

Date of issue: Wednesday, 9 November 2022

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| <b>MEETING:</b>   | <b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b><br>(Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice Chair), Akbar, Bal, Basra, P. Bedi, Kaur, M. Malik and S. Malik) |
| <b>DATE AND TIME:</b>   | THURSDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 2022 AT 6.30 PM   |
| <b>VENUE:</b>   | COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL  |
| <b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:</b><br><b>(for all enquiries)</b> | NICHOLAS PONTONE<br>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.



**STEPHEN BROWN**  
Chief Executive

**AGENDA**

**PART I**

| <b><u>AGENDA ITEM</u></b> | <b><u>REPORT TITLE</u></b> | <b><u>PAGE</u></b> | <b><u>WARD</u></b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

1. Declarations of Interest

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



| <u>AGENDA<br/>ITEM</u> | <u>REPORT TITLE</u>                                   | <u>PAGE</u> | <u>WARD</u> |
|------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| 2.                     | Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 13th October 2022 | 1 - 6       | -           |

## SCRUTINY ISSUES

|   |                                 |           |     |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| 3.  | Member Questions                | -         | -   |
| <i>(An opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Associate Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).</i> |                                 |           |     |
| 4.  | Improvement and Recovery update | 7 - 86    | All |
| 5.  | Scrutiny Improvement Review     | To Follow | All |

## MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

|    |  |         |   |
|----|--|---------|---|
| 6. | Members' Attendance Record               | 87 - 88 | - |
| 7. | Date of Next Meeting - 1st December 2022 | -       | - |

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



**Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 13th October, 2022.**

**Present:-** Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice-Chair), Akbar, Bal, Basra, Kaur, M. Malik and S. Malik

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillors Anderson, Hulme and Nazir

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor

**PART I**

**7. Chair's Statement**

At the commencement of the meeting the Chair of the Committee provided an update on the progress that had been made to strengthen Slough's scrutiny function and the next steps as part of the improvement programme.

It was noted that scrutiny training had been carried out for both Members and officers and further training was planned later in the year with the support of the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny. A new and experienced Statutory Scrutiny Officer had been appointed and the current year's budget included provision to recruit to the post of scrutiny officer, which had been deleted in a previous restructure.

The Chair stated that the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny review of Slough, which had started at the beginning of the year, would report soon and the recommendations would come to the next meeting of the Committee along with a report from officers on the next steps to implement the review and make the necessary improvements to scrutiny as set out in the Secretary of State's Directions to the Council.

In the meantime, a significant amount of work was taking place to refocus the current scrutiny committee and panels towards task and finish group activity aligned to key areas of the Council's recovery and improvement programme. Three task and finish groups would initially be established and they would report back to their respective committee or panel. Budget scrutiny would be further strengthened with all 2023/24 savings proposals coming to scrutiny at the end of November or early December.

The Chair reiterated his commitment to the improvement of the scrutiny function of the Council, which would require proactive support from both Members and senior officers, and that he would keep the Committee updated as the work progressed.

**Resolved –** That the Chair's statement be noted and that the report of the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny be received at the next meeting of the Committee.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 13.10.22**

### **8. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Bal declared that his daughter worked for Slough Borough Council.

### **9. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 14th July 2022**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

### **10. Member Questions**

No Member Questions had been submitted.

### **11. Financial Action Plan Report**

The Lead Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets and the Executive Director of Finance & Commercial introduced a report and answered questions from the Committee regarding the latest version of the Financial Action Plan.

The plan updated on the key areas of the work undertaken to respond to the many and very serious financial challenges and recommendations made by external agencies. A comprehensive summary of the report was given to the Committee including on the current position of the capitalisation direction, asset disposal strategy, accounts, borrowing, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), Dedicated Schools Grant and the key risks and assumptions underpinning the financial strategy.

The financial strategy was founded on the sale of assets to reduce borrowings and MRP/interest costs, and reducing net expenditure through savings. The Committee was informed that positive progress was being made, however the financial position remained very challenging and would require continued delivery of savings targets and asset sales. If disposals could be made earlier than planned that would help the overall position significantly by reducing borrowing costs and risks, which was particularly important at a time when interest rates were expected to rise sharply from the low levels of recent years.

