan, 2020-2025, noting, specifically:

Outcome 2: *Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs*

The schemes that will be delivered through the Enhanced Partnership Plan will be designed to reduce congestion and improve safety at key locations, also to improve air quality, and will therefore lead to better public health across the borough.

Outcome 3: *Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.*

Enhanced provision of public transport will improve social inclusion by making Slough more accessible and increasing mobility across the borough. This will provide better access to commercial / retail centres as well as access to jobs and education. Increased patronage of public transport will also contribute to the reduction in CO² and improved air quality.

Outcome 4: *Our residents will live in good quality homes*

The BSIP will focus on services and infrastructure which will provide high quality transportation links for both existing and new areas of housing development.

Outcome 5: *Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents*

Better connectivity through improved services and links will contribute to economic growth. Greater priority for public transport and increased modal shift will reduce congestion and make journey times more reliable on the road network.

The priorities to be addressed in the establishment of the Enhanced Partnership will also be in line with the overarching Council policies, notably the **Carbon Strategy**. The Council has committed to challenging targets, with a net zero carbon target by 2040 for the borough, and a stretch target of 2030 for the Council's own organisation operations. Increased public transport will make a significant contribution to meeting these targets.

In Transport terms, specifically, and the links with Planning, the Council's Transport policy is focused on providing a sustainable, integrated travel solution at local level. At the heart of this is the need for modal shift, with public transport and mass movement of people playing an essential role here. Multi-modal and linked journeys involving public transport and active travel especially, are also crucial. The BSIP will also support the following specific related policies:

- The Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP)
- The Network Management Plan
- The Local Transport Plan.
- The Low Emission Strategy.
- The Slough Local Plan and Spatial Strategy.

Full details relating to these policies are set out in the Significant Decision for the BSIP.

2.3. Options considered

The DfT initially presented LTAs with a choice of models to implement the requirements of the National Bus Strategy, and hence to base the BSIP on. Three options were available:

Enhanced Partnership

An Enhanced Partnership (EP). This entails close working, cooperation and commitment to a formal, shared and legally enforceable plan for the delivery of bus services in and across the local authority area. This plan is the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

This is the option that the Council has selected, and has to date received funding from the DfT to the value of £150,000.

The Enhanced Partnership has been established, with the first formal meeting with the bus operators having taken place on 25th June 2021. Terms of reference have been agreed, with unanimous approval from the group on the principles relating to the development of the BSIP. The ongoing objectives were discussed and agreed again with the bus operators on the 4th August 2021. At the same meeting, the main proposals included in the BSIP were presented to and agreed by the bus operators.

Franchising

A franchising arrangement would involve the local traffic authority being in overall control of bus services provided in the borough, including the determination and award of franchises to be awarded to specific companies for specific routes / services, subject to successful bidding processes. This option was not feasible. As per the DfT guidance, as a non-mayoral authority, SBC would have required Secretary of State approval for this option, and this would only have been considered if we had previously fully explored the Enhanced Partnership option. In practice, it would not have been possible for Slough to have a franchising system in place by April 2022, and in this circumstance the DfT would have required Slough to have in place an Enhanced Partnership by April 2022 even if it were to consider franchising in the medium to long term.

Neither of the above

In all practical terms, this was not realistically an option. It is unclear how Slough could fulfil its duties regarding the delivery of public transport, and compliance with all related policies and commitments in this scenario. There would also have been greater uncertainty about possible funding sources for transport projects across the board.

The requirement is now to submit the final version of the BSIP to the DfT by the end of October 2021. No exceptions are being allowed by the DfT for late submission. Should the BSIP not be submitted on time, it is unknown exactly what the implications would be for the Council, but there is a possibility that any initial allocation of funding, and any future funding opportunities would be either lost or delayed.

2.4. Background

The National Bus Strategy has been developed by Government in the context of the need to bring about a post-COVID-19 recovery across the country, and to ensure the recovery is not car-led. This follows on from the publication of the DfT's *Better Deal for Bus Users* guidance, with a commitment to help local authorities improve current services and restore lost services where they're needed most.

During the COVID-19 restrictions, demand for public transport was substantially reduced and emergency government funding was applied to maintain bus services. All formal restrictions were lifted in July 2021. In transport terms, the essential policy is for public transport to be an integral part of the overall recovery. For buses, the Government has put forward the slogan *'Bus Back Better'*, indicating the intention to ensure that services post-COVID will be an improvement on the situation before the restrictions came first into place.

However, even before the COVID-19 restrictions came into place, policies were in place at Slough to promote increased uptake of public transport and specifically travel by bus. Hence the National Bus Strategy is building on existing plans and aspirations in Slough.

The mass movement of people on the network has long been a priority in order to deliver an integrated, sustainable transport solution in and across the borough. This has underpinned transport and wider policies.

Prior to consideration by Cabinet, the BSIP has been scheduled for review at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on September 28th.

Prior to that, Cllr Anderson, member with responsibility for Sustainable Transport and the Environment, was consulted on the Significant Decision in July 2021 to proceed with the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership.

Leading on from the Significant Decision, as an essential requirement of the EP and BSIP, the Council's Transport officers have engaged in discussions with all bus operators who run registered, local bus services in Slough. A formal terms of reference document was established for this purpose. Most recently, SBC presented the latest version of the draft BSIP template to the operators at a group partnership meeting.

SBC Transport officers have also consulted neighbouring local authorities, mainly Buckinghamshire County Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead as well as Heathrow Airport Limited. There is a shared commitment here to ongoing engagement, and to ensuring a consistent approach to routes and services that cross boundaries or where there are other shared opportunities and obligations.

Regarding the public, in order to better understand public opinion and to be better informed about public transport needs, opportunities and problems, the Council's Transport Service is currently engaging in an online consultation with the general public. Responses have been requested via an online survey on the Citizenspace website, with the survey running until 26th September 2021. This is intended to involve both bus travellers and those who do not currently travel by bus. Information will be collated and may result in additional or amended content in the final draft of the BSIP. However at this stage, this is expected to strengthen the existing evidence base, and the overall principles and proposals within the current draft BSIP presented at this meeting are not expected to change significantly.

Place Scrutiny review:

The BSIP was presented for review at the Place Scrutiny meeting on 28th September 2021. The panel was asked to note and comment on the content of the BSIP. A range of comments was received, notably relating to:

- Fare prices and ticketing options
- Carbon reduction, policies and zero emission buses. Data provision

- Provision of services – operator obligations and SBC influence
- Supported services and subsidies
- The effectiveness of highway improvements and bus priority
- More focus on services in Langley
- Insufficient reference to the bus station, including accessibility measures
- Insufficient reference to consultation with local groups including disability forums
- Reference to lack of facilities on board buses for wheelchairs
- No evidence of consultation with ward members
- Demand responsive services not proposed
- Request for increased services to Heathrow and Wexham Park
- Likely reduction in parking income due to increased public transport usage

In response, the above comments and questions have been covered to varying extents within the BSIP draft document. In particular, the table of proposed measures already includes detailed reference to fares and ticketing and partnership obligations. Measures relating to the bus station have not been included to date, since the intention is to address the issues now, as an existing priority and as far as practically possible, and not to make them subject to plans in the BSIP.

The requirement for greater local engagement is acknowledged. An extensive survey has been conducted online, but provision for ongoing and more extensive liaison with community groups will be considered for inclusion in the BSIP.

There will be consultation with ward councillors and more widely at the next stage, when it comes to proposing specific scheme proposals and bids at the Enhanced Partnership Plan stage.

The requirement for zero emission buses and carbon reduction more widely will be further reviewed, and proposals included in the BSIP included or strengthened.

All other points will also be further reviewed and considered for reference (or enhanced reference) in the BSIP, as appropriate.

Operator Comments:

The draft BSIP has also been shared with the operators of registered local services in Slough. The main comments received to date are as follows:

First Bus Group has asked for:

- More information on multi-operator ticketing proposals
- More detailed reference to zero emission buses, including ambition level and timescales

Reading Buses have asked for or referred to the need for:

- Provision of real time data on relevant websites
- Better facilities on board for all bus travellers
- Improvements to bus shelters and bus stops generally
- Reference to park and ride plans for Slough

Most of these requests for proposals will ultimately require commitment and investment from the operators themselves, within the overall partnership. All responses are currently being considered and amendments to the final BSIP are being prepared where appropriate.

As an overall comment in response to consultation, the BSIP is intended to be a high level document and set of proposals, with greater detailed to be provided at the EPP stage. Furthermore, once published, the BSIP will be a live document which will be regularly reviewed, and additional or amended proposals will be applied as and when required and in agreement within the Enhanced Partnership.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1. From 2022, Local Authorities with BSIPs / EPPs in place will be invited to submit bids for EP / BSIP related schemes, for funding contributions from the overall £3bn pool.

3.1.2. An underlying principle applicable to all schemes and improvements proposed in the BSIP is that they are subject to availability of funding and that they are feasible in all relevant ways. Currently there is no funding available from the Council. There may be some consideration of the use of possible future Section 106 contributions as partial funding towards schemes, but this is not currently being proposed. Furthermore, the Council is currently seeking ways to reduce expenditure in any way legally and practically possible, including, for example, supported bus services.

3.1.3. Bus operators will be expected to be equally committed to the BSIP (they will be joint owners of and legally bound to all commitments in the plan). This, in theory, would suggest financial investment and contribution. However, in addition to the need for all scheme delivery to be subject to available funding and feasibility, commercial interest will also be an inevitable factor affecting the likelihood of any such constraints.

3.1.4. Regarding services to Heathrow Airport, there is a possibility that funding opportunities may arise in the future, potentially to be provided by Heathrow Airport Limited, for improved services across the relevant authority areas. Noting the current economic circumstances and the impacts of COVID-19, no such funding sources have currently been made available.

3.1.5. Overall, subject to the successful establishment of the partnership, and ongoing effective provision of bus services and relations with the bus operators, no negative financial impacts are anticipated.

However, should the Council choose not to submit a satisfactory BSIP, this would immediately raise financial problems for the Council. This would include the cessation of COVID-19 related payments, which would reduce support for bus services and would therefore be detrimental to both the Council and the operators, who would then be obliged to provide funding for necessary measures from alternative sources.

A grant of £100K already has been received by SBC from the DfT from the Bus Capacity Grant. This was in response to the Council's provisional indication that it has committed to an Enhanced Partnership arrangement and BSIP submission. A subsequent £50k has been received to further assist in the development of the BSIP. The funding covers the following:

- Preparation of the formal statement committing to an Enhanced Partnership
- Development of the BSIP, including preparatory work with the bus operators
- Development of the subsequent specific scheme bids in the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP).

All of this expenditure is subject to satisfactory business cases being approved by the Expenditure Control Panel.

Consideration is already being given to the suspension of subsidies by the Council to support a number of services that are not commercially viable. The lack of a satisfactory BSIP would virtually guarantee that there is no scope to engage with the operators to try to maintain these services on any basis.

It would also prevent the ability to bid for DfT funding for schemes in the lifetime of the National Bus Strategy, placing both the Council and bus operators at a disadvantage compared to other authorities where partnerships or franchises are in place.

3.1.6. The budget for the Council's contribution to the Enhanced Partnership will be managed by the Transport team in the Strategy and Infrastructure division of the Place directorate.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1. The Council as a Local Transport Authority (LTA) has statutory functions under the Local Transport Act 2008 and has statutory duty to comply with the Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017. This 2017 Act introduces an Enhanced Partnership, which is an 'agreement between a local transport authority (LTA) and local bus operators to improve local bus services'

3.2.2 The Council is also under a statutory duty to comply with the National Bus Strategy. Statutory guidance was issued by the DfT in May 2021: National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvements Plans which sets out the timeline for compliance with various stages.

3.2.3 Step 1 is for the Council to decide which statutory path to follow – pursue an Enhanced Partnership or develop a bus franchising assessment. As stated in the Strategy, by the end of June 2021, to be eligible for new funding and continued access to COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) every LTA must have published a statutory notice that they intend to prepare an EPP (as required by S.138F(1)(a) of the Transport Act 2000).

As stated in section 2.3, the Council has chosen to develop an Enhanced Partnership. Formal notice of this decision was given in May 2021. The partnership has been in place since June 2021.

3.2.4 Step 2 LTA's should develop and publish a BSIP by 31 October 2021. Each plan will need to be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan and in other relevant local plans.

The Transport team will manage this annual review and the alignment of the BSIP with all Council related Transport policies.

3.2.5 Step 3 from April 2022, the BSIP should be delivered using one of the two statutory options under Step 1 above. Thus, the Council must have an Enhanced Partnership in place by April 2022.

The Enhanced Partnership commenced in June 2021.

3.2.6 Although the BSIP is a joint plan, with all parties accountable for the successful delivery of the BSIP, the Council has ultimate responsibility for submitting the plan to the DfT in the first instance, and thereafter to chairing the partnership.

3.2.8 The BSIP is an essential element of the way the Council will fulfil its statutory duty to identify the bus services appropriate to meet the needs of their areas, and to secure provision of those services that cannot be provided on a commercial basis. However, the BSIP will inevitably provide new opportunities as well as challenges regarding the best way to fulfil this duty, with an emphasis on the Enhanced Partnership arrangements.

3.2.9 The commitments proposed in the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership will have implications for both the Council as Local Transport Authority and the Bus Operators, who will be the joint owners of the BSIP. However, all schemes included in the BSIP are proposals at this stage, and are subject to feasibility, funding availability and consultation.

3.2.10 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, under Part 3.5, the Cabinet has responsibility for executive functions relating to Transport matters (including Traffic Regulation Orders and related management matters). This function relating to Operational Transport and Traffic matters can be delegated to Officers in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. Under Part 3.7 of the Constitution, the Lead Member for Sustainable Transport & The Environment has the responsibility for Public Transport & Travel Plans and relationships with Bus & Rail Operators and Heathrow Airport Ltd.

3.2.11 Part 3.6 of the Constitution sets out the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and under Section 2 - Executive Directors' general delegated powers include: taking and implementing any decision required for operational effectiveness, taking any action necessary to ensure the effective development and implementation of the Council's key strategies and services relating to directorates and attending and representing the Council on partnership boards. Under section 4, specific delegation is given to the Executive Director – Place for the function relating to Transport planning.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1. A risk assessment has not been conducted specifically to accompany the preparation and submission of the BSIP to the DfT. However, when it comes to progressing proposed schemes, the risk assessments, notably including financial risks, will be considered and prepared as appropriate.

3.3.2. In broad terms, there is no financial risk associated with the preparation and submission of the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership. Conversely, there would be a significant risk should the Council decide not to proceed with its BSIP commitments already made. This relates to the comments in the Finance section above.

3.3.3. Similarly, there are no policy related risks associated with the preparation and submission of the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership. Given the options made available by Government to local transport authorities, the BSIP and EP route is considered the best way to deliver on policy commitments already made by the Council. Conversely, again, there would be a significant risk of failing to meet targets and commitments should the Council not continue with the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 The overall impacts of the BSIP are expected to be highly positive in terms of contributing to the environmental implications. These are referred to in the policy related comments in section 2.

The promotion of Public Transport is one of the major elements of sustainable travel. This involves the mass movement of people across the network, reducing the need for journeys made by cars or other limited capacity vehicles. This in turn leads to reduced congestion and hence better air quality as well as reduced carbon emissions and particulates across the borough. Highway related schemes (e.g. bus priority and junction improvements) will also reduce congestion and therefore lead to reduced emissions.

3.4.2. Still greater contributions will be made to the Carbon Strategy by the potential for zero emission buses to be delivered through BSIP schemes. The DfT has recently called for bids for funding to develop ZEBRA schemes (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas). Whilst a ZEBRA scheme is not currently included in the BSIP, this may well be included as the partnership develops. Initial consultation with the major bus operators in Slough has already taken place on this subject, with encouraging responses.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 The Equality Act 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty and under s.149 it requires Public Bodies as decision makers to have 'due regard' to achieving a number of equality goals, which includes the need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by 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.

3.5.2 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

3.5.3 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design policies and the delivery of services.

3.5.4 In order to assist in meeting its duty the Council has carried out an initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the BSIP and this is provided as Appendix C to this report. This is an over-arching assessment at this stage of the overall response to the National Bus Strategy. Subsequently, when it comes to developing plans for specific schemes within the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP), individual EIAs will additionally be provided for all schemes of a scale and scope considered appropriate to warrant this level of assessment.

The overall expectations are as follows:

- a) The impacts of the BSIP will be positive for all groups in society, with wide-ranging opportunities and improvements across the borough, and
- b) There will be no negative impacts from the BSIP on any protected group

Examples of the benefits that will be of particular benefit to identified groups include the following:

- c) More frequent services will be especially helpful to the elderly. This will lead to increased perceptions of safety and greater comfort / minimised physical pain related to traditionally longer waiting times. A more reliable network of services will also improve connectivity and social inclusion, as well as access to a range of destinations.
- d) Similar benefits will also be expected for people with disabilities, through a greater understanding of the issues, which will be shared by the operators and the Council. Where not already included, the proposed table of measures and schemes will be reviewed and strengthened to better address the needs of people with disabilities
- e) More frequent and more reliable services will also improve safety (perceived and actual) especially for mothers of young children. Benefits will also be associated with better access to healthcare related destinations. Lower fare costs may well be of particular benefit here too.
- f) Improved bus services are expected to provide a more attractive, more efficient travel option for specific cultural groups, where there is typically a strong 'car culture' and a reluctance to travel on public transport.
- g) More reliable bus services, reduced waiting times, and a better bus network are all likely to provide a safer and more attractive travel option to those seeking to travel to places of worship across the borough.

3.6 Procurement implications

3.6.1 There is no immediate need for Procurement knowledge or expertise, or any actions related to this discipline in the finalisation of the BSIP (the plan) and the Enhanced Partnership. However, again, when it comes to advancing the plans for specific major schemes, or contractual opportunities relating to services and facilities, all appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that procurement legislation will be adhered to, and all guidance followed.

3.7 Workforce implications

3.7.1 There is a clear need for the Council to have at its disposal the relevant knowledge, experience, and skills within its workforce. As part of the overall Public Transport related responsibilities of the Council, the BSIP will be managed by the Place directorate, Strategy and Infrastructure division. The BSIP is considered to be one of the Transport service's top priorities. Arrangements are currently in place to manage the initial stages of the introduction of the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership. Additional staff may be required to cover the full range of BSIP and Enhanced Partnership responsibilities as the plan is delivered. Regular reviews will be required on an ongoing basis to ensure that all aspects continue to be covered.

Furthermore, the success of the plan will also depend on appropriate levels of staffing resources in related service areas, including procurement, legal and financial disciplines, particularly when it comes to progressing scheme development and contractual matters within the Enhanced Partnership.

3.8 Property implications

3.8.1 Reference is made throughout the BSIP to bus related infrastructure including the bus station and transport interchanges, as well as bus stop and signage. However, there is currently no reference to the management of the Slough bus station in the town centre. This may be subject to proposals and arrangements as the BSIP plan is taken forward. As in all partnership matters, this will involve consultation and close working with the bus operators who use or have the option to use the station.

4. Background Papers

- BSIP - Slough Baseline: Technical Note
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Significant Decision: Place – Strategy and Infrastructure: Response to the National Bus Strategy. Dated 12th July 2021.
- DfT: Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy
- DfT: NBS – BSIP Guidelines

National Bus Strategy

Bus Service Improvement Plan

Slough Borough Council

October 2021

0.4

DRAFT

Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Slough Borough Council and use in relation to Updated draft

Atkins Limited assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

This document has 37 pages including the cover.

Document history

Document title: Bus Service Improvement Plan

Document reference: 0.4

Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
0.1	First draft for client review	MG	<initials>	EH, MB	<initials>	<date>
0.2	Updated draft for senior officer consideration	MG		SDC		10/09/21
0.3	Eddie Hewitt comments 10/09/21	MG				10/09/21
0.4	Cabinet review submission	MG		EH, MB		06/10/21
0.4	Minor revision to v0.4	MG		EH, MB		07/10/21

Client signoff

Client	Slough Borough Council
Project	National Bus Strategy
Job number	5207070
Client signature/date	

Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Overview	4
2. Current bus offer to passengers	6
2.1. Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes	6
2.2. LTA financial support for bus services	14
2.3. Other factors that affect the use of local bus services	15
3. Headline Targets	17
3.1. Bus Journey Times	17
3.2. Bus Journey Time Reliability	17
3.3. Passenger Numbers	18
3.4. Passenger Satisfaction	20
4. Delivery 21	21
4.1. Make improvements to bus services and planning	21
4.2. Make improvements to bus services and planning: More frequent and reliable services	22
4.3. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review service frequency	22
4.4. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase bus priority measures	22
4.5. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase demand responsive services	24
4.6. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Consideration of bus rapid transport networks	25
4.7. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Improvements to planning / integration with other modes	25
4.8. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Integrate services with other transport modes	25
4.9. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Simplify services	25
4.10. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review socially necessary services	26
4.11. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Invest in Superbus networks	26
4.12. Improvements to fares and ticketing: lower fares	26
4.13. Improvements to fares and ticketing: simplify fares	26
4.14. Improvements to fares and ticketing: Integrate ticketing between operators and transport	27
4.15. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: higher specification buses	27
4.16. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	27
4.17. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Protect personal safety of bus passengers	27
4.18. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Improve buses for tourists	28
4.19. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in decarbonisation	28
4.20. Improvements to passenger engagement: Passenger charter	28
4.21. Improvements to passenger engagement: Strengthen network identity	28
4.22. Improvements to passenger engagement: Improve bus information	28
5. Reporting	30
6. Overview table	31
Appendices	34
A.1. Funding Template	35

1. Overview

DfT Guidance

Name of LTA(s) that the BSIP covers. This should also set out whether the BSIP covers a single LTA or more than one and the justification for that decision.

Map showing geographical area(s).

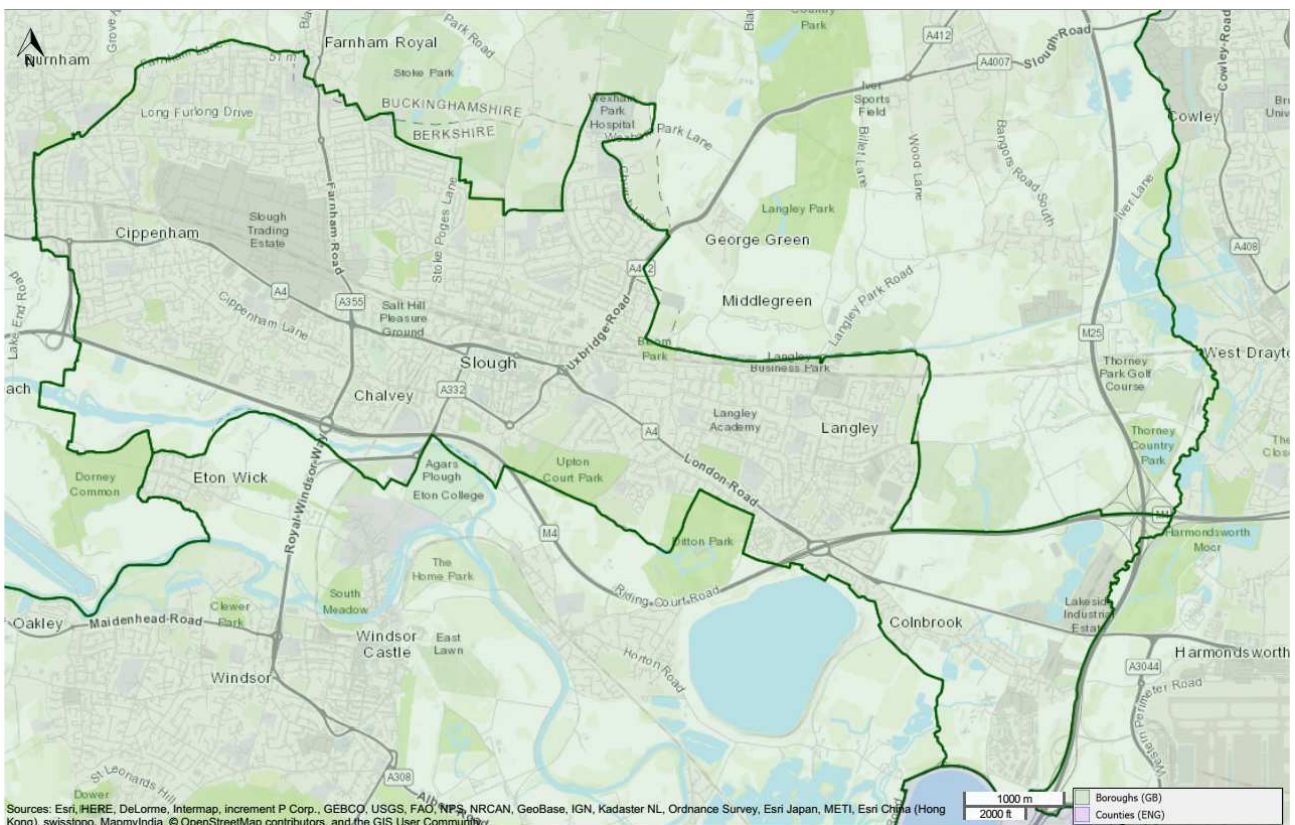
Explanation of whether that area(s) are proposed to be covered by an enhanced partnership scheme and/ or will form part of a franchising appraisal. All the LTA geographical area must be covered either by an EP or a franchising proposal

(Advice on using both an EP and franchising see advice on using both under Step 1 of the main guidance).

Duration of the published BSIP, arrangements for annual review and how it will be aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) covers the entire administrative area of Slough Borough Council illustrated at Figure 1-1. The Council has decided to prepare its BSIP covering only its own area following consultation with neighbouring authorities and in recognition of the fact that Slough differs from its neighbours significantly in terms of its geography and socio-demographic profile.

Figure 1-1 – Slough Administrative Area



Slough Borough Council intends to enter into an Enhanced Partnership. Its notice can be found here: [National Bus Strategy / Bus Back Better – Slough Borough Council](#).

This Bus Service Improvement Plan will be published on 29 October 2021 and the Enhanced Partnership will enter force on 1 April 2022. Slough Borough Council will publish a review of the BSIP by 31 October of each subsequent year for as long as the Enhanced Partnership is in force.

The BSIP is consistent with the Bus Strategy and wider Local Transport Plan 3 covering the period 2011 – 2026 and which can be found here: [Local Transport Plan – Slough Borough Council](#).

Slough Bus Station – courtesy Reading Buses



2. Current bus offer to passengers

DfT Guidance

The Strategy requires BSIPs to drive improvements to local bus services in a number of ways – for example, by setting targets for passenger growth and developing plans for multi-modal ticketing. This section should provide an analysis and data of how the current bus network compares to the BSIP aims and objectives set out in the subsequent sections.

- **Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes**
 - How current services meet or fall short of BSIP expectations as set out in this guidance and the Strategy.
- **LTA financial support for bus services**
 - Explain the financial support that the LTA(s) is providing for subsidised public bus services, listing the numbers of routes and route mileage supported.
- **Other factors that affect the use of local bus services**
 - This should include the extent and pricing of parking provisions in town and cities and the split between LTA and private sector provision. It should also include current LTA spending on parking enforcement.

This section describes the bus service offer to Slough, assesses its quality and suitability for Slough residents, and analyses the impact of background highway and socio-demographic conditions on buses. At a number of points it refers to “Slough BSIP Baseline Evidence Base” (SBBEB) which addresses these issues in some details and to which the reader is referred for more detail. This is provided alongside this BSIP document.

At the end of each section is a brief commentary on the existing situation and how it relates to the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

2.1. Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes

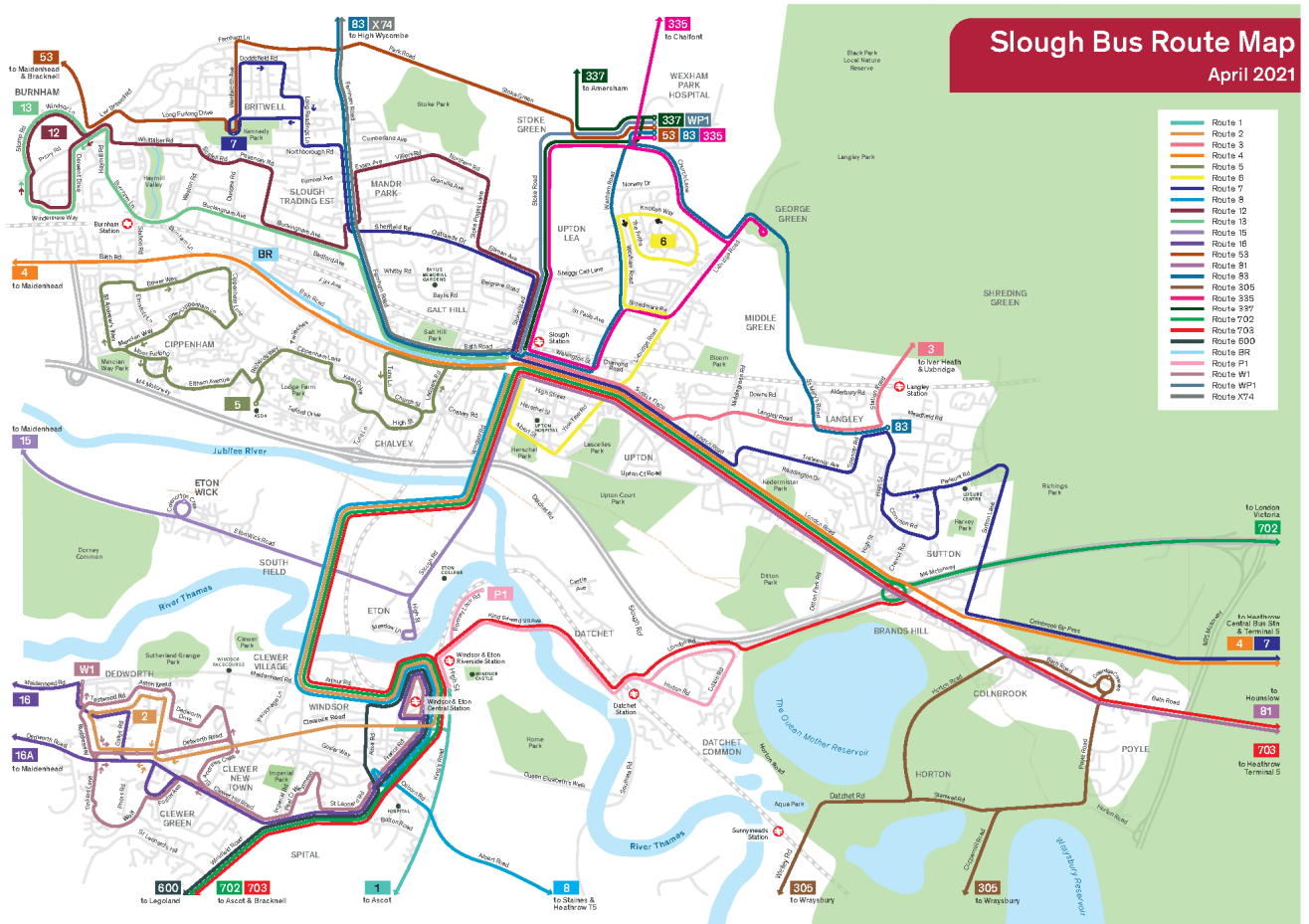
2.1.1. Operator Context

Slough’s bus network is provided by a number of operators, predominantly commercially, but some operating under tender to Slough Borough Council and other authorities. The major exception is bus route 81, which is procured by Transport for London and operated as part of the London bus network in order to fulfil TfL’s duty to secure local bus services in its area.

The major operator is First in Berkshire, with Thames Valley Buses (a subsidiary of Reading Buses) operating a significant number of services in Slough. Carousel Buses, Reading Buses and Redline Buses operate fewer services but are still a substantial presence in the authority. Carousel Buses re-started commercial operations in Slough at the end of August 2021. Bear Buses and Red Eagle operate limited services in Slough primarily under contract to other authorities, while Stewarts Coaches operates an innovative service connecting Slough rail station with major employers on Slough Trading Estate.

Figure 2-1 shows the bus map for Slough as at April 2021. Changes since then are that Carousel Buses has commenced operation of a service linking Slough town centre, the Wexham Court Estate, Wexham Park Hospital and Chalfont Common (routes 106 and 107). Operation of routes 335 and 337 has ceased.

Figure 2-1 – Slough Bus Map (April 2021)



2.1.2. Bus Service Supply

The highest frequency service is TfL’s route 81 with up to 6 buses per hour (bph) at peak times. Transport for London provides this service in fulfilment of its duties under section 181 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and its provision reflects the high volume of movement between Hounslow, Hillingdon and schools in Slough, but also to key employment locations such as Poyle Industrial Estate.

The next highest frequency is on First’s route 7 which before Covid ran up to 4 times an hour between Britwell, Slough Town Centre and Heathrow Airport, and on Redline Buses’ route WP1 between Slough Bus Station and Wexham Park Hospital (on the northern fringe of Slough), also at 4 buses per hour.

Most parts of Slough are serviced by routes running to a half-hourly frequency, with (where they exist) hourly services on evenings and Sundays. Most residents are within 400 metres of the line of bus route.

Services operate to a number of locations outside Slough. Heathrow Airport has been mentioned, but others include Windsor, Egham, Staines, High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Uxbridge. With the exceptions of Windsor and Heathrow, these also operate to half-hourly frequencies.

Bus journey speeds are relatively slow. We estimate an average scheduled journey speed in the morning peak (as at August 2021 timetables) of around 18 km/hour within the Slough boundary.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- Only one bus service provides a ‘walk-up’ frequency of 5-6 bph. Other services are regular but relatively low frequency. NBS: More frequent; Intensive services on key corridors;
- Regular but low frequency services to major settlements outside Slough – typically 2 buses per hour. NBS: More comprehensive;
- Low scheduled speed of around 18km/hour in the AM peak. NBS: Faster and more reliable.

2.1.3. Bus Fares

Bus fares in Slough vary substantially. SBBEB Section 5-3 provides a summary of published fares. From this there is substantial variation in fares and the offers to different groups, notably younger people.

Table 2-1 illustrates some key fares charged and benchmarks these against other nearby towns.

Table 2-1 – Bus Fare Comparison

	Day Ticket	Weekly Ticket	Carnet Product
Slough			
First in Berkshire	£6.50 (on-bus); £6.00 (electronic)	£22.00 (on-bus); £20.00 (electronic)	10 trip: £24.00
Thames Valley Buses	£5.50 (£4.00 for route 5)	£17.00 (£15.00 for route 5)	5-day saver: Cippenham £15 / Slough & Windsor 5-day saver £17
Transport for London	£4.65 (daily cap)	£21.80 (weekly cap)	-
Benchmark			
Stagecoach: Basingstoke	£4.60 (on-bus); £4.40 (electronic)	£12.30 (on-bus); £11.80 (electronic)	n/a
Reading Buses: Reading	£4.00	£16.00 (electronic)	10 single journeys £16.00
High Wycombe Smartzone	£4.60	£16.00	Any 5 days £20.00 / 10 trips £18.00
High Wycombe: Carousel Buses	£4.00	£15.00	Any 5 days £17.50 / 12 trips £18.00
High Wycombe: Arriva	£3.90	£15.00	3-day flexi £11.00

This analysis suggests that fares in Slough are significantly higher than those in neighbouring towns in the Thames Valley, and that therefore there may be a need to reduce them in order to provide an attractive offer to passengers. For example, day tickets for the two commercial Slough operators considered lie in the range of £5.50 to £6.50, compared to a range of £3.90 to £4.60 in the towns considered outside Slough.

Bus fares are also generally higher than rail fares: between Slough and Windsor a peak rail return is £4.00 (falling to £3.10 off-peak) compared to £4.50 return on Reading Buses' services.

The provision of concessionary travel to older and disabled people is mandated by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, and Slough Borough Council operates the scheme between 09:30 and 23:00 on weekdays and all-day on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

The provision of discounted travel to young people varies considerably. Redline Buses and First in Berkshire offer child fares to the age of 16. Reading Buses and Thames Valley Buses offer child fares to the age of 19, or 21 with a valid student identification. TfL offers free travel to the age 16 provided the user has an Oyster ZipCard. Between 16 and 18 residents outside London gain a 50% discount on bus fares, again provided they have an Oyster ZipCard.

There is no multi-operator ticketing scheme in Slough. First period ticket products are valid on Redline Buses' route WP1 between Slough Bus Station and Wexham Park Hospital.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- With the exception of single journey fares on TfL services, many bus fares in Slough are relatively high compared to nearby towns. NBS: Fares must be lower and simpler;
- There is no multi-operator ticketing scheme. A passenger wishing to travel from Cippenham to Wexham Park Hospital, for example, has to pay twice for their journey: once on the Thames Valley route 5 bus,

and again on Redline's route WP1. NBS: passengers should not have to buy a new ticket when changing buses.

- Complex range of discounts for young people which varies by operator: NBS: expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to consider youth fares.

2.1.4. Bus Passenger Information

Much information is available on channels which are universally available across the UK: Traveline, google maps, and a variety of open-source websites such as Citymapper.

Slough Borough Council has historically maintained a bus map which it has made available on its website [CO-5723 web version \(slough.gov.uk\)](#). It does not provide other bus service information itself but signposts to Traveline and operators' websites.

For journey planning purposes most bus operators provide websites with service information. Provision of fares information is variable. For instance, First provides information on period ticket products such as day or weekly tickets, but not for 'point-to-point' fares, nor does it produce a map showing fare zone boundaries. Thames Valley Buses by contrast provides information on all fares. Real-time information is generally available by app.

Transport for London provides bus stop flags at stops it serves. Slough Borough Council provides flags at other locations showing route number and direction, though coverage is not universal. For the most part bus operators post their own timetable information at bus stops. Slough Borough Council has provided information at some stops where there is more than one bus operator's services or at other locations. SBC operates a real-time passenger information system with displays at most busy stops and in the bus station. Most operators provide a data feed to this – the major exceptions being Redline Buses, Transport for London and Stewarts Coaches.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- The environment of different operators providing services results in presentation of information in a variety of formats and with different levels of information provided. This makes the bus product unclear to prospective or occasional passengers. Information on fares is particularly variable. NBS: Bus information provision needs to be substantially improved

2.1.5. Bus Fleet

Much of the bus fleet in Slough is mid-life:

- TfL route 81 (operated under contract by Metroline) – Volvo double-decks dating from 2010;
- First in Berkshire – a mixed fleet of single-deck buses including 15 hybrid buses dating from 2009 to 2015.

The exceptions to this are the Thames Valley Buses fleet allocated to Slough are generally less than two years old; and the Stewarts Coaches vehicles allocated to route BR operating between the rail and bus stations and the Trading Estate.

Emission standards are for the most part Euro VI. There are currently no zero-emission buses in the fleet.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- A mixed fleet, albeit generally to a high emission standard, but no zero-emission buses in the fleets. NBS: Buses are a key part of delivery of net zero by 2050.

2.1.6. Bus Priority Measures

Slough Borough Council has implemented a significant amount of bus priority over the last few years. Most of this has been located on the A4 London Road, with two stretches on the A355 Farnham Road. The Farnham Road measures were implemented using DfT 'Better Buses For All' funding, while the recently-implemented measures on the A4 followed award of funding by the Berkshire Thames Valley LEP. At this point there were nearly 3km of bus lane.

Further, there are bus gates at the entrance to Slough High Street and connecting the Bath Road Service Road with the A4 Bath Road at Galvin Road.

This bus lane provision was supplemented in 2020 using funds made available under DfT’s Emergency Active Travel Fund. These experimental bus lanes are located on the A4 London Road and Bath Road and stretch between the junctions of Cippenham Lane and Uxbridge Road. This has increased bus lane provision by around 6km. At the time of writing public consultation on whether to retain the experimental bus lanes was underway.