The assumptions that underpinned the figures were summarised and the key risks and pressures were discussed including pay inflation and contract inflation. Good progress was being made overall in responding to the various external recommendations with 50 of the 74 already completed and the others on track.

It was estimated that the overall capitalisation direction could be reduced from a potential total of £782m to £369m. The improvement was due to several factors including improved and accelerated asset sales leading to earlier financing and reductions in MRP profiling, together with improvements to the collection fund, council tax and funding settlement figures. Members asked a number of questions about the improved position, including whether the

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 13.10.22**

revised figures were robust and whether the savings and disposals remained deliverable, particularly given the fact there had been some slippage in achieving the agreed savings in the current year. The Executive Director said the financial strategy was deliverable but emphasised that the position remained very challenging and would require the delivery of a high level of savings over the coming years and asset sales in excess of £300m. In response to a question about the process for implementing savings plans it was noted amongst the measures in place officers carried out 'challenge reviews' with departments to test each savings proposal and seek to identify non-delivery early to take the appropriate action to get the saving back on track or find alternative savings. Concerns were raised about the 22% slippage in savings delivery in 2022/23 and questions were asked about the reasons for this and action being taken. It was responded that a significant amount of work was being done with departments to ensure savings plans robust and achievable. It was a normal part of financial management to manage a savings programme with variances during the year, but the key point was that where a saving could not be delivered it should be replaced by an alternative saving.

Senior officers from each of the directorates were present and they were asked for their views on the progress of the savings programme and how future improvements could be made. Officers highlighted the processes were now much more rigorous with detailed business cases, risk analysis and delivery plans for each saving that were tested and challenged before being agreed.

The Committee discussed the current position regarding the asset disposal programme and Members asked about the approach that would be taken to minimise any service impacts. The Lead Member highlighted that the Asset Disposal Strategy would be considered by Cabinet in the next week and it set out the sequence by which assets would be disposed of in a phased approach starting with the out of borough assets and other non-operational assets where there would not be any service impact. Future phases would include operational assets and proper consideration would be given to whether the service was still required and, if it was, how it could be delivered in a different way.

A number of specific questions were raised about departmental savings such as CCTV; the anticipated funding settlement from central government; and the recruitment of staff in certain areas to ensure key services would continue to be delivered to residents. Members raised some concerns about the fact that the digitisation of council services was a barrier to some residents and that communication and engagement was key. A new Associate Director had recently been recruited to lead on resident engagement and part of the investment in IT was to improve access.

Members asked about the future scrutiny arrangements for the report. The Financial Action Plan update report would continue to be brought to each Council meeting so that progress was clearly tracked and reported. The

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 13.10.22**

Committee could consider scrutiny of specific aspects of the plan where it could contribute to the recovery and improvement programme.

At the conclusion of the questions and discussion the report was noted.

**Resolved –** That the Financial Action Plan be noted.

### **12. Financial Update Report - 2022/23**

The Executive Director of Finance & Commercial introduced a report that set out the financial monitoring position for the 2022/23 year as at the end of July 2022.

Senior Officers from each of the directorates were present to answer questions from Members about specific departmental and services issues.

The overall forecast year-end position for the General Fund, taking account of use of all capitalisation directions amendments, was a fully balanced position. However, there was an overspend of £7.6m across service areas including a shortfall on in-year savings of £4.4m against a total target of £20m. This included the loss set out in the Slough Children First company business plan. An additional provision of £4.4m had been made for cost of living and inflation pressures over and above what was allowed in the 2022/23 budget. The Committee noted the updated position on Dedicated Schools Grant and the Housing Revenue Account.

Members were concerned about the shortfall in savings delivery at that point in the year and asked if there had been any improvement in the position since the end of July. The Director commented that the Month 6 report would be produced shortly and be received by Cabinet in November. The committee challenged the robustness of the assumptions behind the figures and it was responded whilst officers were confident the report presented reflected all the identified risks at the time, it was likely new risks and opportunities would emerge. Improved risk management practice and register was now in place and regularly reported to the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee.