Further bus lanes are currently being implemented at Brands Hill as part of a further highway scheme on the A4 London Road funded by the LEP.

Most of the bus lanes in Slough operate between 07:00 and 10:00 and between 15:00 and 19:00. A range of vehicle classes are permitted. Camera enforcement is undertaken.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

- Extensive bus priority but a number of pinch-points on the bus network remain as do opportunities to implement more bus priority. The peak-only operation of bus lanes can lead to buses experiencing delays off-peak. There is not yet any ‘whole route’ priority applying to any bus route. NBS: bus lane on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one. Bus lanes should be full-time and...part of a whole corridor approach.

2.1.7. Slough Borough Council Staffing

As explained in Section 8 of the SBBEB, three staff are engaged in public transport operations and delivery, but all three have a wide range of duties of which public transport is only one. To date they have been supplemented by specialist resource provided by Atkins Ltd. Contact with bus operators has in recent years been around specific operational and commercial issues.

Current situation compared to National Bus Strategy aspiration:

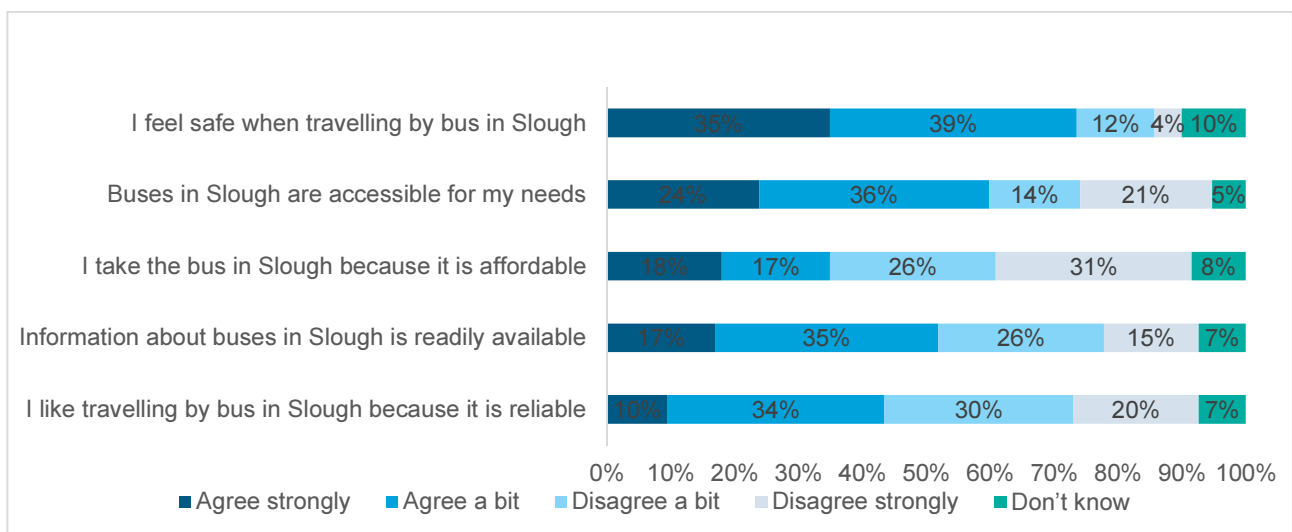
- Limited officer capacity to engage with bus operators and to provide proactive policy and operational direction.

2.1.8. Views of Passengers and Stakeholders

Slough Borough Council undertook on-line consultation with existing bus users, non-users and with stakeholders. This survey concluded on 1 October 2021.

Results from 389 respondents (of whom 189 identified as bus users and 200 identified as non-users) are shown below.

Figure 2-2 – Perception of Bus Travel: Responses from Bus Users

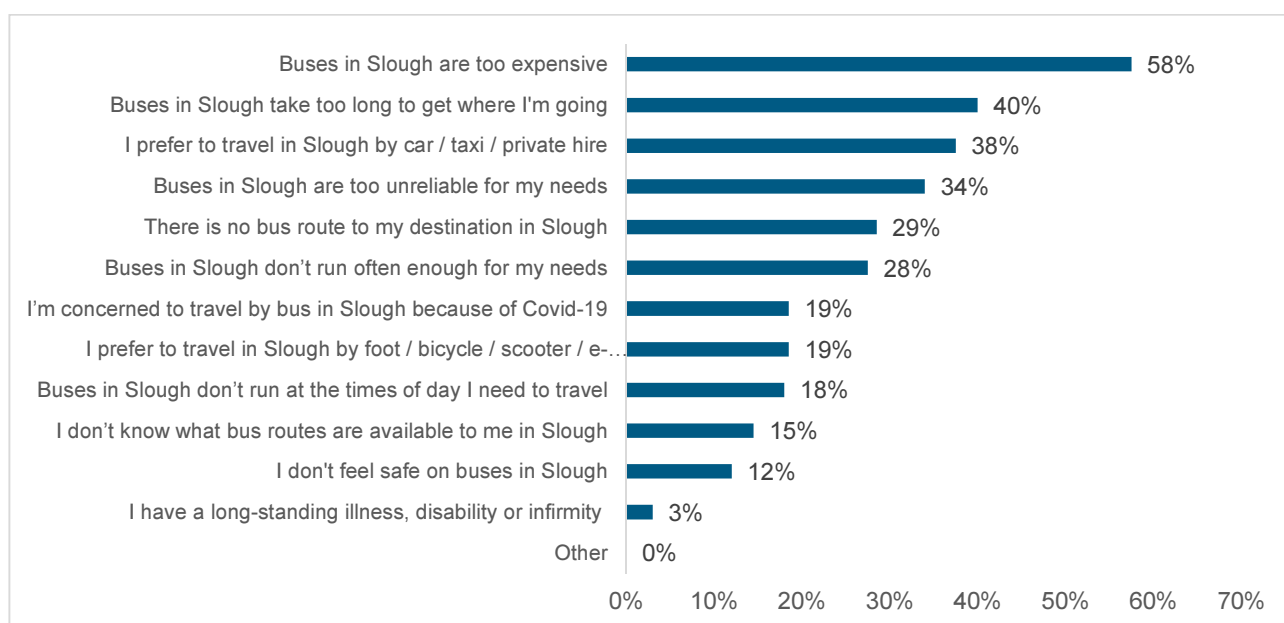


Around three quarters of bus users agreed either strongly or a bit that they felt safe or very safe travelling by bus in Slough. Around 40% agreed that they travelled by bus because it was reliable and affordable. The percentage agreeing that they travelled by bus rose to 59% amongst concessionary bus pass-holders. A similar proportion agreed that information was readily available, but the score improved to around 60% of bus users who felt that bus was accessible for them.

As a point of comparison, the nationwide Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey of autumn 2019 (the last one available) found satisfaction with value for money in a range of 50% - 77%, and satisfaction with punctuality in a range of 53% and 84%. Accepting that the sample size is limited and the methodology different, these figures suggest that satisfaction with buses in Slough may be towards the lower end of the range. Caution needs to be exercised in making comparisons, however, since the two survey methodologies are very different.

Non-bus users were asked why they don't travel by bus at present.

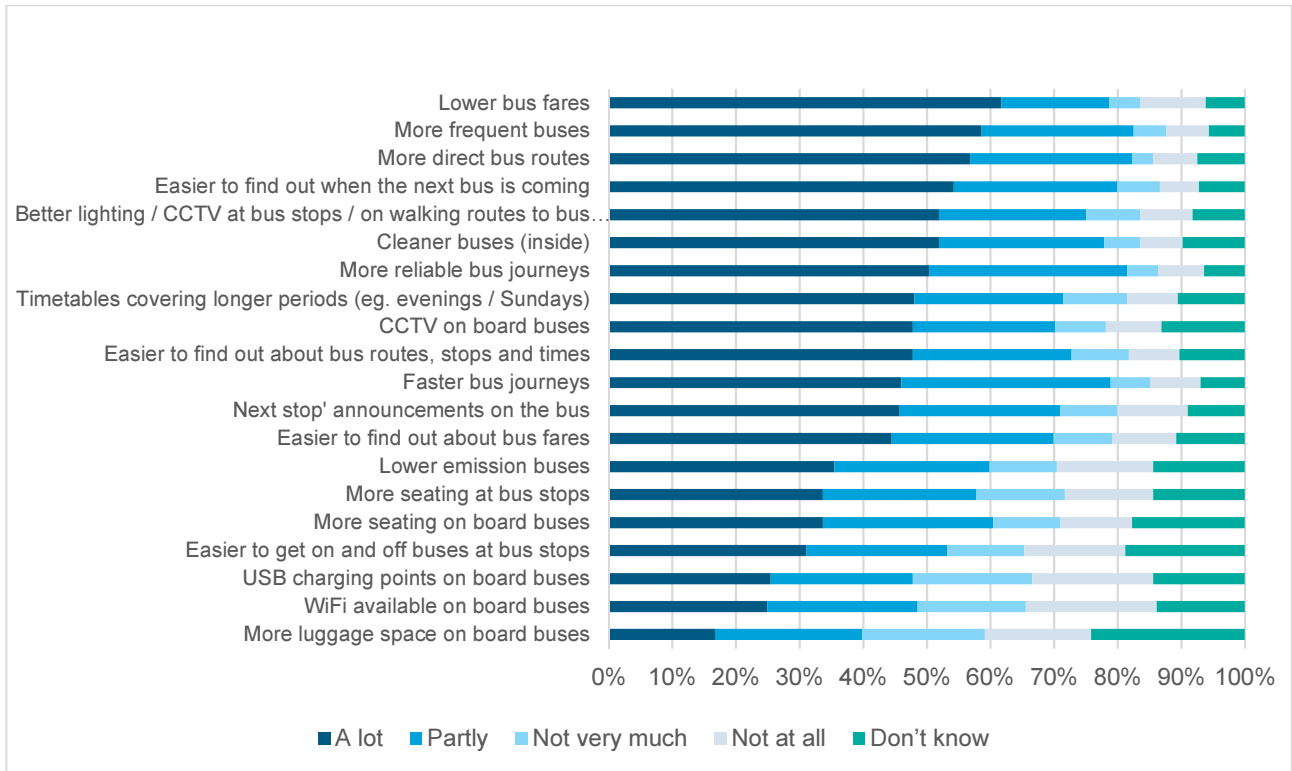
Figure 2-3 – Reasons Cited by Non-Bus Users for not Using Buses



The most frequently cited reason is that buses are too expensive, followed by buses taking too long to reach respondents' destinations, and a preference to travel by other modes. Reliability was cited as the top fourth-equal response. Consistent with bus users, personal safety was cited by few respondents.

Both users and non-users were asked what attributes would make them use bus, or use bus more.

Figure 2-4 – How much would the following make you start travelling, or travel more often, by bus in Slough?



Responses that led over 75% of respondents to answer that they would use buses more, or start using buses, 'a lot' or 'partly' focused on basic journey characteristics (fare, reliability, speed, frequency, duration of services into evenings and Sundays) and information (making it easier to find out about routes, times, fares). The high response rate for fare is despite the fact that 34% of respondents had a bus pass, so amongst fare payers this also is likely to be above 75%.

Fifty-nine percent of responses were provided by females. The survey achieved responses from all age groups from 17-20 to over 70, with a quarter of respondents aged between 40 and 49, but only 10 aged 17-20. Seventeen percent of respondents stated that they had a long-standing illness or disability. Fifty-three percent of respondents identified as white, and 25% as Asian or Asian British, with 14% declining to provide a response on ethnicity.

Respondents were able to provide their comments on bus services. These mainly related to fares being high, peak-period overcrowding, poor reliability, some services being circuitous and poor amenity at Slough bus station.

2.1.9. Bus Service Outcomes

According to DfT bus statistics, the bus passenger trip-rate is a little under 30 per year and has been falling over recent years (SBBEB Figure 6-2). This rate is significantly higher than in neighbouring Berkshire authorities but lower than would be suggested by the level of zero car ownership amongst households in Slough. This suggests that the bus passenger trip-rate could be expected to be around 50% greater at around 45 trips per year (SBBEB Figure 6-3).

There are a number of exogenous factors for this:

- There is a high level of congestion on Slough's highway network, though this appears to have fallen slightly in recent years (SBBEB section 6-8). There are two main causes. The first is a high level of both in-commuting and out-commuting. The in-commuting in particular takes place over a very wide geographical area, much of it to the Slough Trading Estate, some distance from the town centre (SBBEB Figure 3-10). It is therefore difficult for public transport to capture these trips at either trip origin or trip end. Slough Borough Council has sought to address this by combining four business shuttles into one publicly-available bus service linking Slough Station and the Trading Estate. On the other side of the coin the link from Burnham Station to the Trading Estate has been lost;

- SBC is close to the M4 motorway, and experiences variable levels of congestion resulting from incidents on the motorway, which then affects the reliability of local bus services;
- Slough town centre has lost a significant amount of retail activity over recent years;
- There is no university in the town – universities are associated with higher levels of bus usage; and
- Slough has an ethnically highly diverse population, elements of which are understood to place a high value of the ownership and use of a car as a status symbol.

On the other hand, Slough has a relatively high bus mode share for journeys to work at 7.5% (SBEB Figure 6-13). This reflects in part the influence of Heathrow Airport, which is a significant attractor of demand for out-commuting (SBEB Figure 3-9). Here Slough Borough Council, working in conjunction with Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) and the bus operators, has over recent years expended some effort in tailoring bus services to meet shift start and finish times, while HAL has offered very low public transport fares and extensive financial support to bus services. HAL has suspended both of these during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Analysis by Urban Transport Group suggests that at a mode share of 7.5% for journeys to work, the overall demand for bus travel could be expected to be roughly 50% higher (SBEB Figure 6-14). Hence journeys to work are strongly represented in the overall demand for bus travel which indicates some success in attracting work trips to bus but ties in with the narrative above on exogenous factors which suggests reasons for lower levels of bus usage for discretionary and education journeys. As patronage on the bus network is so strongly tied to work journeys, particularly to the Airport, it is strongly reliant on the recovery of these businesses from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Current situation summary:

- Demand for journeys to work is high but overall demand is lower than would be expected for the socio-demographic characteristics of Slough;
- The influence of Heathrow Airport in particular means that the recovery of demand for bus travel will be strongly aligned to recovering demand for air travel and associated activity;
- Figure 2-5 summarises the strengths and weaknesses associated with the bus network in Slough affecting the demand for bus travel.
-

Figure 2-5 - Summary of factors affecting the demand for bus travel in Slough



2.2. LTA financial support for bus services

The financial support that Slough Borough Council currently provides (at 2021/22 prices) is shown at Table 2-2.

Table 2-2 Slough Borough Council Financial Support

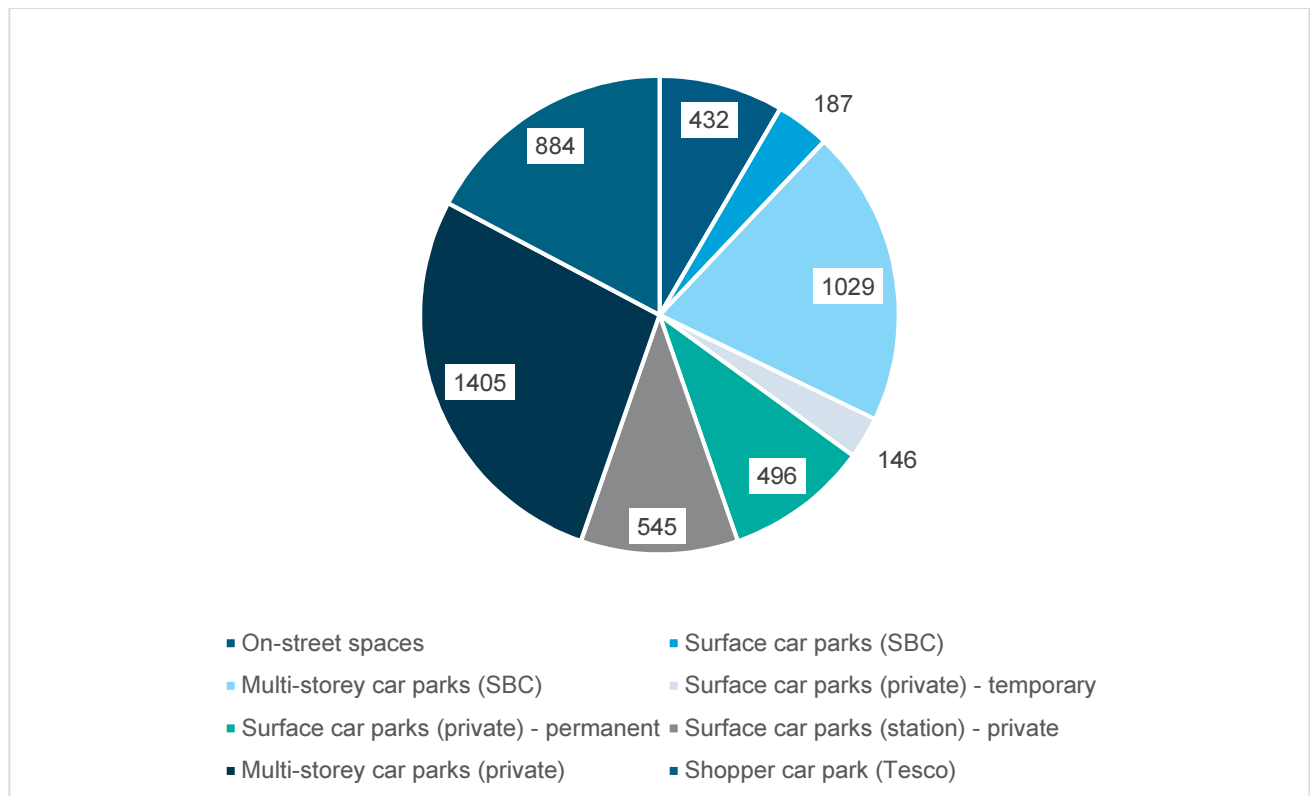
Route	Description	Annual Value	Funding Source
4	Monday – Sunday evenings between Slough Bus Station and Maidenhead	£65,200 (gross cost)	SBC
5	Cippenham 'loop'; early morning and late evening journeys; Sunday operation	£89,997 (net cost)	SBC
6	Sunday daytimes	£22,050 (gross cost)	SBC
12	Monday – Saturday one evening journey; Sunday daytimes	£26,412 (gross cost)	DfT Better Deal for Bus Users
63/68	Minor diversion to serve Goldsworthy Way	£2,354 (net cost)	SBC

2.3. Other factors that affect the use of local bus services

This should include the extent and pricing of parking provisions in town and cities and the split between LTA and private sector provision. It should also include current LTA spending on parking enforcement.

A previous assessment by Atkins suggested just over 5,000 parking spaces in Slough town centre. The figure below shows the breakdown between on-street and off-street and ownership types.

Figure 2-6 – Slough Town Centre Parking Stock



It can be seen that SBC-managed car parking (on-street and off-street combined) accounts for 30% of the total, with private operators having a large proportion of the parking stock.

Table 2-3 below shows the pricing structure of the major car parks in the town centre.

Table 2-3 – Pricing Structure of the Major Car Parks in Slough Town Centre

Duration	SBC MSCPs (Hatfield and Herschel, 1,029 spaces)	Queensmere shopping centre MSCP (1,405 spaces)	Slough Rail Station (545 spaces)	SBC surface The Grove (45 spaces)	Tesco (884 spaces)	High Street (on-street parking)
Up to 1 hour	£1.00	£1.00	£7.60	£1.20	Free to customers – maximum 2-hour stay	£1.80
1-2 hours	£2.00	£2.00		£2.20		-
2-3 hours	£3.00	£3.00		£3.20	-	-

3-4 hours	£4.00	£4.00	£4.20	-	-
8 hours	£5.00	£8.00	£5.20	-	-
12 hours	£5.00	£12.00	£5.20	-	-

It can be seen that for stays of up to half a day, there is significant competition between SBC and Queensmere shopping centre, and in consequence parking is low cost. There is certainly no price incentive for an adult travelling on their own to use the bus. The cheapest available bus fare is on TfL's route 81 (£3.10 round-trip): only 90p less than £4.00 for up to 4 hours parking.