Members asked each of the senior officers present questions about the delivery of savings plans within their services areas. The Committee welcomed the fact that People (Adults) was on track to deliver its savings target this year and Members asked about how that had been achieved and whether there was any learning that could be shared across the Council. The Acting Executive Director for People (Adults) stated that the savings target was challenging but that a well-managed transformation programme was in place and the external support provided by PeopleToo had been important in achieving savings targets.

It was noted that Slough Children First (SCF) was reporting a forecast loss of £5.2m based on the July version of their business plan. Members questioned the underlying reasons for the continued losses made by the Trust and now the company. The SCF Finance Director explained the position and

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 13.10.22**

highlighted that demand for services was high and rising. Many of the pressures on children's social care were national, including workforce shortages which led to the high cost of agency staff. Plans were being developed on a new early help model to try reduce demand but this was an invest to save activity that would require funding from the Council.

In relation to the Place directorate Members asked about the unachieved income target for leasing space at Observatory House. The Executive Director for Place & Community explained that there had been interest in leasing space at the time the savings proposal was included in the budget but this had not materialised and the options for Observatory House would be included as part of the asset disposal programme. Other matters raised included how the Council was seeking to minimise energy costs and assurance was provided that energy had been purchased until the end of March which would provide some protection against the rapidly rising prices.

During the course of the discussion on both finance items several members of the committee had commented on importance of supporting residents and the following recommendation was therefore proposed by Councillor Gahir and seconded by Councillor Bal:

*"Bring back the corporate complaints and democratic services resource to handle member casework as was previously done."*

The proposal was agreed by the committee.

In relation to financial monitoring scrutiny the committee agreed that the report contained a lot of assumptions which were dependent on a number of key issues and there has been a shortfall against saving targets. The report referred to the fact that the Cabinet, auditors and commissioners expected regular reports to evidence progress made and the following was therefore proposed by Councillor Matloob and seconded by Councillor Kaur:

- *"These reports come to scrutiny too at the same time."*
- *If needed, we arrange extraordinary scrutiny meetings or direct meetings with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial & relevant cabinet member to review key issues & examine savings plans to ensure they are robust.*
- *Better timely detail shared to scrutiny on the assets being put forward for disposal."*

This proposal was agreed by the committee.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member, Executive Directors and other officers for their contribution to the meeting.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 13.10.22**

- (b) That the following be recommended to the executive to seek to improve the support to residents:

*“Bring back the corporate complaints and democratic services resource to handle member casework as was previously done.”*

- (c) That the following be agreed in relation to future scrutiny of financial monitoring and plans provided to cabinet, the auditors and commissioners:

- *“These reports come to scrutiny too at the same time.*
- *If needed, we arrange extraordinary scrutiny meetings or direct meetings with the Executive Director of Finance and Commercial & relevant cabinet member to review key issues & examine savings plans to ensure they are robust.*
- *Better timely detail shared to scrutiny on the assets being put forward for disposal.”*

### **13. Attendance Record**

**Resolved –** That the record of Members' attendance be noted.

### **14. Date of Next Meeting - 17th November 2022**

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

However, the Chair stated that this meeting may need to be moved to 1<sup>st</sup> December, or that an additional meeting be held on this date, to carry out scrutiny of the 2023/24 savings proposals. Members confirmed their agreement in principle to change the date or add a further meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 if required.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.36 pm)

## Slough Borough Council

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Report To:</b>                   | Overview and Scrutiny Committee   |
| <b>Date:</b>                        | 17 November 2022  |
| <b>Subject:</b>                     | Improvement and Recovery update   |
| <b>Lead Member:</b>                 | Councillor James Swindlehurst, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Council Recovery, Forward Strategy & Economic Development |
| <b>Chief Officer:</b>               | Stephen Brown   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>             | Sarah Hayward   |
| <b>Ward(s):</b>                     | All   |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>                | NO  |
| <b>Exempt:</b>                      | NO  |
| <b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b> | NO  |
| <b>Appendices:</b>                  | Appendix 1 – Report to Improvement and Recovery Board 3 November 2022   |

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny and Cabinet on the progress being made by the Council against each of the Secretary of State Directions issued in December 2021, and the overall council recovery plan
- 1.2 This report focuses on the directions as that has been the main focus of recent work and assessment of progress in delivering against them will be a key focus of the Commissioners' next report to Government.
- 1.3 This includes an outline of the various action plans that the Council was directed to put in place to address specific issues.
- 1.4 It is intended that further update reports will be brought on a quarterly basis, with exact timings dependent on the cycle of Commissioner's reports to Government. This is in addition to stand alone reports on specific recovery themes and improvement activities.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1.5 Scrutiny is requested to make any comments on the following to inform the consideration of this report by Cabinet on 21 November:

- a) Note the progress made by the Council in addressing the Directions of the Secretary of State;
- b) Agree to the proposed next steps to deliver against the action plans and other workstreams that have been developed to address the Directions;
- c) Agree to receive further regular updates of progress to be submitted on a quarterly basis, with exact timings dependent on the cycle of Commissioner's reports to Government.
- d) Comment on the report contents and the extent to which it aids member scrutiny of this work
- e) Advise officers of how Scrutiny would like to be involved in Slough's recovery, ensure it is properly scrutinising the councils work in this area and making recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

## **Reason**

- 1.6 The Council is necessarily having to address a wide range of problems and issues identified by a series of external reviews in 2021 which resulted in the Secretary of State determining that the Council had failed in numerous ways to comply with its best value duty, necessitating the issue of Directions and appointment of Commissioners from 1 December 2021.
- 1.7 This report provides an update against the progress the Council has made in addressing each of the detailed Directions and the next steps to further embed the required changes.
- 1.8 This will address a combination of financial and governance failings to improve the way in which the Council operates.
- 1.9 It is essential that the Council is transparent in its reporting against the Directions to residents and wider stakeholders to build wider confidence in its journey to recovery and improvement.

## **Commissioner Review**

*Slough Borough Council is approaching the end of the first year of the Secretary of State's intervention. Commissioners' views on progress will be set out in their letter to the Secretary of State which will be sent in December.'*

## **2. Report**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 As Members are aware and have previously been advised the Council has received the following:
  - statutory and non-statutory recommendations from the external auditor,
  - a significant number of recommendations from internal audit,
  - a s114 notice from the Director of Finance,
  - External assurance reports commissioned by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to review financial management and

governance. Both reports identify significant weaknesses in financial management processes, governance and internal control,

- a formal direction from DLUHC made under s.15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999, including a direction that prescribed functions are to be exercised by Commissioners; and
- the appointment of Commissioners from 1 December 2021.

- 2.2 In response the Council has taken a number of short- and medium-term steps, including approving a new Corporate Plan that set out its strategy for improvement. A series of reports on progress against these has been presented on a regular basis over the past few months.
- 2.3 In recent weeks the council has developed a holistic and corporate approach to reporting the progress we are making which gives all stakeholders a more transparent view of where the council is in driving forward improvements

### **3 Options considered**

- 3.1 The recommended option of regular public reporting is an essential part of Slough's recovery to ensuring transparency and accountability and to allow effective scrutiny.
- 3.2 Other options would be to continue to report on stand-alone recovery themes or to use the Improvement and Recovery Board for this purpose. Whilst there will continue to be stand-alone reports on specific items, it is recommended to have a corporate report pulling the themes together. It is not recommended to rely solely on the Improvement and Recovery Board, as this is a commissioner led body which is not held in public and attended by only a small number of elected members.

### **Background**

- 3.3 It is now almost a year since Commissioners were appointed by the Secretary of State. During that time the Council has had the opportunity to discuss with Commissioners the extent of the challenges it faces.
- 3.4 Officers have reported regularly to elected members on progress, however it has not reported holistically on progress against its Corporate Plan/Recovery Plan which was agreed in May 2022. This report seeks to address that gap now and in the future. At this stage there is a single report covering specific work on the directions, in future it is expected reporting may include fuller reporting on the corporate plan, and/or deeper dives in to individual Directions or other recovery workstreams.
- 3.5 In recent weeks the Council has also made a number of senior level appointments to Corporate Leadership Team including the Chief Executive position. This has created more of a sense of stability and an ability to oversee a refreshed corporate approach to improvement and recovery. In addition, new resource has been created at a corporate level to build greater functionality to design the recovery programme and support delivery.
- 3.6 In part as a result of those appointments, the council now has better capacity to be able to take a more strategic approach to delivering and reporting progress against the directions which has resulted in this corporate reporting.