For stays of a day's duration, SBC car parks offer the cheapest parking available, and at £5.00 all-day there is little or no price signal in favour of using the bus – a Thames Valley Buses day ticket is £5.50, a return trip using two First carnets is £4.80.

Car parking at Slough rail station appears to be cheaper than at large stations on nearby routes – examples are Staines (£9.40) and High Wycombe (£9.50). At £7.60 there is a price signal to use bus for a connecting journey to rail but it could be significantly stronger.

SBC earns £1.26m a year from parking charges.

3. Headline Targets

DfT Guidance

Targets for improvement should be covered in this section. Each section should include an explanation of how and why these targets were chosen and what the percentage increase is on existing performance. The key here is that these targets should be assessed using existing available data or data that the partnership has or can compile. It is also vital to think about clear objectives and how success will be judged and explain your thinking here.

- Targets for journey times and reliability improvements
- These should cover the LTA(s) area as a whole and provide specific data for each of the largest cities and towns in its area.
- Performance against these targets must be reported against and published at least every six months.
- Targets for passenger growth and customer satisfaction

This should include details of how this will be measured.

3.1. Bus Journey Times

3.1.1. Target Development

We estimate that the average one-way bus journey time in the AM peak¹, weighted by bus service frequency, is 24 minutes within the Slough boundary. We estimate an average journey time saving, again weighted by frequency, of just over 2 minutes, or a 9% reduction, as a result of implementation of bus priority and other traffic management measures described in Section 4. This estimate is at present a very high level one.

In addition, work undertaken by Atkins in 2019 estimated a reduction in journey time of 2% resulting from a conversion of 50% of on-bus fare-paying transactions to Tap On Tap Out (TOTO). Adding this gives a total journey time reduction of 2.5 minutes or 11%.

We will review the target as design work on bus priority and traffic management measures proceeds, and as SBC gains a more in-depth understanding of the scope for journey time improvements.

3.1.2. Monitoring Proposal

We propose to measure performance in two ways:

- Analysis of bus scheduled journey times within the Slough boundary; and
- Analysis of real-time data from bus operators, both including and excluding bus stop dwell times.

We then propose to control the bus journey time results using results for car journey times using Slough's 'Drakewell' real-time database of Bluetooth car journey time data. Experience with monitoring the results of the A4 bus lane suggest that it is important to understand the effects of bus priority on bus journey times in the context of the change in car journey times in response to changes in traffic volumes and other capacity effects on the highway network.

3.2. Bus Journey Time Reliability

3.2.1. Target Development

DfT Bus Statistics give a figure of 78% 'on-time' performance for the latest year for which data are available, 2017/18. Further information including a time-series is shown at Figure 5-5 of SBBEB. According to the DfT definition of high frequency services (at least 6 buses per hour), no services in Slough currently operate to a

¹ Defined as the last arrival time in Slough Bus Station or at the destination of the journey before 09:00 Mondays to Fridays

high frequency. The highest frequency bus service in Slough, route 81, operates at a frequency of 5 buses per hour for most of the operating day.

Therefore no services should currently be measured using the 'Excess Wait Time' (EWT) formula. EWT measures the additional time that, on average, a passenger who turns up at a bus stop at random can expect to wait for a bus and is considered to be a measure that better reflects the passenger experience of reliability for high frequency services than deviation from the timetable.

However, at that frequency route 81 is measured as a high-frequency service by TfL. The performance standard is an EWT of 1.1 minutes and the service achieved an EWT along the whole route of 0.96 minutes in 2019. Interestingly, in 2020 it achieved 0.53 minutes – in other words as a result primarily of lockdown but possibly also the additional bus priority implemented by SBC under the Emergency Active Travel Fund the route achieved punctuality twice as high as the minimum standard.

We propose to implement a target of a 10% improvement in reliability to be achieved by 2024/25. This will see:

- The target for low-frequency services move from 78% to 86% 'on time' at all timing points within the Slough boundary; and
- The target for any services meeting the definition of high-frequency move from the 1.1 minutes minimum standard of Excess Wait Time currently applied to route 81 to 1.0 minutes.

3.2.2. Monitoring Proposal

Reliability will be monitored using real-time data provided by operators and by SBC's real-time passenger information system. In the case of route 81 we propose to use whole-route data published by TfL.

3.3. Passenger Numbers

3.3.1. Target Development

The development of the target increase in patronage resulting from measures implemented under the BSIP is summarised at Table 3-1 below. These are structured according to elements of Generalised Cost, which is a helpful framework in which to consider the changes to a passenger's journey from walking to a bus stop, waiting for a bus, paying a fare, travelling on a bus, and experiencing 'soft' measures like real-time passenger information and on-bus audio announcements.

Table 3-1 – Target Development

Generalised Cost Element	Change	Elasticity Factor ²	Target % Change	% Passengers the Change Applies to	Forecast Demand Response
Scheduled wait time	Headway	-0.25	-33%	25%	2.1%
Journey time variability	'On Time' or EWT performance	-0.25	-10%	100%	2.5%
Walk	Service Density	-0.25	0%	0%	0%
In-Vehicle Time	On-bus journey time	-0.60	-11%	100%	6.7%
Fare	Average fare / paid passenger journey	-0.30	-20%	50%	3.0%

² Bus fare and journey time elasticities and diversion factors for all modes, RAND Europe and SYSTRA, 2018

Real-Time Information	Number of passengers who receive RTPI while waiting at a bus stop	-0.25	-2%	33%	0.4%
Simplified Ticketing	Number of passengers who benefit from simplified ticketing	-1.1	-2%	50%	0.8%
On-bus audio announcements	Number of passengers who benefit from simplified ticketing	-0.6	-2%	61%	1.5%
Target					17.0%

Taking each of these in turn:

- Scheduled wait time: this is a function of the bus service headway, and reflects a target that a 33% reduction in headway will apply to 25% of passenger journeys – described further in Section 4;
- Journey time variability: again, this is a function of the bus service headway, and reflects a target that additional waiting time resulting from late or irregular operation will reduce by 10%;
- Walk time: no change to service density or coverage is proposed, so walk time remains ‘as is’;
- In-vehicle time: as per the journey time target, this reflects the target that on average 100% of passenger journey times will fall by 11%;
- Fare: we estimate that 28% of passengers travel on TfL’s route 81 and it is not proposed that fares will change on this route. Just over 20% are concessions. For the remaining 50%, we target a 20% reduction in average fare paid per journey as described further in Section 4;
- Real-time information: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to extend real-time to every bus stop in Slough, benefiting an additional 33% of users. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 1.47 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 2% reduction in GJT, applied to the headway elasticity;
- Simplified ticketing: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to simplify ticketing in Slough, benefiting the 50% of passengers who do not use the TfL service or who are concessionary passholders. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 0.84 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 1% reduction in GJT, applied to the total GJT elasticity; and
- On-bus announcements: as described in Section 4, we propose measures to extend on-bus announcements to every bus in Slough, benefiting the 61% of passengers who we estimate do not currently benefit from this. To estimate the change in generalised journey time (GJT) we have taken the webTAG value of 1.22 minutes and expressed this as a percentage of the GJT – estimated at 2.5 times the estimated mean passenger journey time of 12 minutes. This gives a 2% reduction in GJT, applied to the in-vehicle journey time elasticity.

We have used standard elasticities in this assessment. Given the high propensity to use buses in Slough for work and school education journeys, we think the demand response to reliability measures in particular may be greater than estimated. Similarly, fares elasticity may be higher, suggesting a higher demand response, given the relatively high fares charged in Slough. Finally, the assessment takes no account of the provision of information, which we believe will significantly improve as a result of measures described at Section 4.

We are therefore targeting a 20% increase in patronage, rather than the 17% outlined above. It will be noted that the target percentage increase in patronage of around 20% is lower than the 50% increase suggested by the comparison of bus passenger trip-rate and car ownership set out in section 2.1.9. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the target is derived from individual measures, and it is to be hoped that the combined effect of the measures put forward in the BSIP is greater than the sum of the individual parts. But it is also important to recognise the exogenous demand constraints also considered at section 2.1.9 – notably the limited retail offer in Slough town centre, the limited tertiary education opportunities, and the high level of congestion on the highway network that inevitably will continue to affect buses despite the extensive bus priority measures proposed for implementation under the BSIP.

3.3.2. Monitoring Proposal

We propose to monitor the patronage target using data collated from the bus operators in Slough, using passenger boardings in Slough to be consistent with the DfT's bus statistics.

Before the return of schools in September, bus patronage nationally was at around 60% of pre-Covid volumes. At the end of September with schools returning and the return of many people to workplaces demand had risen to around 75% of pre-Covid levels. The rate of Covid recovery has been considered in both the bus and rail industries and a number of scenarios constructed for rail reflecting the uncertainties around Covid recovery. Much of this recovery relies on exogenous sources such as the demand for travel to work. A particularly strong feature of Slough's bus network and its associated demand is the influence of Heathrow Airport, both as a source of employment and in terms of the support that it has previously provided to bus services in terms of financial support and to staff working at the Airport in terms of heavily discounted tickets. The rate of employment at the Airport will depend on the extent of the recovery in air travel, as will the Airport's ability to resume its financial support for services and to staff.

At this stage, therefore, we forecast a 20% increase in patronage by 2024/5 as a result of the measures implemented in the BSIP. This is based on the level of demand at the start of the Enhanced Partnership in April 2022. Our ambitious target is to deliver a return to 2018/19 passenger volumes by 2024/25 and to continue to deliver improvements beyond that date. We will of course monitor this target and will review it upwards should factors such as employment at Heathrow Airport suggest that it should increase further.

3.4. Passenger Satisfaction

Slough Borough Council has not been the subject of the regular 'Bus Passenger Survey' designed and administered by Transport Focus. There is therefore limited information available on the baseline. We have asked bus operators to provide information on customer comments and complaints which could form a baseline, and in terms of establishing a target or monitoring, could be used in future years. If this proves feasible, we will control this against patronage to provide a complaints or comments rate per 100,000 journeys.

In preparation of the BSIP we have undertaken an on-line survey of users and non-users, the headline results of which have been reported in Section 2. This has requested, amongst other things, residents' views on the perceptions of the bus service. We intend to repeat this survey each year to inform revisions to the BSIP, and so this will also provide an evidence base which we can use to monitor the trend on satisfaction as well as gain intelligence on how the perceptions of users and non-users change.

4. Delivery

DfT Guidance

This is the main body of the BSIP. Its purpose is to explain how the requirements set out in the Strategy are to be delivered. Many factors and interventions by the LTA and local bus operators will influence and contribute to delivering outcomes. The purpose of this section is for the BSIP to set out detailed policies in each of the areas, explain delivery in more detail and how they each will work together to improve local bus services. The BSIP should contain a separate section on each as set out earlier in this guidance (paragraph references are given for ease).

Slough Borough Council and the bus operators recognise that the bus has huge potential to cater for a larger share of everyday journeys and to better meet the needs of people to get around, and to and from, Slough. Through a programme of co-ordinated and sustained investment, we will deliver radical improvements to bus travel, which will see a year-on-year increase in people travelling by bus. The measures set out in this Bus Service Improvement Plan will be a catalyst for bus passenger growth across Slough by creating the conditions to achieve a virtuous circle of investment and passenger growth. Growing bus usage will contribute to a range of the Council's policy objectives, including de-carbonising travel, providing better opportunities to access employment, education, health and leisure activities, and achieving better use of roadspace.

Accountabilities and responsibilities for delivery of the measures proposed under this BSIP will be considered and codified as part of the Enhanced Partnership Plan. Some, such as the provision of highway measures, will clearly sit with Slough Borough Council. Given that all except two bus routes cross the Slough boundary, we will seek to co-ordinate these works with neighbouring highway authorities to deliver maximum effect across whole bus routes.

Many of the measures will require the agreement and active participation of the bus operators. These include, for example, measures to make it easier to pay bus fares or on pricing, or to improve bus passenger information, or on bus network development.

Delivery of measures is clearly reliant on feasibility. Proposals for bus priority, for example, are at outline stage at present, and we will expect to follow the usual processes of project development. In some types of intervention other forms of clarity may be required.

Key stakeholders will be consulted and informed and some – notably Heathrow Airport - will be closely involved in delivery of the measures proposed under the BSIP.

Finally, the implementation of the measures is reliant upon funding being available. SBC will follow its recent successes in seeking match-funding from other sources, but as with other local transport authorities SBC will rely heavily on funding provided by Government under the National Bus Strategy.

4.1. Make improvements to bus services and planning

We have found in recent years a willingness on the part of the main operator in Slough to consider minor changes to timetable proposals in response to suggestions to better meet shift change times at major employers or to make headways more consistent. This follows long-standing influence on the part of Heathrow Airport and Wexham Park Hospital to tailor services to the needs of their employees.

We will build on that co-operation to develop a more collaborative process as part of the Enhanced Partnership to consider proposals to change the bus network and to consider external influences, notably the planning of new development both in the context of opportunities to grow demand but also to ensure that bus services are able to meet the mobility needs in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Similarly we will work with neighbouring authorities and organisations to develop bus services which cross Slough boundaries. Our immediate neighbours are Buckinghamshire Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Transport for London. Other authorities with an influence on bus service provision are

Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Surrey County Council. We will seek to co-ordinate with them on highway schemes which will benefit buses but more specifically we will focus on:

- Bus links between Slough and Windsor – co-ordinating services between different operators to achieve improved service regularity, and increasing frequency between Dedworth and Slough;
- Bus links beyond Windsor to Staines, Legoland and Bracknell, and to High Wycombe and Gerrards Cross – seeking to create the conditions for service development; and
- The proposals for the A4 outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.4 will improve bus speeds and reliability on cross-boundary services from Maidenhead and Taplow to Slough and Heathrow, and we hope will help to create the conditions in which these can further develop.

4.2. Make improvements to bus services and planning: More frequent and reliable services

Subject to funding made available under the National Bus Strategy and other sources, we aim to develop a core urban network consisting of the A4 east-west spine between Cippenham and Heathrow Airport, links to the Britwell Estate and the link between Slough town centre and Wexham Park Hospital. On these links the target is for a 10-minute daytime headway with maximum 20-minute headways during evenings and Sundays, with services tailored to the needs of shift-workers particularly at Heathrow Airport and Wexham Park Hospital (see SBBEB Figure 3-13).

On other town routes we will seek standardised maximum 30-minute daytime headways with maximum 60-minute headways during evenings and Sundays.

In the case of services along the A4 and to Britwell, delivery of the bus priority measures described at Section 4-4 will help to reduce the vehicle requirement, in turn unlocking resource which can be directed at increasing the frequency on the core network or underpinning delivery of regular services on other routes. These bus priority and other highway measures will also promote reliability on this network, as will measures to reduce bus stop dwell times. These measures will also assist the development of interurban services crossing the Slough boundary as outlined at section 4.1 above.

A threat to service development is that patronage has yet to recover to pre-Covid volumes. The rate of this continued recovery is very uncertain, particularly in the case of Slough with its relationship with Heathrow Airport. We therefore seek current network support while patronage builds back for 2022/23 while changes are planned and implemented to make them better for passengers and to deliver growth.

4.3. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review service frequency

In addition, we have reviewed shift start and finish times with the major regional employer, Heathrow Airport, and will seek funding to enable more bus services to meet key shift start and finish times.

Also, we will seek funding for provide consistent service start and finish times across the core network, with the aim of providing last services at around midnight.

4.4. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase bus priority measures

We propose a range of measures, from bus lanes to reviewing Traffic Regulation Orders, in order to reduce bus journey times and facilitate reliable operation.

Subject to funding, technical and construction feasibility and consultation we propose a range of bus priority measures:

- Further priority on the A4 Bath Road and London Road in order to complete provision of priority on this route and provide ‘whole route’ priority for key bus services to Heathrow Airport and address congestion on the A4 identified at Figure 6-11 of the SBBEB;
- Priority measures on the A355 Farnham Road, and enhancement of existing measures, in order to help buses travel more quickly and reliably along a congested section of road – again, see Figure 6-11 of the SBBEB;

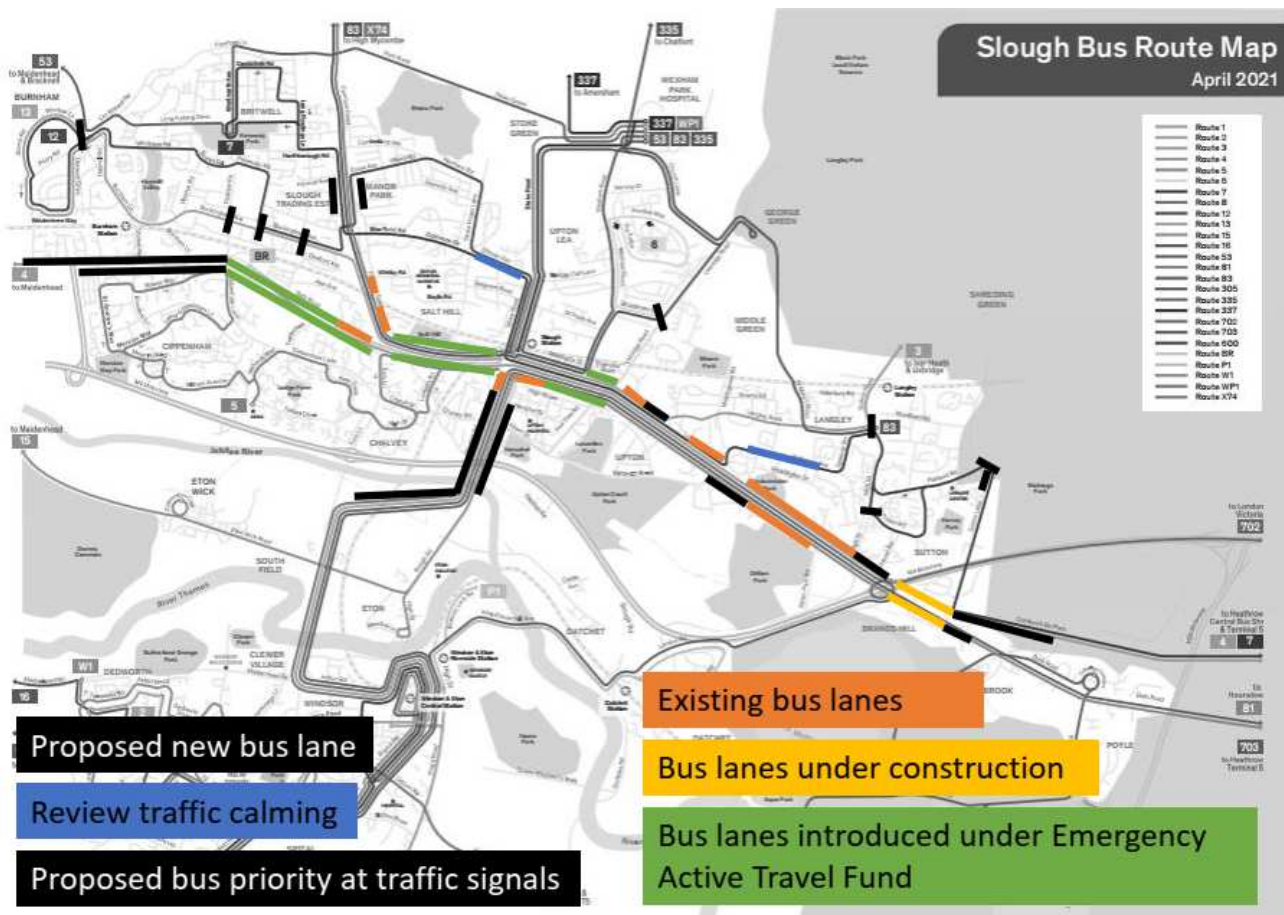
- Priority measures on the A332 Windsor Road, where an opportunity exists to convert the nearside lane in each direction between the town centre and the B3022 junction following recent highway enhancements. The opportunity exists to further enhance this by converting the nearside lane of the A332 inbound from its junction with the A355 to further insulate buses from the effects of highway congestion. We hope that this will help to re-invigorate bus service provision between Slough and Windsor;
- A northbound bus gate on Stoke Road as part of a wider urban realm improvement on this busy and congested link, which is a key part of the route utilised by the core service between Slough town centre and Wexham Park Hospital;
- Other more minor sections of bus lane to identify known issues – notably the westbound approach to the Brands Hill junction from Colnbrook, and the northbound approach on Sutton Lane to Parlaunt Road;
- Bus priority at a number of traffic light-controlled junctions, either to address issues of congestion or to provide an appropriate level of priority where bus service frequencies are low. Altogether 10 locations are currently proposed, subject to feasibility;
- Whilst not in itself bus priority, a proposed link between the A4 Bath Road and Chalvey Church Street will enable a significant reduction in the distance travelled by outbound route 5 buses; and
- Review existing traffic calming measures on Elliman Avenue and Trelawney Avenue, where existing road humps cause delays to buses and significant discomfort to passengers.