- 3.7 Prior to the IRB held on 3 November, senior officers and commissioners spent significant time together to ensure a common understanding of the demands of the Directions on the council, progress so far and next steps. Further work and reporting will be undertaken by the next Board in early December and before the next commissioner report to DLUCH.
- 3.8 For these reasons, the appendix to this report presents an overview of the workstreams in place to address each of the Directions. The Appendix sets out a new reporting template that has been agreed with Commissioners to signpost the direction of travel, the status of improvement and next steps.

## **4 Implications of the Recommendation**

### **Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.
- 4.2 This progress update report is intended to complement existing financial reporting in particular against the Financial Action Plan.

### **Legal implications**

- 4.3 On 1 December 2021 the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities made statutory directions requiring the Council to take prescribed actions and that certain functions be exercised from this date by appointed Commissioners, acting jointly or severally. The directions were extended on 1 September 2022. The directions were made under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 due to the Council having failed to comply with its best value duty. The general duty of best value is set out in section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 and requires local authorities to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. This requires consideration of overall value, including economic, environmental and social value, when reviewing service provision. There is also a duty to consult when deciding how to fulfil the best value duty.
- 4.4 Annex A of the directions set out the action the Council is required to take. This included functional capability assessments of all service areas and preparing and agreeing an improvement plan containing a number of action plans. The functional capability assessments were reported to Cabinet in March 2022 and have formed the basis of service delivery plans. The improvement plan was approved by full Council in May 2022 with a series of recovery themes. Work is continuing on the detail of the action plans under each of these themes. The Council is required to report to the Commissioners on the delivery of the Improvement Plan at six monthly intervals or such intervals as the Commissioners may direct. The Council has been reporting to the Commissioners at monthly improvement and recovery boards and will be adopting the recent feedback given by the commissioners in meetings on each of the action plans. There is a specific direction on a programme of cultural change. A report was brought to Cabinet in March 2022 agreeing actions against this direction and this work underpins all other actions plans and recovery work. There is also a specific direction on reviewing the Council’s companies. Progress on this has been reported in the Finance Action Plan, as well as in standalone reports. Reports will be presented to Cabinet on each of the

remaining companies this financial year. There is a specific direction on better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the use of data and insight. This underpins all Council action plans and improvements as it is at the centre of how public bodies should make decisions.

4.5 Annex C sets out the functions to be exercised by the Commissioners. This includes functions associated with governance and scrutiny of strategic decisions, requirements for the proper administration of financial affairs, functions associated with the oversight of collection of revenues and benefits and appointment of the three statutory governance officers and the scrutiny officer, as well as functions to define the officer structure at a senior level, determine recruitment processes and recruit relevant staff to these positions. The Explanatory Memorandum to this Direction confirms that in practice most decisions are expected to be taken by the Council, however the Directions are designed to give the Commissioners the power to tackle weaknesses identified to ensure the Council is better equipped to meet the best value requirements. Cabinet should have regard to the advice and comments of the Commissioners contained in this report.

### Risk management implications

4.6 The table below sets the key risks

| Risk         | Summary  | Mitigations   |
|--------------|--|---|
| Financial    | Failure to deliver financial sustainability  | Financial action plan, Capitalisation Directive and immediate to long-term savings plans  |
| Legal        | Failure to address the Directions and demonstrate compliance with the Council's best value duties or other legal duties leading to increased legal challenges to decision-making and further statutory intervention. | Appointment of new interim Monitoring Officer to bolster capacity at senior management level.<br>Recruitment of interim support for governance and scrutiny.<br><br>A whole system approach, focusing on the basics of local government governance and decision making, including training and development and involvement of legal services at an earlier stage of policy formulation. |
| Reputational | Failure to meet the requirements contained in the Directions leading to further intervention from Government   | A more comprehensive and corporate approach has been developed building on lessons learned over the past year to provide greater confidence in the Council's journey and direction of travel  |

### Environmental Implications

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

### Equality implications

- 4.8 The Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - (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.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

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

### **Procurement implications**

- 4.9 One of the Directions includes specific reference to the procurement and contract management function and this is detailed in the Appendix.