This package would increase the distance of bus lane provided in SBC by around 8.5km. Consistent with the requirements of the NBS, we propose to work towards the conversion of existing bus lanes to '24-7' operation in order to provide maximum protection to buses from fluctuations in traffic flow. We propose also that new bus lanes will be '24-7'. We will review the classes of vehicle to be permitted in the bus lanes, and comment that there are no current plans to allow electric vehicles to use these bus lanes.

We aim to work collaboratively with Buckinghamshire Council, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to deliver bus priority on a co-ordinated basis, recognising that the priority itself may take a number of forms depending on local circumstances and need.

These measures are shown below at Figure 4-1.

Figure 4-1 – Proposed Bus Priority Measures



We recognise that there are other means by which journey times can be improved, and by which reliability will be enhanced. We propose to:

- Review the process of communicating roadworks with operators, with the aim of enabling better planning and communication of diversions;
- Give bus operations control staff access to traffic cameras such that bus service controllers can identify incidents emerging in real-time and take early appropriate action; and
- Review Traffic Regulation Orders in force at bus stop clearways, with a view to standardising on '24-7' operation.

Finally, we will undertake a review on each bus route. This will include identification of locations where minor works or a review of parking and loading controls could ease pinch points for buses. It will also review the potential to fill in bus stop laybys, which are identified as causing delays to buses on departing from the bus stop. Subject to funding we propose to commit to a rolling programme of reviewing 3 bus routes a year under the Enhanced Partnership, the routes to be distributed equitably amongst operators but focusing on the busiest routes first.

4.5. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Increase demand responsive services

No DRT services operate in Slough at present except for a 'Section 19' community bus operation. We are conscious of the financial and commercial risks involved in establishing a DRT operation at scale. We are also conscious that accessing employment opportunities is challenging in many circumstances.

We therefore propose to work with major employers to establish one or more DRT schemes. We propose to utilise the model developed by 'Tandem' and others which establish a brokerage scheme using local transport providers – in many cases local taxi companies where the demand is low. In this way the service can begin at a low scale (and low financial risk) and scale up easily in response to demand. Such a scheme would not necessarily be restricted to operation within Slough's boundary. Employers with whom we might work include the NHS at Wexham Park Hospital and SEGRO, who manage a large part of Slough Trading Estate.

4.6. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Consideration of bus rapid transport networks

The proposals for whole route priority along the A4 Bath Road and London Road represent the foundations for Bus Rapid Transit, and is reflected in SBC's proposals for Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT). Phase 1 is in operation between Slough rail station and the Bath Road Trading Estate and Phase 2 is under construction at Brands Hill. By further developing priority measures and working in co-ordination with Heathrow Airport and with neighbouring Buckinghamshire Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, we hope to stimulate operation of high-frequency BRT services on this corridor.

4.7. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Improvements to planning / integration with other modes

We propose to liaise with TfL Rail and Great Western Railway on timetable co-ordination.

Subject to funding we will re-focus cycle hire / e-scooter hire at Slough and Burnham stations at commuter journeys. We will review the provision of cycle racks at bus stops and consider the potential for mobility hubs.

The requirement is noted to integrate potential cycling infrastructure (subject to a separate Capability Fund bid) on the A4 with bus priority infrastructure.

4.8. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Integrate services with other transport modes

Subject to funding, we will implement a wayfinding project at Slough Bus Station to help passengers find their bus. This will be of particular value to occasional visitors to Slough arriving by rail and who need to identify the stand or on-street bus stop from which their service departs. Given the high rail service frequencies – particularly with the start of Crossrail services – we do not believe that there is a need to co-ordinate frequencies, but we will seek opportunities to develop early morning and late evening bus services, and bus services on Sundays, in order to improve opportunities to connect between bus and rail services.

Subject to funding, we will seek to re-establish the link between Burnham Station and the Trading Estate, which we believe is a valuable link for rail commuters from the west. We will seek to ensure timetable co-ordination between bus and rail as part of the re-establishment of the link.

We will also seek opportunities to improve timetable co-ordination between bus and rail services at Langley station.

4.9. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Simplify services

Services are already generally quite simple in Slough, but opportunities will be pursued, subject to funding, where these require more resource.

We will also seek to ensure that services remain simple – in particular, that bus operate on consistent routings throughout the day. We will prepare a short set of network planning guidelines under the Enhanced Partnership for agreement by operators.

To the north west of Slough a number of areas are served by one bus route with frequent changes in direction. This results in lengthy journey times for some users, as noted by some respondents to the residents' survey. These areas are amongst the more deprived in Slough (SBBEB Figure 2-4) and we will work with the bus operator to develop quicker and more direct services for the benefit of these residents.

4.10. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Review socially necessary services

SBC has sought to retain Sunday and evening services previously lost, and will continue to do so with the target, subject to funding, of a maximum 20-minute headway on core network and 60-minute headway on secondary network at these times.

Again subject to funding it will seek to ensure that the majority of its residents are within 5 minutes' walk of a daytime bus service, as it has done to date with funding the 'Cippenham loop' of bus route 5.

4.11. Make improvements to bus services and planning: Invest in Superbus networks

Superbus consists of a comprehensive network of bus priority measures; fares caps; and increased service frequencies. Subject to funding and feasibility we propose to implement each of these elements and so we believe that our proposals qualify for 'Superbus' designation.

4.12. Improvements to fares and ticketing: lower fares

As set out in Section 2, fares in Slough (and east Berkshire generally) are significantly higher than fares in comparable towns. This reduces the competitiveness of bus with driving, getting a lift with a friend or relative, or even using a taxi or Uber. A minimum £5 applies to an Uber fare in Slough, but with a base fare of £2.50, it is highly likely that many journeys within the town will be charged at no more than £5³: Where more than one passenger is travelling, this is unlikely to represent a significant premium over many bus fares.

Subject to funding and feasibility, we propose to reduce the highest fares paid in Slough by around 20% to bring them into line with fares paid in other geographically similar locations and where possible to align with rail fares for equivalent journeys. In 2021/22 prices, our aim is for a day ticket price of around £5.00 and a weekly ticket price of around £17.50. In advance of periodic fares capping, we also want to see a more comprehensive and consistent offer for occasional users of bus, with a carnet of single journeys priced at around £2.00 per journey and a carnet of day tickets priced at around £4.50 per day ticket.

Passenger fares also increase as a result of a need to change between buses of different operators. For instance, someone wanting to travel between Cippenham and Wexham Park Hospital pays twice. Even where tickets are accepted (as with First period ticket products on Redline Buses route WP1) low awareness almost certainly results in passengers paying more. The proposed multi-operator proposition described in section 4.13 will eliminate the need for passengers to pay twice for journeys involving more than operator.

4.13. Improvements to fares and ticketing: simplify fares

Subject to funding and technical feasibility, in particular recognising the constraints imposed by the different technologies employed by TfL and by commercial bus operators, we propose to undertake this in two key ways.

The first is to address the current issue that fares for young people are applied inconsistently by standardising under the Enhanced Partnership (EP) on the age of 19 as the minimum cut-off for a youth discount, that discount being set at not more than 75% of the equivalent adult fare.

The second is a migration to seamless multi-operator ticketing in three stages.

Stage 1 is to mandate under the EP a QR-code paper-based and/or app-based multi-operator ticketing scheme with minimal or zero premium over operator own-price products. This would be based on the model being operated successfully in High Wycombe as Wycombe Smartzone. Some funding will be required from NBS to pay for establishment costs.

Stage 2 is to encourage a move to own operator account-based tap on tap out ticketing, subject to funding being made available under the NBS for second card readers on each bus to enable alighting passengers to 'tap out' separately from those those tapping in. We recognise that TfL in effect has this already – but with no 'tap out' since this is not required as flat fares apply.

³ [Taxi rates UBER in Slough \(taxihowmuch.com\)](https://www.taxihowmuch.com/).

Stage 3 is to pull together stages 1 and 2 to develop multi-operator account-based 'tap on tap out' ticketing mandated under the EP. This would be consistent with Project Coral being developed by the major group operators and we would hope to be able to adopt the infrastructure and processes developed under Project Coral. A significant advantage in Slough is that all operators except Bear Buses and Transport for London currently utilise 'Ticketer' ticket machines and therefore have access to the same 'Littlepay' back office. This may allow SBC to proceed more quickly than a nationally-based scheme would allow, but clearly we will keep this under review. A significant objective at Stage 3 is to integrate Transport for London into the multi-operator scheme. This requires that TfL's 'Pay As You Go' back office is integrated into the Ticketer / Littlepay back office, or whichever back office becomes available nationally, and we recognise that this may present significant challenges.

Stage 3 would substantially replace the multi-operator ticketing scheme, though we recognise that there are some issues around equality of access to the scheme for the unbanked and those eligible for youth fares which will need to be addressed during design phases. Partly for this reason SBC would seek funding from NBS to facilitate the introduction of this scheme.

4.14. Improvements to fares and ticketing: Integrate ticketing between operators and transport

A significant benefit of the 'back office' integration proposed to be developed between TfL's and the commercial operators' back offices is that opportunities would be opened up to integrate local bus fares with TfL Rail 'Pay As You Go'. This would maximise the opportunities for bus/rail multi-modal journeys.

4.15. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: higher specification buses

We will conduct customer research to establish customer priorities, but at this stage we envisage:

- Seeking funding from NBS to ensure as far as possible that buses are fitted with USB chargers as standard, since the ability to charge an iPhone en-route is likely to be a significant bonus to bus passengers; and
- Seeking funding for improved vehicle specifications, such as air chilling or luggage racks for buses used on the core network and other long-distance journeys in order to provide a journey experience more akin to using a car.

Transport Focus research on attitudes of young people to using the bus in 2018 suggested that free on-board wifi was one of three top requirements. We will keep this under review: with improved data bundles this may not be the priority that it once was.

4.16. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services

Subject to funding, we will identify and develop solutions for bus stops which do not currently meet accessibility standards. It is considered that filling in bus stop laybys, where appropriate, will also assist.

We will seek funding to review the facilities at Slough Bus Station, and seek means of improving circulation particularly for those in wheelchairs or with buggies.

Subject to funding we will mandate 'next stop' screens and announcements on vehicles as standard on all bus services regardless of DfT moves to mandate AV equipment on the bus. We will investigate the scope of any on-bus AV equipment to accommodate information on diversions.

Finally, we will ensure that the new development takes appropriate account of the needs of bus users and efficient use by bus operators.

4.17. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Protect personal safety of bus passengers

Subject to funding, we will review access routes to bus stops including footpaths as part of the series of route reviews described at section 4.4.

Subject to funding, we will implement CCTV at Slough Bus Station and at selected bus stops.

Most buses in service in Slough are equipped with on-bus CCTV, but we will mandate its use on all but the most infrequent services.

Subject to technical feasibility and funding, we will consider developing a system in conjunction with bus operators whereby a parent is notified when a child's QR code / app is read by a ticket machine as he or she boards a bus.

4.18. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Improve buses for tourists

Buses serving tourist destinations travel through Slough, notably Reading Buses routes 702 and 703 providing links between central London and Heathrow and Legoland and Windsor. A number of visitors to the tourist attractions in Windsor stay in hotels in Slough. The bus priority and service development measures we propose will help these buses provide reliable journeys to tourists and visitors.

4.19. Make improvements to bus passenger experience: Invest in decarbonisation

We will seek funding opportunities to deliver a migration to zero-emission bus fleet with associated infrastructure over the coming years. We will co-ordinate with neighbouring authorities especially Transport for London, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Buckinghamshire Council in recognition of the fact that most bus services cross the Slough boundary.

We will in the meantime seek funding to investigate the feasibility of different types of technology applied to the constraints at bus depots and the mileages being operated on bus routes in Slough in order to establish the most cost-effective means of decarbonising the bus fleet. This also recognises our Carbon Management Plan, which sets the objective for Slough Borough Council to be carbon neutral by 2030.⁴

4.20. Improvements to passenger engagement: Passenger charter

We will develop a passenger charter in conjunction with operators. This will include commitments around:

- Ensuring that passengers can find out about their journeys in an impartial manner;
- Ensuring that accurate bus service information will be provided at bus stops;
- Ensuring that buses are clean and conform to an agreed specification for that service;
- Ensuring suitable redress for when things go wrong, including provision of a taxi if the last bus on a route is cancelled; and
- Regular reporting of key bus service performance metrics such as reliability.

4.21. Improvements to passenger engagement: Strengthen network identity

Slough's geography means that most bus services cross its boundary, so a Slough-specific brand is not considered appropriate. Indeed, we estimate that around half the operated mileage is outside the authority's boundary, and only two bus routes (routes 5 and 6) operate entirely within Slough's administrative area. First and Reading Buses have already adopted 'Thames Valley' branding which is considered to be more reflective of the area in which buses operate, and in addition buses on Heathrow services carry Heathrow branding.

4.22. Improvements to passenger engagement: Improve bus information

We propose a suite of measures to overcome the opaqueness that arises from a complex operator landscape and the multiplicity of information sources:

1. Explore potential for operators to share more service information on each others' services on websites and apps. This happens to an extent now in operators' journey planners and is likely to become more

⁴ [Council to be carbon neutral by 2030 – Slough Borough Council](#)

practical as operators begin to retail tickets for travel on each others' services under a multi-operator ticketing scheme;

2. Develop e-ink to provide static and real-time information at all bus stops in Slough as part of a large-scale demonstration project. Currently, paper timetable displays are labour intensive to post, prone to becoming out of date, and because of the logistical challenges changing a number of displays at once it is rarely possible to align changing the roadside at precisely the time of the timetable change. The cost of changing a paper display is around £4 - £5 a unit. It involves a significant amount of vehicle mileage and associated carbon and other emissions. Finally, with multiple operators at some stops but not others there is the potential for confusion about responsibility for posting the roadside. Paper-based roadside information is hard for people to read after dark and is vulnerable to vandalism. It would be tempting to abolish roadside information altogether but there is evidence that passengers value it: Transport Focus's research on attitudes of younger people to using buses found that a third gained their information from roadside displays, and this percentage is likely to increase for older people. Further, e-ink offers the potential to include real-time information at each stop rather than at selected stops, and may be able to integrate with Urban Traffic Management Control systems (see point 5 below). We are therefore keen, subject to funding, to pursue e-ink as a more accurate and engaging means of displaying information at bus stops. We would propose an early pilot project on one route, with fuller roll-out once the concept has been proved;
3. In the meantime we will revise processes for the provision of roadside information and, where possible, standardise provision of display cases;
4. Under the EP we will require co-ordinated timetable changes at set times during the year; and
5. We will seek opportunities to integrate Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) and bus passenger real-time systems to improve information about disruption and diversions.

Figure 4-2 – Sample e-ink displays



5. Reporting

DfT Guidance

This section should set out the arrangements for publishing six-monthly performance against BSIP targets. Please include the URL on your website where these reports will appear.

We propose to publish performance against the four key targets on our website every six months. These will include:

- Bus journey times on a sample of routes, controlled against car journey times so that the context for changes in journey times can be properly understood;
- Reliability on the same sample of routes;
- Patronage as measured by the number of passengers boarding buses in Slough, using figures provided by operators; and
- Bus passenger satisfaction and perceptions, using results of a rolling survey administered by SBC.

The reporting will also summarise changes made to the bus product such as the implementation of bus lanes, service development and fare changes.

The reporting process will be overseen by the Enhanced Partnership Board which we will constitute in the coming months. This body will be responsible for updating this Bus Service Improvement Plan will meet on a periodic basis to manage the development of outputs, monitor outcomes against targets and hold delivery partners to account. The frequency of these meetings will be such to ensure that any risks to delivery can be identified and raised in a timely manner to resolve.

6. Overview table

DfT Guidance

This section should summarise the key outputs of the BSIP and how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy. The purpose of this section is to give readers, including passengers and the Department, an overview of the commitments in the BSIP which LTAs and operators will work towards to improve local bus services. LTAs should complete all sections of the template.

BSIP Overview Table Template

Name of authority or authorities:	Slough Borough Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication:	29 October 2021
Date of next annual update:	31 October 2022
URL of published report:	tbc

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey time	-	Based on current timetables (Aug 21) existing average one-way AM peak bus journey time weighted by frequency is 24 minutes within Slough	21.5 minutes (11% reduction)	Analysis of bus schedules and real-time information for bus services within Slough. This is because half of route mileage currently operates outside Slough: to measure the whole route would under-represent SBC's delivery of bus priority measures. Change in bus journey times to be controlled against change in car journey times (Bluetooth data).
Reliability	78% on-time (2017/18 figure)	78% on-time (2017/18 figure); TfL measures Excess Wait Time on route 81. EWT in 2019 0.96 mins against minimum standard of 1.1.	85% on-time for low-frequency routes; Excess Wait Time (for high frequency routes) 1.0 minutes	Values for timing points to be estimated from real-time passenger information systems for stops within Slough. In the case of TfL route 81 results to be drawn from TfL's published results.
Passenger numbers	4,655,093	4,536,793	?	20% increase in passenger numbers as a result of BSIP measures on a baseline of patronage at the end of the Bus Recovery Grant period (April 2022).
Average passenger satisfaction	-	-	-	Regular SBC residents' surveys.

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning	Yes	More collaborative process as part of the EP to consider proposals to change the bus network and to consider external influences, notably the planning of new development.

		Collaborate with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary interurban service design.
More frequent and reliable services	Yes	Subject to funding, core network of the A4 east-west spine, Britwell Estate and Wexham Park Hospital: target 10-minute daytime headway with 20-minute headways evenings and Sundays. On other town and core interurban routes target maximum 30-minute daytime headways (60-minute headways evenings and Sundays). Improved reliability through intensification of bus priority measures and reduced bus stop dwell times.
Review service frequency	Yes	See above. We will seek funding to provide more bus services to meet key shift start and finish times at Heathrow Airport and other major employers. Also, we will seek funding to provide consistent service start and finish times, with the aim of providing last services at c. midnight.
Increase bus priority measures	Yes	Subject to funding, feasibility and consultation new bus priority on various links and at various junctions. Review traffic calming measures, and bus stop laybys across the network. Minor works and review Traffic Regulation Orders on each bus route. Review TROs at bus stops. Review process of communicating roadworks with operators. Give bus operations control staff access to traffic cameras
Increase demand responsive services	Yes	Propose to establish shared transport services to major employer(s) using a transport brokerage model.
Consideration of bus rapid transport networks	Yes	The proposals for whole route priority along the A4 Bath Road and London Road represent the foundations for Bus Rapid Transit, and is reflected in SBC's proposals for SMaRT, of which Phase 1 is in operation between the rail station and the Bath Road Trading Estate. SBC hopes to stimulate operation of high-frequency BRT services on this corridor.
<i>Improvements to planning / integration with other modes</i>	Yes	Liaise with TfL Rail and First Great Western on timetable co-ordination. Subject to funding re-focus cycle hire / e-scooter hire at stations at commuter journeys. Review provision of cycle racks at bus stops. Requirement noted to integrate potential cycling infrastructure (subject to separate Capability Fund bid) on A4 with bus priority infrastructure.
Integrate services with other transport modes	Yes	Subject to funding, a wayfinding project at Slough Bus Station to help passengers find their bus. Timetable co-ordination between bus and rail as part of re-establishment of the link between Burnham Station and the Trading Estate, subject to funding.
Simplify services	Yes	Services are already generally quite simple in Slough, but opportunities will be pursued, subject to funding where these require more resource.
Review socially necessary services	Yes	SBC has sought to retain Sunday and evening services previously lost, and will continue to do so with the target, subject to funding, of maximum 20-minute headway on core network and 60-minute headway on secondary network.
Invest in Superbus networks	Yes	Superbus consists of a comprehensive network of bus priority measures; fares caps; and increased service frequencies. Subject to funding and feasibility we propose to implement each of these elements.
<i>Improvements to fares and ticketing</i>		
Lower fares	Yes	Subject to funding and feasibility, propose to reduce the highest fares paid in Slough to bring them into line with fares paid in other similar locations and where possible to align with rail fares. The proposed multi-operator ticket will eliminate the need for passengers to pay twice for journeys involving more than operator.
Simplify fares	Yes	Subject to funding and technical feasibility: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Standardise on age 19 as the minimum cut-off for a youth discount; 2) Mandate a QR-code paper-based / app-based multi-operator ticketing scheme; 3) Encourage operator own account-based tap on tap out ticketing;

		4) Mandate multi-operator account-based tap on tap out ticketing consistent with Project Coral.
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport	Yes	Subject to funding and feasibility, electronic PlusBus to allow Plus Bus tickets to specify bus at the start of the journey; Under stage 4 above, integrate local bus fares with TfL Rail Pay As You Go.
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
<i>Higher spec buses</i>		
Invest in improved bus specifications	Yes	We will conduct customer research on priorities, but at this stage we envisage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking funding from NBS to ensure as far as possible that buses are fitted with USB chargers as standard; Seeking a higher specification through vehicle refurbishment for buses used on the core network and other long-distance journeys.
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	Yes	Subject to funding, we will identify and develop solutions for bus stops which do not meet accessibility standards. Subject to funding, 'next stop' screens and announcements on vehicles as standard on all bus services. Ensure that the new development takes appropriate account of the needs of bus users and efficient use by bus operators.
Protect personal safety of bus passengers	Yes	Subject to funding, review access routes to bus stops including footpaths. Subject to funding, implement CCTV at Slough Bus Station and at selected bus stops. Mandate CCTV on-bus. Subject to technical feasibility and funding: Notifications to parents when a child's QR code / app boards a bus.
Improve buses for tourists	Yes	Bus priority and service improvements proposed will boost services to tourist attractions in Windsor.
Invest in decarbonisation	Yes	We will seek funding opportunities to deliver migration to Zero-Emission fleet with associated infrastructure over the coming years. We will co-ordinate with neighbouring authorities especially TfL, RBWM and BC.
<i>Improvements to passenger engagement</i>		
Passenger charter	Yes	We will develop a passenger charter in conjunction with operators.
Strengthen network identity	No	No specific proposals. Slough's geography means that most bus services cross its boundary, so a Slough-specific brand is not considered appropriate. First and Reading Buses have already adopted 'Thames Valley' branding. Heathrow branding in place.
Improve bus information	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Operators to share more service information on each others' services; Develop e-ink to provide static and real-time information at all bus stops in Slough; Co-ordinated timetable changes at set times during the year Seek opportunities to integrate UTMC and bus passenger real-time systems to improve information about disruption and diversions.
Other		
Other		

Appendices



A.1. Funding Template

See the table below entitled *Outline Funding Template for BSIP*

Also provided as an attachment in Excel format

Outline funding template for BSIP

* Within each category, please use multiple lines to show details of different projects or proposals where you can. For example, on bus priority, you should aim to include detail on specific responsive services to flag. This is particularly important where you wish to attach a different priority ranking to different parts of your proposals.

** Please rank each line with a number showing your view of priority to your BSIP outcomes: 1 being the highest priority, and every line receiving a different number thereafter.

*** Totals will automatically be calculated. Do not amend calculations in row 34 or columns Q and R.

Q1. Please complete the table below. All figures should be nominal (actual prices, unadjusted for inflation). Please delete guidance in [blue] when completing the template.

<i>[Within all categories, please add more rows if required]</i>	Title of scheme	Detail on aspiration [e.g. 'additional bus priority on X corridor', 'flat fares of Y across operators']	Priority Ranking**	
Bus priority infrastructure	<i>Bus priority on primary road network not included in packages below</i>	<i>bus lanes Farnham Road and Windsor Road</i>		DfT - £3b
	<i>Bus priority on other roads not included in packages below</i>	<i>bus lanes, selective vehicle detection, bus stop geometry reviews</i>		DfT other (specify) Other Gc (please s Private
	<i>Other highway reviews not included in packages below</i>	<i>review bus lane operations hours; highway reviews</i>		DfT - £3b DfT other (specify) Other Gc (please s Private
Other infrastructure	Improved timetable displays at bus stops Bus stop upgrades & walk route reviews not included in packages below CCTV in Slough Bus Station and at selected stops Slough Bus Station vehicle upgrades decarbonisation	<i>link displays not included in packages below</i> <i>review boarding and passenger facilities</i> CCTV <i>wayfinding; review accessibility and facilities</i> <i>USB chargers, vehicle refurbishment, next stop announcements</i> <i>feasibility study</i>		
Fares support	Fares reductions	<i>Fares reduction</i> <i>Discounted fares for young people</i>		
Ticketing reform	Migration to multi-operator and account-based ticketing	second card readers costs to establish multi-operator & account-based schemes		
Bus service support	Support for enhanced bus services not included in packages below Support for current bus service	<i>Hospital access and evenings and Sunday</i> Current network support, while patronage builds back. This is a one year request to enable a network review to be carried out with operators and service re-shaping to be properly planned, communicated and implemented		
Marketing				
EP/franchising delivery: LTA costs	additional staff costs	2 FTE and EP Board chair		
Package 1	<i>Langley corridor</i>			
Package 2	<i>A4 London Road and Bath Road corridor</i>			
Package 3	<i>North West Slough</i>	bus priority, bus stop and bus stop access upgrades, highway reviews, bus service improvements		
TOTALS***				

Q2. [optional] Please provide any additional notes to explain the other funding sources outside of the £3bn for buses (150 words maximum).

Matt Gamble
Atkins Limited
Nova North
11 Bressenden Place
Westminster
London
SW1E 5BY

Matt.gamble@atkinsglobal.com



© Atkins Limited except where stated otherwise

Outline funding template for BSIP

*Within each category, please use multiple lines to show details of different projects or proposals where you can. For example, on bus priority, you should aim to include detail on specific corridors, or on bus services support, you may have a split between scheduled services and demand-responsive services to flag. This is particularly important where you wish to attach a different priority ranking to different parts of your proposals.
 ** Please rank each line with a number showing your view of priority to your BSIP outcomes: 1 being the highest priority, and every line receiving a different number thereafter.
 *** Totals will automatically be calculated. Do not amend calculations in row 34 or columns Q and R.

Q1. Please complete the table below. All figures should be nominal (actual prices, unadjusted for inflation). Please delete guidance in blue when completing the template.

Within all categories, please add more rows if required	Title of scheme	Detail on aspiration (e.g. 'additional bus priority on X corridor', 'flat fares of Y across operators')	Priority Ranking**	Source of Funding		2022/23 (£ nominal)		2023/24 (£ nominal)		2024/25 (£ nominal)		Beyond 2025 (£ nominal)		Total cost of project or proposal (£ nominal)***	
				DTT - £3bn DTT other (please specify) Other Government (please specify) Private	DTT - £3bn	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital	Resource	Capital
Bus priority infrastructure	Bus priority on primary road network not included in packages below	bus lanes Farnham Road and Windsor Road		DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	750,000		750,000		1,670,000		600,000		600,000	2,400,000
	Bus priority on other roads not included in packages below	bus lanes selective vehicle detection, bus stop geometry reviews		DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	230,000		230,000		470,000		360,000		360,000	1,440,000
	Other highway reviews not included in packages below	review bus lane operations hours; highway reviews		DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	150,000		150,000				70,000		70,000	280,000
Other infrastructure	Improved timetable displays at bus stops Improved boarder reviews not included in packages below CCTV in Slough Bus Station and at selected stops Slough Bus Station vehicle upgrades decarbonisation Fares reductions Migration to multi-operator and account-based ticketing Support for enhanced bus services not included in packages below Support for current bus service	work displays not included in packages below review boarding and passenger facilities CCTV wayfinding; review accessibility and facilities USB chargers, vehicle refurbishment, next stop announcements feasibility study Discounted fares for young people second card readers costs to establish multi-operator & account-based schemes Hospital access and parking and Sunday Current network support with bus stop build back. This is a one year request to enable a network review to be carried out with operators and service re-shaping to be properly planned, communicated and implemented		DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn DTT - £3bn	1,410,000 470,000 80,000 120,000 280,000 1,100,000 700,000 360,000 50,000 420,000 2,530,000	1,410,000 470,000 80,000 120,000 280,000 1,100,000 700,000 360,000 80,000 400,000 2,530,000	1,410,000 470,000 80,000 120,000 280,000 1,100,000 700,000 360,000 50,000 400,000 2,530,000	1,410,000 310,000 80,000 60,000 390,000 700,000 1,800,000 90,000 1,880,000	1,410,000 310,000 80,000 60,000 390,000 700,000 1,800,000 90,000 1,880,000	1,050,000 310,000 640,000 60,000 390,000 5,630,000 2,860,000 90,000 3,050,000 2,530,000	1,050,000 310,000 640,000 60,000 390,000 5,630,000 2,860,000 90,000 3,050,000 2,530,000	4,250,000 1,250,000 120,000 410,000 1,550,000 100,000 160,000 1,880,000		
Marketing	EP/franchising delivery LTA costs additional staff costs	2 FTE and EP Board chair		DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	170,000		170,000		170,000		650,000		1,360,000	
Package 1	Langley corridor	bus priority, bus stop and bus stop access upgrades, highway reviews, bus service improvements		DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	1,420,000	600,000	1,200,000	670,000	1,240,000	400,000	5,750,000		9,710,000	1,730,000
Package 2	A4 London Road and Bath Road corridor			DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	160,000	480,000	160,000	2,870,000	150,000	2,120,000	2,620,000		2,620,000	5,940,000
Package 3	North West Slough			DTT - £3bn	DTT - £3bn	280,000	640,000	210,000	700,000	130,000	620,000	1,150,000		1,770,000	1,950,000
TOTALS***						6,150,000	5,630,000	3,450,000	8,480,000	3,410,000	7,060,000	20,410,000		33,420,000	21,170,000

Q2. (optional) Please provide any additional notes to explain the other funding sources outside of the £3bn for buses (150 words maximum).

Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Place	
Service: Strategy and Infrastructure – Transport	
Name of Officer/s completing assessment: Eddie Hewitt	
Date of Assessment: 14th September 2021	
Name of service/function or policy being assessed: Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)	
1.	<p>What are the aims, objectives, outcomes, purpose of the policy, service change, function that you are assessing?</p> <p>The BSIP is an essential element of the Council’s response to the National Bus Strategy. This response also includes the development of an Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators in Slough. The overall requirement is to establish and commit to a joint plan to improve reliability and quality of services, increase bus passenger levels and improve bus passenger satisfaction.</p> <p>The National Bus Strategy has been developed by Government in the context of the need to bring about a post-COVID-19 recovery across the country, and to ensure the recovery is not car-led. This follows on from the publication of the DfT’s <i>Better Deal for Bus Users</i> guidance, with a commitment to help local authorities improve current services and restore lost services where they’re needed most.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 restrictions, demand for public transport was substantially reduced and emergency government funding was applied to maintain bus services. All formal restrictions were lifted in July 2021. In transport terms, the essential policy is for public transport to be an integral part of the overall recovery. For buses, the Government has put forward the slogan ‘Bus Back Better’, indicating the intention to ensure that services post-COVID will be an improvement on the situation before the restrictions came first came into place. However, even before the COVID-19 restrictions came into place, policies were in place at Slough to promote increased uptake of public transport and specifically travel by bus. Hence the National Bus Strategy is building on existing plans and aspirations in Slough. The mass movement of people on the network has long been a priority in order to deliver an integrated, sustainable transport solution in and across the borough.</p> <p>The headline objectives in the BSIP include targets as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reductions in journey times • Improvement in journey time reliability • Increased patronage (passenger numbers) • Increased levels of passenger satisfaction. <p>The proposals in the BSIP designed to realise these objectives include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased bus priority on the road network • Better service frequency • Lower fares • Better ticketing systems and arrangements (including multi-operator ticketing) • Improved modal integration opportunities • Better service information <p>The BSIP is the first stage in the overall response to the National Bus Strategy, and is by its nature a preliminary plan which is subject to various factors and circumstances coming into alignment. Hence, this Equality Impact Assessment is an initial, overarching review.</p> <p>The BSIP has also not yet been finalised. The BSIP is currently in draft form, and will be finalised in time for submission to the Department for Transport by the 31st October 2021. Subject to Cabinet review, towards the end of October, the main content of the BSIP is, however, not expected to change significantly.</p> <p>The BSIP will then be followed by the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) which will contain detailed, specific schemes. Further, scheme specific EIAs will be produced in due course, where the schemes are considered to be of an appropriate scale and scope, and where such schemes are expected to lead to significant impacts for any protected group(s).</p>
2.	<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 BSIP is a shared plan. Slough Borough Council and the Bus Operators of registered local services in Slough have joint ownership of the BSIP. Subject to feasibility, funding and consultation, the proposed measures will be delivered jointly, through the Enhanced Partnership. However, ultimately, Slough Borough Council has responsibility for leading the development of the plan and submission to the Department for Transport (DfT).</p> <p>The development of the BSIP has been overseen by the Transport team in the Place Directorate, Strategy and Infrastructure division. Responsibility for regular progress reviews, liaising with the bus operators and all related administrative activities lies with the Transport team.</p> <p>The DfT is responsible initially for reviewing the Slough BSIP, and for determining any initial levels of funding. Subsequently, the DfT will also be reviewing scheme specific proposals that are set out in local traffic authority Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPPs) – the next stage in the overall process – and determining any grant funding to facilitate the delivery of the proposed schemes and measures.</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>The overall expectation is that this proposal will lead to improvements for all who use bus services in Slough, with wider benefits for all.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that bus travel may be used and relied upon by certain protected groups more than others. Broadly speaking, the relevant groups are expected to be affected as follows:</p> <p>Age: Older people are often particularly reliant on public transport and bus travel especially. Service frequency, safety, access to bus stops and the bus station, information availability, and concessional fares are all of particular relevance here. The same applies to young people, including school pupils and students.</p> <p>Disability: As above, people with disabilities are often reliant on public transport. Again, service frequency, safety, access to bus stops and the bus station, information availability, and concessional fares are all of particular relevance.</p>

	<p>Pregnancy and maternity: There may be some specific impacts for this category, relating to access to healthcare and facilities for parents and also young children.</p> <p>Race: Generally speaking, there are no specific impacts here. However, there may be some cultural/religious aspects which relate to the perceived and actual benefits or otherwise of public transport services and patronage.</p> <p>Religion and Belief: Generally speaking, there are no specific impacts here. However, there may be some impacts, including better access to places of worship. Furthermore, as above, there may be some cultural/religious aspects which relate to the perceived and actual benefits or otherwise of public transport services and patronage.</p> <p>Gender Reassignment: No specific impacts associated with this category.</p> <p>Marriage and Civil Partnership: No specific impacts associated with this category.</p> <p>Sex: No specific impacts associated with this category.</p> <p>Sexual orientation: No specific impacts associated with this category.</p> <p><i>Details relating to the nature of the various, expected impacts are set out in sections 4 and 5 below.</i></p>
4.	<p>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.</p> <p>The positive impacts for all groups identified above, and indeed for all bus travellers from all groups, are likely to be:</p>

- More frequent bus services
- More reliable journey times
- Lower fares
- Multi-operator ticketing arrangements (a simpler ticket and therefore easier travel)
- Better quality buses
- Improved air quality, reduced carbon emissions
- A more extensive network of services / greater access to places of work and education, shop, services, healthcare, and other destinations
- Further benefits.

Nb the above list of likely benefits is not exhaustive.

Other likely benefits or aspects which are particularly relevant to the specific groups identified are as follows:

Age

More frequent services will be especially helpful to both older people and young people. This will lead to increased perceptions of safety and, for the elderly mainly, greater comfort / minimised physical pain related to traditionally longer waiting times.
A more reliable network of services will also increase connectivity and social inclusion, as well as easier access to a range of destinations.

Disability

As above, similar benefits will arise as for older people.
In addition, the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership is expected to lead to more considerate and more responsive bus companies, through a greater understanding of the issues, which will be shared by the operators and the Council. Where not already included, the proposed table of measures and schemes will be reviewed and strengthened to better address the needs of people with disabilities.

Parents and young children

Again, as above, more frequent and reliable services will improve safety (perceived and actual) especially for mothers of young children and young children themselves. Benefits will also be associated with better access to healthcare related destinations. Lower fare costs may well be of particular benefit here too.

	<p>Race Although it can be hard to demonstrate with empirical evidence, certain cultural attitudes towards public transport do appear to be of particular relevance to certain ethnic and minority groups. Themes include actual and perceived safety on public transport and a preference for car ownership and travel combined with reluctance to travel on public transport for a variety of reasons (termed sometimes as '<i>car culture</i>'). Improved bus services are expected to provide a more attractive, more efficient travel option for all, and hence the benefits here may be particularly attractive to certain groups within the community.</p> <p>Religion and Belief More reliable bus services, reduced waiting times, and a better bus network are all likely to provide a more attractive travel option to those seeking to travel to places of worship across the borough. In addition, there may also be some benefits in terms of safety – again, perceived or actual – for members of certain religious groups who may generally feel vulnerable on public transport.</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 very few negative impacts anticipated for any of the groups identified above. The only impact that stands out is a possible reduction in parking availability at certain locations across the borough (although no firm plans – or even locations – have been established). This impact would potentially be detrimental to those who have a particularly strong preference to travel by private car. In the wider interests of the borough, the more important need here is for the Council, as local transport authority, to provide more education and to engage with residents better to promote more sustainable forms of travel, including public transport and active travel.</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>In preparing the BSIP, the Council has taken into account all relevant and available data sources, including data from the bus operators. Nb in the case of some operators, data is yet to be received and is subject to non-disclosure agreements, due to commercial interests. The analysis of this data is therefore not yet complete.</p> <p>Regarding other sources: The Council is currently hosting a public survey for both bus travellers and non-bus travellers. This survey is currently still active and is due to cease at the end of September 2021. The BSIP team is already engaged in reviewing the responses as they come in, and</p>

	<p>considering how best to respond to the results. At present, there are no early indications of any issues relating to specific, protected groups, but this will be closely monitored during the finalisation of the BSIP, subsequently the EPP, and then on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Responding to customer complaints and other correspondence are generally considered as part of the general Transport team duties. All relevant information has been discussed and referred to the authors of the BSIP document, either verbally as part of ongoing discussion, or in written form via emails. However, the information here is not extensive and there are no major points of reference relating to any specific group.</p>
7.	<p>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?</p> <p>Staff forums and unions have not been consulted. Community groups have been sent information regarding the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership development, via email correspondence, with a request for any comments to be made.</p> <p>One particular group specifically targeted is schools, with head teachers having been contacted for this purpose. Staff resources at the Council are quite limited, at present, but the intention is to engage further with as many relevant organisations and community groups as far as reasonably possible. This process is expected to continue for the lifetime of the national Bus Strategy, specifically the period during which the Government is coordinating the overall realisation of the strategy and making funding streams available for local authorities to bid for.</p>
8.	<p>Have you considered the impact the policy might have on local community relations?</p> <p>The BSIP is expected to make a positive contribution here. Public Transport plays a valuable role in the borough, and nationally, in providing greater mobility and accessibility to all members of the community.</p> <p>The BSIP contains a comprehensive list of measures and proposals designed to have the overall effect of improving connectivity within and across the town. This will be achieved through more frequent services, more reliable journeys, better value with fares, and all associated benefits. All of these impacts are expected to be valued by the community, and specific community groups, as referred to in section 4.</p> <p>The expected benefits arising from the improved air quality, reduced carbon emissions, reduced congestion levels, will all be particularly valuable in terms of greater social and environmental sustainability. Better, more reliable access to jobs, education and shopping areas will all be expected to lead to greater economic sustainability, with positive implications for all within the various communities.</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>As throughout this review, there are currently no negative impacts anticipated for any protected group, or indeed all members of the public. It is possible that some changes may have some unexpected consequences, including some short term detrimental impacts, but the BSIP is a 'living' document / plan, and any negative impacts will be reviewed and addressed accordingly.</p> <p>Engagement with the public increasingly takes place via online communications, and the various websites run by the Council and the bus operators, and all other sources, will continue to play a vital role in the exchange of information and comments. However, as far as practically possible, greater input from community groups will be actively sought and welcomed by the Council, through current channels and new initiatives to be explored and implemented.</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>The reporting procedure for the BSIP has not yet been fully finalised. The current proposal is that six monthly reviews will be appropriate to monitor the effectiveness of both the BSIP and the Enhanced partnership. In addition, the Council will respond to all relevant guidance from the DfT, and will comply with all formal reporting requirements.</p> <p>The success of all major schemes and measures to follow via the EPP will typically be subject to evaluation reports and regular monitoring, as well as discussion at partnership meetings to come with the bus operators.</p> <p>In addition, the Transport team will oversee an ongoing review of the overall development and progress of the BSIP and all associated measures, including consideration of the perceived and actual impacts on the public – including, specifically, all protected groups. The Enhanced Partnership will provide greater opportunity for the Council to engage in meaningful discussion with both the bus operators and the public on all relevant matters, and this will be expected to lead to further positive and specific outcomes.</p> <p>As stated in the question, the full impacts of the BSIP, the EPP, and the partnership will only be realised initially over the lifetime of the National Bus Strategy and the local response, and subsequently beyond. For a long-term, sustainable solution, thorough, ongoing review will be vital, along with continuity and increased commitment to the essential principles and objectives established in the plan.</p>

What course of action does this EIA suggest you take? More than one of the following may apply	
Outcome 1: No major change required. The EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken	✓
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy 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).	✓
Outcome 3: Continue the policy 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).	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink 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
Final version of the BSIP to be submitted to the DfT	All groups	Eddie Hewitt Support from Atkins (consultants)	Satisfactory review and feedback from the DfT, along with any relevant funding award	Review	31 st October 2021	On course
Regular reviews of the progress of the implementation of the	All groups	Eddie Hewitt / Transport	Satisfactory review findings	Monitoring	Ongoing (minimum every 6	Planned

BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership							
Development of the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and submission to the DfT)	All groups	Eddie Hewitt / Transport Support from Atkins (consultants)	Satisfactory review and feedback from the DfT, along with any relevant funding award for specific schemes proposed.	Review	March 2022	On course	

Name: Eddie Hewitt, Principle Transport Strategy Officer

Signed:
(Person completing the EIA)

Name: Misha Byrne, Transport Lead

Signed:

.....(Policy Lead if not same as above)

Date: 14th September 2021

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 18th October 2021

SUBJECT: Proposed Professional Services Framework

CHIEF OFFICER: Executive Director of Place

CONTACT OFFICER: Fin Garvey,

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Leader of Council and Lead Member for Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans-
Cllr Swindlehurst

Lead Member for Housing, Highways, Planning & Place – Cllr Mann

KEY DECISION: YES

EXEMPT: NO

DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN: YES

APPENDICES: None

1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report seeks approval to develop a four year Framework of Architect/Design led Professional Services. The framework will be for internal use within the council but is principally targeted at HRA developments, General Fund works coming through the Place Delivery team and the Highways and Planning teams. It will also provide access to relevant consultants to input into planning decisions.

2.0 Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the development and introduction of a four year professional services framework to enable the cost effective procurement of essential consultants across a range of services be approved.
- (b) That it be noted that as part of the procurement exercise, Officers will publish the notice in the *Find a Tender* to invite Expressions of interest from Suppliers wishing to tender.
- (c) That it be noted that having followed and satisfied all the legal, regulatory and statutory requirements the framework agreement is set to commence in 2022 and run for a period of 4 years (the maximum period for a Framework).

- (d) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Place to approve the appointment of suppliers to the award of the Professional Services Framework agreement.

Reason:

The Framework Agreement provides a cost effective route to procure essential consultancy services and will help manage the variable workload resulting from a number of capital projects/grants and will improve the Council's capability and capacity by providing specialist services that are not available in-house.

2 Report

Introductory paragraph

2.1 The successful set up of a Framework Agreement will enable Officers to commission services from Consultants who will assist with the delivery of projects/schemes that help fulfil the Council's vision and corporate priorities that include the Five Year Plan and Infrastructure Projects Service Plan through:

- Outcome 1 Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful by delivering cycling and walking schemes that help improve air quality.
- Outcome 2 Our People will be healthier and manage their own care needs by supporting works under the General Fund and HRA that are associated with healthy lifestyles and also managing grant funds that providing cycle training and cycle related events that promote healthier activities and facilitate active travel for the community.
- Outcome 3 Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay by supporting works under the General Fund and HRA that improve the physical environment and also assisting in designing cycling and walking schemes that will encourage residents to use alternative sustainable modes of transport.
- Outcome 4 Our Residents will live in good quality homes by supporting key residential development projects.
- Outcome 5 Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents – by ensuring designs and construction works deliver fit for business transport infrastructure.

Options considered

1. Option 1. Recruit additional in-house resources: The option to recruit additional in-house resources to support the requirements of the current and projected workloads has been considered. This would create additional and permanent employee costs to the Council for what is a fluctuating resource requirement. This option would not allow for project design work or analysis where specialist knowledge is required. Furthermore, funding for capital budgets is time-restricted and ringfenced to deliver specific schemes. This option provides limited capacity and restricted capability and matches long term resource and costs to short-term projects. This option is not recommended.
2. Option 2. Procure professional services on a project-by-project basis: This option provides maximum choice in terms of capability and experience although it provides

limited agility in terms of responding to requirements and procurement. This would result in delays to project delivery and add costs to the project. This option is not recommended.

3. Option 3. Use of established external Framework Agreements from other Local Authorities, Government departments and National Contract such as ESPO or the Crown Contract Services. This approach is currently being used but there are fee implications for Slough to access the agreements and additional administration fees from Local Authorities i.e., Hampshire contract administration costs are set at 10%. The existing Framework Agreements do not offer the opportunity to use Slough's own terms or develop our social value contributions with the suppliers/contractors. Whilst offering some capacity, this option has limited flexibility and is likely to be expensive compared to other options due to fee arrangements. This option is not recommended.
4. Option 4. Develop a bespoke Council Framework Agreement with multiple small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The bespoke Council framework agreement will provide a long term, innovative and compliant service appointment, with the ability to demonstrate value for money and improve social value for the Council. This option will allow the Council to seek competition within a shorter timescale where external funding timescales require a tighter turnaround. The professional services framework agreement will set out the scope and specification of the services to ensure that they can be delivered efficiently and effectively that supports the delivery of projects within the directorate. In establishing the framework agreement, the Council does not commit in any way to awarding any volume or value of contract work to any of the framework providers. This provides reassurance should there be fluctuations (either up or down) in Capital programmes or no Revenue funding. In addition, the Slough Framework agreement will enable Slough to use their own specific contract terms, own KPI's and agree on social values that will benefit the Council and its residents. **Recommended Option.**

Background

Place Delivery had a very successful framework in place between 2014 and 2018. This extended across Corporate, Residential and Education lots. The most important lessons learned from the framework was not to underestimate the requirement for services and not to limit the participation to too low a number as this may reduce competition.

Housing Development have a Procurelink framework with a single operator which has proven very expensive to operate. The framework has a very broad ranging service delivery mechanism which provides a simple mechanism for call-off but provides no mechanism for cost control, value for money and competition.

As discussed above in Option 3, there are third party frameworks available elsewhere, some of which are currently in use by the Council's highways team. These generally attract a substantial fee and do not provide the critical control measures which typically arise from setting up an independent framework.

The scope of this framework has been discussed with internal departments to ensure that lessons learnt are factored into the preferred option with a view towards establishing a high quality, competitive, inclusive and high value-adding framework.

General Construction

It is proposed to have a single lot to cover all construction related to professional services for Residential, Education and Corporate works. This will ensure that core services can be procured for any such needs and all qualifying firms are capable of such delivery, have

sufficient capacity and can provide a wider value-added service to the Council. We are also aware that there may be ancillary services that are required from time to time that all parties will not necessarily be able to provide but which can be procured through this mechanism where appropriate.

Place Operations

The Council, as a Transport Authority, has a duty to develop and apply policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient, and economic transport facilities and services to, from and within Slough. This includes statutory duties related to road safety and the development of strategic documents.

The introduction of the Framework Agreement will help Slough deliver the schemes that satisfy these requirements.

The Transport and Highways Team, now positioned in the Place Directorate, undertook a procurement exercise and awarded Atkins the professional services contract for five years plus a maximum of (5 x1 year) extensions. Following the contract's expiration in March 2017, the Transport and Highways Team has used the existing framework agreements at Hampshire County Council and Wokingham Borough Council Both Framework Agreements attract a 10% access fee based on contract value.

For major schemes the Council has also used the Eastern Shire Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) to procure technical design services. Similarly, the additional access/administration fees have motivated the team to explore alternative delivery options.

The formation of our in-house Framework will deliver savings against the access fee (10%) as a proportion of works contracted through this mechanism. In addition, the rates provided within the new framework will provide another means of determining value for money when compared with the external frameworks.

The need for a bespoke framework agreement will help;

- (i) Provide capability - bridge the gap in skills required to deliver projects within the service area
- (ii) Improve delivery and quality - enable the delivery of projects within agreed timelines due to suitability and certainty of capability and due diligence on suppliers
- (iii) Value for money - allow continued competition in terms of cost and quality
- (iv) Ensure capacity and agility - enable SBC to respond flexibly to unforeseen issues or changes in government requirements (i.e LTN 1/20)
- (v) Support wider economic objectives - Improve business opportunities for SMEs
- (vi) Support social value and benefits to Slough's residents – require businesses to be more innovative especially in relation to added value to the Council and its residents.

To deliver the services in the most efficient way and enable multiple and local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to tender for the works, the categories of the professional services will be divided into two lots.

Lot 1 Multidisciplinary Services

To generate the optimum number required for further competition responses, it is expected that a maximum of three suppliers will be appointed to cover all disciplines in each service area. Suppliers in Lot 1 can bid for additional services in Lot 2 – specialist/technical services area.

Lot 2 Specialist /Technical Services

Due to the nature of the work undertaken within these disciplines, it is expected that a maximum of three suppliers will be appointed to cover each discipline under each technical area. This will enable small to medium specialist companies to compete with multi specialist companies.

Planning & Policy Team

In addition to the above, a range of Consultancy services are being discussed with Planning for inclusion into the Framework, such as Archaeology advice, Ecology Studies, Flood Risk Assessments, Viability and Valuation Studies, Daylight/Sunlight Reports and Conservation.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications to the Council of developing this framework as the Council is only required to pay for consultancy services as they are required. However it is envisaged that once the Framework is in place and these services are called upon, expenditure on each Lot over the 4 year period will be in the region of:

Construction	£9m
Transport & Highways	Lot 1 £6m and Lot 2 £1.5m
Planning & Policy	£tba

*these estimates are based upon current expected changes to the capital programme and are provided as a guide only

3.1.2 The Finance Team will be engaged throughout the development of the Framework Agreement including agreeing the key evaluation criteria (financial, value for money and commercial) that will be used to evaluate consultants.

3.1.3 The Finance Team will also be engaged throughout to ensure that appropriate arrangements are established to monitor Framework costs and continued value for money. This includes agreement for consultancy spend outside of the Framework Agreement on an exceptional basis.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 The Framework Agreement will be developed in conjunction with Legal Services to allow for the relevant works to be called off primarily but not limited to using the NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract Options (to be confirmed). Options will also include using the JCT Design & Build Contract and the JCT Pre-Construction Services Agreement as-and-when required. Project Managers will manage the call-offs within the Place Directorate and a call-off process will be detailed within both Framework Agreements. No legal implications have been cited at the time of writing this report.

3.2.2 All procurement requires compliance with the council's contract procedure rules and procurement at this level of spend (where the proposed total spend is above the relevant threshold of £189,330) needs to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in full.

3.2.3 The internal requirements are for a formal, compliant tender process to be run, led by the authorised officer in the service area with support from the procurement team. The contract should be advertised and the use of the shared services e-portal system is mandatory.

3.2.4 The council's high value terms and conditions should be used as the basis for both the framework terms and the call off contract terms.

3.2.5 Cabinet approval will be sought before going to market and post tender report with recommendation to award, significant decision to be declared to cabinet on award. Cabinet approval is required to award also and the service lead, procurement review board and director of service.

3.2.6 The final framework contract must be sealed.

3.3 Risk management implications

Summary of risks.

Category	Risk/Opportunity	Controls	Residual Risk Score (1 (Low) to 10 (high))	Additional Controls
Economic/Financial	Increased fees due to inflation, lack of competition and choice and other external factors	Risk reduced by ability to appoint from a framework of consultants who have demonstrated strong value for money Anticipated maximum of 3 consultants per lot	3	No commitment to use the framework if other routes are more economic
Procurement	Inconsistency in procurement documentation	Utilising the framework will standardise documentation and governance across the service areas Rapid comparison across consultants	2	
Procurement	Non-adherence to policies and procedures due to unclear responsibilities and/or lack of knowledge	Governance will be set out within the framework, giving greater clarity and over procurement activities. This will also cover appropriate tender evaluation panels.	2	Once in place designated staff within each service area with specific responsibilities Standard T&Cs
Procurement	Services required that are out of scope	Detailed scopes produced with all service areas to cover core and non-core areas that need to be covered, utilising best practice from previous successful framework	2	Under exceptional circumstances, specialist services can be procured in line with the Council's procurement policy

Procurement	Poor interest from consultants to participate in the framework Tender resulting from proposed cuts to the capital programme and S114.	By good quality marketing coupled with offering a view on the future pipeline of work which will include a large % of externally/grant funded work it is expected that greater interest will be generated than with individual procurement exercises, providing the cost benefits of economies of scale.	4	Standardised appointments
	Difficulty in comparing suppliers	Use of a multi-team approach (legals/finance/technical) to agree on key criteria	4	Good quality documentation and records in the evaluation process.

3.3.2 If a decision were made not to agree the above, this would likely result in a less efficient means of procuring related services. Such a decision would also mean that additional resources would be required to meet the Council's statutory obligations and the Council's policy requirements in respect of the Transport services. This would also be likely to increase the cost to the local authority of procuring such transport related services from a marketplace that is less competitive.

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 The framework will enable our teams to actively include environmental considerations within both the framework participation and each contract award. In addition, there is scope to include carbon footprint, energy efficiency and sustainability within the KPIs for all participants. scope within procurement rules to consider environmental aspects, ie carbon footprints, energy efficiency and sustainability. Carbon Strategy – delivering the services.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 The framework will be constructed to ensure equality of access and non discrimination. This will be captured within the procurement documentation and agreed with procurement before the process is commenced. process of awarding can be assured that it meets equality duty etc. Accessible, equitable, no discriminating.

3.6 Procurement implications

3.6.1 This report sets out the range of procurement options considered from recruitment, ad hoc appointments, use of other frameworks and a bespoke framework. It is recommended that this bespoke framework route provides the most cost effective and practical solution for the procurement of professional services for the forthcoming period where it is expected that there will be fluctuating demands.

3.7 Workforce implications

3.7.1 Officer resources – This approach will be more efficient in time perspective rather than Officers having to procure independently by project requirement.

3.8 Property implications

3.8.1 This Framework has no direct implication on properties.

4. Background Papers

None

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 18th October 2021

SUBJECT: Covid-19 Decisions Update

CHIEF OFFICER: Executive Director, Corporate Operations

CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Pontone, Senior Democratic Services Officer
(01753 875120)

WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Carter – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services & Corporate Support

KEY DECISION: NO

EXEMPT: NO

DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN: YES

APPENDICES: Appendix A – Table of significant decisions

1 Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to inform Cabinet of the further significant decisions taken by officers.
- 2 This report seeks Cabinet ratification of significant decisions at the first available opportunity and will enable the Council to continue to seek to meet its duties to protect public health and to serve the well being of those who live, work and visit its area.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Significant Decisions taken by Silver as set out in Appendix A be ratified.

Reason for Recommendation:

To seek ratification by Cabinet of significant decisions taken by officers insofar as they relate to Executive functions.

2. Report

The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

The decisions taken by officers and set out in this Report have sought to support, as far as reasonably practicable at the present time, the objectives of the [Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy](#) (SJWS) and the Five Year Plan.

Options considered

Option 1 – Ratify all the decisions set out in Appendix A.

Option 2 – Do not ratify the decisions and consider an alternative course of action for one or more decisions, noting they have been taken under delegated authority.

Option 1 is recommended.

Background

2.1.1 Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The decisions set out in this Report have been taken with the overarching objective of protecting public health and the wellbeing of residents and ensuring that the Council is able to achieve this objective lawfully, and as effectively as possible, in the prevailing circumstances. The recommendations contained in this report seek to ensure that the Council is able to continue to try to meet this objective and thereby be in a position to continue to address the priorities of the SJWS and the JSNA appropriately.

2.2 Five Year Plan Outcomes

The recommendations contained in this Report, namely the noting and ratification by Cabinet of the further significant decisions taken by officers, at the first available opportunity, will enable the Council to be in a position to be able to go forward to try and continue to meet the following objectives of the Five Year Plan.

- *Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.*
- *Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.*
- *Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.*
- *Our residents will have access to good quality homes.*
- *Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents*

2.3 Governance

This report sets out the Significant Decisions taken by Officers in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Robust governance arrangements were put in place in March 2020 to manage SBCs response, which is led by a GOLD and SILVER command structure. GOLD/SILVER meetings have been held jointly since March. This is summarised as follows:

- **GOLD** – Chief Executive and Silver Lead from CMT on rotation
Overall responsibility for SBC strategy and response, primary liaison with partners and leads on external communications. Lead Members are consulted where appropriate on decisions in their portfolio.
- **SILVER** – led by a member of CMT on rotation, includes CMT, Public Health, Communications and Operations Room Management. TVP and CCG attend. Responsibility for tactical implementation of GOLD Strategy, escalates strategic decisions to GOLD, refers issues for resolution to task groups.
- **Task Groups** – usually led by an Executive Director or senior Officer
Manages operational matters and escalate issues to Silver
Task groups established include Finance, Human Resources and Business Continuity, Community Hub, IT, Children, Adults, Safer Public Spaces, Testing, PPE, Recovery, Local Outbreak Management Plan Cell and Workplace Safety Group. Some task groups stood down and ready to be reactivated if operationally required.
- **Operations Room** – led by Associate Director
Seeks to coordinate activity in a single team; logs enquiries, actions and decisions and supports Silver.

2.4 Timeline

A summary of the key events and phases is summarised as follows:

- 5th March – first death in UK from Covid-19 is confirmed.
- 12th March – SBC GOLD/SILVER response group meets. SILVER met daily between 23rd March to 24th April and at least weekly since. It currently meets twice a week.
- 23rd March – Prime Minister announces UK-wide partial “lockdown”.
- 26th March – Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (‘lockdown regulations’) come into force.
- 13th May – National ‘Lockdown’ restriction start to be eased and this process continues through June and July. It is not until 25th July that indoor gyms and swimming pools are able to reopen.
- 1st July – local restrictions introduced in Leicester.
- 18th July – Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) (No 3) Regulations come into force giving local authorities in England new powers to close shops and outdoor public spaces in order to control Covid.
- 1st August 2020 – Shielding programme is paused.
- August / September 2020 – local restrictions across England start to be tightened, particularly in the North West and Yorkshire.

- 24th September 2020 – pubs and restaurants ordered to close by 10pm and ‘Rule of 6’ applies.
- 14th October 2020 – new Covid tiers come into force. Slough is placed in Tier 1 – medium level alert.
- 24th October 2020 – Slough moves into Tier 2 – high level alert, which introduced a ban on household mixing.
- 5th November 2020 – Prime Minister announces a new national ‘lockdown’ until 2nd December.
- 26th November 2020 – new Tier system is introduced in England to come into force on 2nd December. Slough will enter Tier 3 – very high alert which means pubs and restaurants remain closed following national ‘lockdown’ and household mixing remains banned.
- 19th December 2020 – Government revises Tier system with a new Level 4 Tier – Stay at Home with restrictions similar to those during the national ‘lockdown’ in November. The Government decides to put Slough into this highest Tier.
- 4th January 2021 – Prime Minister announces new national ‘lockdown’ for England.
- 22nd February 2021 – Government publishes a “roadmap” to gradually ease restrictions over the coming months, starting with the full reopening of schools to all pupils from 8th March 2021.
- 8th March 2021 – Step 1 of the Government’s “roadmap” begins with schools recommencing face-to-face learning for all pupils.
- 29th March 2021 – ‘Stay at Home’ rule ends. Restrictions on social contact begin to be relaxed outdoors.
- 12th April 2021 – Step 2 of the Government’s “roadmap” begins which includes the reopening of non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality.
- 17th May 2021 – Step 3 of the Government’s “roadmap” begins which includes the reopening of indoor hospitality, entertainment and events (with capacity limits), travel corridors and domestic overnight stays.
- 19th July – Step 4 of the “roadmap” due to begin which is likely to remove the remaining legal restrictions.

2.5 Comments of Other Committees

A report on this subject, in the same terms, will also be submitted to full Council at its next meeting.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

3.1.1 Any financial implications of significant decisions taken by officers in connection with the need to deal with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are monitored weekly by a special finance group and will be reported to cabinet as part of the usual financial reports to cabinet.

3.2 Legal implications

3.2.1 Any decisions taken by officers pursuant to the statutory regulations enacted by the Government to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic, to enforce business closures and restrict assembly, could potentially be challenged under the Human Rights Act 1998 as being a breach of article 11, relating to the freedom of assembly and association, and of Article 1 of the First Protocol to that convention, relating to the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. It is considered, however, that risks of successful challenge are low as, in the latter case, derogations are permitted to control use of property in the general interest and, in the former case, for the protection of public health.

Under the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive has delegated power to act in case of emergency and urgency to exercise all council functions. Additionally, under the constitution, all matters not specifically reserved are deemed to be within the delegated authority of the Chief Executive and Directors for all purposes which fall within their directorate or budget area or area of responsibility to which they may be nominated from time to time

The Cabinet may ratify any decisions of officers falling within their functions.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
That the Cabinet note and ratify the significant decisions taken by officers since the "lockdown" came into force.	Failure by Members to note and ratify these actions and decisions increases the risk of challenge and disruption. Ratification provides the opportunity for the Council to build upon the good results already achieved and to move forward strongly by building upon these results with greater	The significant decisions and actions have been taken in accordance with governance arrangements put into place in consultation with the Council's statutory officers and in accordance with all applicable guidance issued by and best practice recommended by all relevant bodies.	Likelihood – Very Low – 2 Legal/ Regulatory – Critical - 3 Score: 6	Increasing return to usual decision making structures and processes as circumstances permit.

	engagement across the Council			
--	-------------------------------------	--	--	--

3.4 Environmental implications

3.4.1 Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs: The Council have not at present carried out any systematic analysis of the effect on carbon emissions and energy costs of the decisions taken by officers since the “lockdown” took effect. It is considered that it is self-evident, however, that the restrictions on travel and the reduction in the use and occupation of Council premises and other council activities means that it is unlikely that there was an increase in emissions and energy costs during this period.

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 All the significant decisions set out in this Report were taken having regard, so far as was practicable in the circumstances, to the public sector equality duties and the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

3.6 Procurement implications

3.6.1 Procurement issues have been considered by Officers in relation to each decision and procurement processes would need to be followed where they apply.

3.7 Workforce implications

3.7.1 The decisions taken by Officers which have affected the workforce are set out in the schedule to this Report.

3.8 Property implications

3.8.1 The restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Act 2020 on the ability of the Council as a landowner to take action to enforce payments of rents will have had an effect on the Council’s asset management position. Any long term effects on the Council’s property portfolio and asset management strategy evaluated and reported to the cabinet as part of the Council’s normal financial reporting to the cabinet.

4. **Background Papers**

None.

Summary of Decisions Taken by Silver

Reference number	Decision Required	Outcome	Date of decision	Decision made by
DEL324	Contract extension for Contact Tracing staffing	Agreed to extend contracts of existing agency staff in local contact tracing team on a weekly rolling for up to 2 months until a longer term model was agreed by Silver.	26/08/2021	SILVER
DEL325	Engagement with Headteachers	The request of the interim Service Lead, Public Health to engage with headteachers and head of virtual school on plans and measures to mitigate transmission in schools was agreed, subject to consultation with Associate Director responsible for education	26/08/2021	SILVER
DEL326	Requests from Workplace Safety Group	The opening requests from WSG were agreed in relation to customer services office team; autism training session; EB CLASS Business Support Team; phased return of adult learning activities at Children's Centres and Chalvey Can Fun Day. All risk assessments had been completed.	02/09/2021	SILVER
DEL327	Request to use Council Chamber for Royal Borough Fire & Rescue Service Meeting - 7th September	Silver agreed in principle that the Chamber could be used, subject to WSG approving a risk assessment.	02/09/2021	SILVER

DEL 328	Return to Workplace and Agile Working	Silver noted the detailed report on approach to return to the workplace at Step 4 of the Roadmap. Option 1 was agreed to maintain the current approach to workplace safety processes and risk assessments. The Executive Board would consider how best to implement the decision and allocate the available capacity at Observatory House to best meet business needs.	02/09/2021	SILVER
DEL329	Self isolation support scheme grants	The update report was noted.	02/09/2021	
DEL330	Requests from Workplace Safety Group	Strategy and Improvement Insight Group 20th Sept, Targeted Group Work - Children centre - Parent and Child Support Groups in Children Centres, This activity is allowed under the current stage of unlock	09/09/2021	SILVER
DEL333	Requests from Workplace Safety Group	Opening requests 1 and 2 for paediatric training and the Place operations meetings were agreed. The request from Business Support was not approved and to be referred to the Workplace Safety Group as part of the prioritisation exercise for staff and services returning to work from Council buildings.	16/09/2021	SILVER
DEL334	Report from Workplace Safety Group	The information report on Covid isolation and case figures was noted.	16/09/2021	SILVER

DEL335	Report from Workplace Safety Group - Face Masks in the Office	The public health guidance and advice on the benefits of mask wearing by staff in SBC offices was noted. Silver agreed that communications would be sent to all staff to reinforce the messages about complying with all existing Covid measures in the office and to encourage face coverings/masks for all staff, with more vulnerable categories wearing more protective masks.	16/09/2021	SILVER
DEL336	Covid-19 Officers	The recommendation option not to extend the contract for Covid-19 Officers was agreed. A future paper from public health would make proposals for best use of the limited COMF funding available.	16/09/2021	SILVER
DEL337	Report from Workplace Safety Group	Requests agreed for Council chamber usage for Council meetings following completion of a detailed risk assessment approved by the Workplace Safety Group.	23/09/2021	SILVER

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 18th October 2021

SUBJECT: Notification of Decisions

CHIEF OFFICER: Executive Director, Corporate Services

CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Pontone, Democratic Services Lead
(01753 875120)

WARD(S): ALL

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Swindlehurst, Leader of the Council

KEY DECISION: NO

EXEMPT: NO

DECISION SUBJECT TO CALL IN: YES

APPENDICES: Appendix A – Published Notification of Decisions

1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 To seek Cabinet endorsement of the published Notification of Decisions, which has replaced the Executive Forward Plan.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that the Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

Reason:

To ensure compliance with requirements regarding local authority executive decision making.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Notification of Decisions sets out when key decisions are expected to be taken and a short overview of the matters to be considered. The decisions taken will contribute to all of the following Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities:

1. *Starting Well*
2. *Integration (relating to Health & Social Care)*
3. *Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods*
4. *Workplace health*

2.2 **Background**

The Notification of Decisions replaces the Forward Plan. The Notice is updated each month on a rolling basis, and sets out:

- A short description of matters under consideration and when key decisions are expected to be taken over the following three months;
- Who is responsible for taking the decisions and how they can be contacted;
- What relevant reports and background papers are available; and
- Whether it is likely the report will include exempt information which would need to be considered in private in Part II of the agenda.

The Notice contains matters which the Leader considers will be the subject of a key decision to be taken by the Cabinet, a Committee of the Cabinet, officers, or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the Plan.

Key Decisions are defined in Article 14 of the Constitution, as an Executive decision which is likely either:

- to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the Borough.

The Council has decided that any expenditure or savings of £250,000 or more shall be significant for the purposes of a key decision.

There are provisions for exceptions to the requirement for a key decision to be included in the Notice and these provisions and necessary actions are detailed in paragraphs 15 and 16 of Section 4.2 of the Constitution.

To avoid duplication of paperwork the Member Panel on the Constitution agreed that the Authority's Notification of Decisions would include both key and non key decisions – and as such the document would form a comprehensive programme of work for the Cabinet. Key decisions are highlighted in bold.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 **Financial implications**

3.1.1 There are no financial implications in endorsing this notice..

3.2 **Legal implications**

3.2.1 There are no Human Rights Act implications. The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 require the executive to publish a notice of the key decisions, and those to be taken

in private under Part II of the agenda, at least 28 clear days before the decision can be taken. This notice replaced the legal requirement for a 4-month rolling Forward Plan.

3.3 Risk management implications

Cabinet endorsement of the published statutory 28-day Notification of Key Decisions contributes to good governance and forward planning and reduced the risk of challenge of executive decisions.

3.4 Environmental implications

None.

3.5 Equality implications

None. All reports to Cabinet will separately set out the equality implications of the proposed decision.

4. Background Papers

None

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

1 OCTOBER 2021 TO 31 DECEMBER 2021

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

Slough Borough Council has a decision making process involving an Executive (Cabinet) and a Scrutiny Function.

As part of the process, the Council will publish a Notification of Decisions which sets out the decisions which the Cabinet intends to take over the following 3 months. The Notice includes both Key and non Key decisions. Key decisions are those which are financially significant or have a significant impact on 2 or more Wards in the Town. This Notice supersedes all previous editions.

Whilst the majority of the Cabinet's business at the meetings listed in this document will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information.

This is formal notice under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that part of the Cabinet meetings listed in this Notice will/may be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

¹⁶ This document provides a summary of the reason why a matter is likely to be considered in private / Part II. The full reasons are listed alongside the report on the Council's website.

¹⁸ If you have any queries, or wish to make any representations in relation to the meeting being held in private for the consideration of the Part II items, please email nicholas.pontone@slough.gov.uk (no later than 15 calendar days before the meeting date listed).

What will you find in the Notice?

For each decision, the plan will give:

- The subject of the report.
- Who will make the decision.
- The date on which or the period in which the decision will be made.
- Contact details of the officer preparing the report.
- A list of those documents considered in the preparation of the report (if not published elsewhere).
- The likelihood the report would contain confidential or exempt information.

What is a Key Decision?

An executive decision which is likely either:

- To result in the Council Incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the borough.

Who will make the Decision?

Decisions set out in this Notice will be taken by the Cabinet, unless otherwise specified. All decisions (unless otherwise stated) included in this Notice will be taken on the basis of a written report and will be published on the Council's website before the meeting.

The members of the Cabinet are as follows:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Leader of the Council – Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans | Councillor Swindlehurst |
| • Deputy Leader – Leisure, Culture & Communities | Councillor Akram |
| • Sustainable Transport & The Environment | Councillor Anderson |
| • Regulation & Public Protection | Councillor Bains |
| • Customer Services & Corporate Support | Councillor Carter |
| • Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills | Councillor Hulme |
| • Housing, Highways, Planning & Place | Councillor Mann |
| • Social Care & Public Health | Councillor Pantelic |

Where can you find a copy of the Notification of Decisions?

The Plan will be updated and republished monthly. A copy can be obtained from Democratic Services at Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road on weekdays between 9.00 a.m. and 4.45 p.m., from MyCouncil, Landmark Place, High Street, or Tel: (01753) 875120, email: nicholas.pontone@slough.gov.uk. Copies will be available in the Borough's libraries and a copy will be published on Slough Borough Council's Website.

How can you have your say on Cabinet reports?

Each Report has a contact officer. If you want to comment or make representations, notify the contact officer before the deadline given.

What about the Papers considered when the decision is made?

Reports relied on to make key decisions will be available before the meeting on the Council's website or are available from Democratic Services.

Can you attend the meeting at which the decision will be taken?

Where decisions are made by the Cabinet, the majority of these will be made in open meetings. Some decisions have to be taken in private, where they are exempt or confidential as detailed in the Local Government Act 1972. You will be able to attend the discussions on all other decisions.

When will the decision come into force?

Implementation of decisions will be delayed for 5 working days after Members are notified of the decisions to allow Members to refer the decisions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, unless the decision is urgent, in which case it may be implemented immediately.

What about key decisions taken by officers?

Many of the Council's decisions are taken by officers under delegated authority. Key decisions will be listed with those to be taken by the Cabinet. Key and Significant Decisions taken under delegated authority are reported monthly and published on the Council's website.

Are there exceptions to the above arrangements?

There will be occasions when it will not be possible to include a decision/report in this Notice. If a key decision is not in this Notice but cannot be delayed until the next Notice is published, it can still be taken if:

- The Head of Democratic Services has informed the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel in writing, of the proposed decision/action. (In the absence of the above, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be consulted);
- Copies of the Notice have been made available to the Public; and at least 5 working days have passed since public notice was given.
- If the decision is too urgent to comply with the above requirement, the agreement of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been obtained that the decision cannot be reasonably deferred.
- If the decision needs to be taken in the private part of a meeting (Part II) and Notice of this has not been published, the Head of Democratic Services will seek permission from the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, and publish a Notice setting out how representations can be made in relation to the intention to consider the matter in Part II of the agenda. Urgent Notices are published on the Council's [website](#).

Cabinet - 18th October 2021

Item	Portfolio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<p><u>SBC Engagement Plan</u></p> <p>To consider an Engagement Plan which sets out the plans for public consultation and engagement as set out in the Chief Executive's response to the s114 notice to Council on 22nd July 2021 and the Recovery & Renewal Plan report to Cabinet on 20th September 2021.</p>	F&E	All	All	Josie Wragg, Chief Executive	-	None	√	
<p><u>Financial Action Plan Update</u></p> <p>To receive any further updates and take any necessary decisions in relation to the Financial Action Plan agreed by Cabinet on 20th September 2021 and/or other matters in relation to the Council's response to the Section 114 Notice.</p>	F&E	All	All	Steven Mair, Section 151 Officer	-	None	√	
<p><u>Library Service Consultation</u></p> <p>To agree to commence a consultation on how best to deliver future library services in Slough.</p>	CS	All	Yes	Richard West, Executive Director of Customer & Community	-	None	√	
<p><u>Bus Service Improvement Plan</u></p> <p>To consider approval of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and next stage of the development of an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators in Slough.</p>	T&E	All	All	Savio DeCruz, Associate Director, Place Operations Tel: 01753 875640	Place Scrutiny Panel	None		

Portfolio Key – F&E = Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans, CS = Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills, C&C = Customer Services & Corporate Support, T&E = Sustainable Transport & The Environment, H&P = Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, L&C = Leisure, Culture & Communities, R&P = Regulation and Public Protection, S&P = Social Care and Public Health

Bold – Key Decision Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision *Italics* – Performance/Monitoring Report

<p><u>Professional Services Framework (Place)</u></p> <p>To seek approval to develop a 4-year Framework of architect/design led professional services across the Place directorate (including Place Delivery, Housing, Highways and Transport).</p>	H&P	All	All	Stephen Gibson, Executive Director of Place Tel: 01753 875852	-	None		
<p><u>Digital Signage Strategy</u></p> <p>To obtain approval for the strategy for the use of council sites for the provision of digital advertising for the purpose of income generation and approval of sites for such advertising. (Note: this report may be deferred until November 2021).</p>	F&E	All	All	Stephen Gibson, Executive Director of Place Tel: 01753 875852	-	None		Yes, p3 LGA
<p><u>Covid-19 Decisions Update</u></p> <p>To update on the significant decisions taken by officers in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to seek to ratify the executive decisions taken.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		
<p><u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u></p> <p>To receive any references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and/or scrutiny panels.</p>	C&C	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		
<p><u>Notification of Key Decisions</u></p> <p>To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		

Portfolio Key – F&E = Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans, CS = Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills, C&C = Customer Services & Corporate Support, T&E = Sustainable Transport & The Environment, H&P = Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, L&C = Leisure, Culture & Communities, R&P = Regulation and Public Protection, S&P = Social Care and Public Health

Bold – Key Decision Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision *Italics* – Performance/Monitoring Report

Cabinet - 15th November 2021

Item	Port-folio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<p><u>Revenue and Capital Budget Monitor - Quarter 2 2021/22</u></p> <p>To receive an update on the latest revenue and capital position and to consider any write off requests, virements and any other financial decisions requiring Cabinet approval.</p>	F&E	All	All	Steven Mair, Section 151 Officer	O&S	None		
<p><u>Slough Local Plan Update</u></p> <p>To receive an update report on the re-emerging Local Plan for Slough.</p>	H&P	All	All	Pippa Hopkins, Group Manager Place Strategy	Planning Committee and Place Scrutiny Panel	None		
<p><u>Covid-19 Decisions Update</u></p> <p>To update on the significant decisions taken by officers in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to seek to ratify the executive decisions taken.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		
<p><u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u></p> <p>To receive any references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and/or scrutiny panels.</p>	C&C	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		
<p><u>Notification of Key Decisions</u></p> <p>To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None		

Portfolio Key – F&E = Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans, CS = Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills, C&C = Customer Services & Corporate Support, T&E = Sustainable Transport & The Environment, H&P = Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, L&C = Leisure, Culture & Communities, R&P = Regulation and Public Protection, S&P = Social Care and Public Health

Bold – Key Decision Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision *Italics* – Performance/Monitoring Report

Cabinet - 20th December 2021

Item	Port-folio	Ward	Priority	Contact Officer	Other Committee	Background Documents	New Item	Likely to be Part II
<p><u>Performance & Projects Report, Quarter 2 2021/22</u></p> <p>To receive a report on the progress against the Council's balanced scorecard indicators and key projects for 2021/22.</p>	C&C	All	All	David Hounsell, Group Manager, Business Insight	O&S	None	√	
<p><u>Council Taxbases 2022/23</u></p> <p>To present information on the properties in Slough and their categories of occupation for the purpose of determining the council tax base for the borough for the 2022/23 financial year.</p>	F&E	All	All	Steven Mair, Section 151 Officer	-	None	√	
<p><u>Covid-19 Decisions Update</u></p> <p>To update on the significant decisions taken by officers in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to seek to ratify the executive decisions taken.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None	√	
<p><u>References from Overview & Scrutiny</u></p> <p>To receive any references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and/or scrutiny panels.</p>	C&C	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None	√	

Portfolio Key – F&E = Financial Governance, Economic Development & Council Plans, CS = Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills, C&C = Customer Services & Corporate Support, T&E = Sustainable Transport & The Environment, H&P = Housing, Highways, Planning & Place, L&C = Leisure, Culture & Communities, R&P = Regulation and Public Protection, S&P = Social Care and Public Health

Bold – Key Decision Non-Bold – Non-Key Decision *Italics* – Performance/Monitoring Report

<p><u>Notification of Key Decisions</u> To endorse the published Notification of Decisions.</p>	F&E	All	All	Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead Tel: 01753 875120	-	None	√	
--	-----	-----	-----	--	---	------	---	--