### **Workforce implications**

- 4.10 Any future changes to the workforce will be subject to full statutory processes and consultation.

### **Property implications**

- 4.11 The Council has developed an Asset Disposal Strategy and this has been approved by Cabinet.

## **5 Background Papers**

Democratic Governance Action Plan  
Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan  
Companies Governance Action Plan

Strategy and Transformation

# Improvement and Recovery Board

Page 3  
Progress Report  
31-Oct-22

Report Owner: *Stephen Brown, Chief Executive*  
Report Author: *Tom Overend, Strategy & Policy Lead*



# Agenda

|               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
| 1.            | Welcome, Introductions & Declaration of Interests.     | Lead Commissioner                        |
| 2.            | Actions from previous Improvement and Recovery Boards. | Lead Commissioner/Secretariat            |
| 3.            | Decisions Required at this Meeting.                    | All                                      |
| 4.            | Headlines.   | Leader                                   |
| 5.            | Improvement and Recovery Plan Updates.                 | Leader/CEX                               |
| 6.            | Financial Update.                                      | Cab Mem: fin. oversight & council assets |
| 7.            | Asset Disposal Summary.                                | S151 Officer                             |
| 8.<br>Page 14 | Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Action Plan.        | Monitoring Officer                       |
| 9.            | Internal Audit Action Plan.                            | S151 Officer                             |
| 10.           | Procurement and Contract Management Action Plan.       | S151 Officer                             |
| 11.           | Information Technology Action Plan.                    | COO                                      |
| 12.           | Senior Recruitment Update.                             | CEX                                      |
| 13.           | Cultural Change Programme.                             | COO                                      |
| 14.           | Subsidiary Company Review.                             | S151 Officer                             |
| 15.           | Evidence Based Decision Making.                        | COO                                      |
| 16.           | AOB.   | Lead Commissioner                        |
| 17.           | Appendices.  |  |

## Welcome, Introductions and Declarations of Interests

## Open and Closing Actions

| Ref               | Status  | Description of Action   | Date Raised | Raised By | Owner             | Progress   | Date Last Updated | Target Date | RAG |
|-------------------|---------|---|-------------|-----------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------|-----|
| AC-001            | Open    | Lucy Storr to discuss how and where to bring a longer-term vision for Slough Borough Council with Gavin Jones and team.                                     | 16-Jun-22   | IRB       | Lucy Storr        | <b>27/07/22</b> - In progress. Stephen Brown and Max Caller discussed on <b>26/07/22</b> .   | 26-Jul-22         | 30-Jun-22   | A   |
| AC-002            | Open    | Commissioners to set up a working session with a cross-party group to discuss how to implement recovery plans at the same time as running council services. | 28-Jul-22   | IRB       | Max Caller        | <b>29/09/22</b> - TBC: Original date no longer available.  | 29-Sep-22         | 31-Aug-22   | A   |
| AC-003            | Open    | Stephen Brown committed to providing a regular savings monitor to lead Members.   | 22-Aug-22   | IRB       | Stephen Brown     | <b>29/09/22</b> - Status to be confirmed.  | 29-Sep-22         | 28-Sep-22   | A   |
| Page 16<br>AC-004 | Open    | Cllr Swindlehurst to meet Alex Polak to discuss investment in Member and Officer training.  | 22-Aug-22   | IRB       | Cllr Swindlehurst | <b>17/10/22</b> - Leader and other key member stakeholders are meeting regularly with Head of Governance and Scrutiny. Standards Committee now has Member Development in its ToR and the Chair has been approached. Scrutiny training delivered and further bespoke support planned via CfGS (LGA-funded) proposals. Other member development in-year is underway via the LGA (we are tracking uptake) and an updated member development plan in development with strong emphasis on new member induction in 2023. Member/officer work under discussion in context of LGA support. | 29-Sep-22         | 28-Sep-22   | A   |
|                   | Open    | Provide Members with a three-page report on budget for their portfolio. The Board agree, Stephen Brown to action.   | 25-Aug-22   | IRB       | Steven Mair       | <b>17/10/22</b> - Steve is preparing information for the next meeting.   |                   | TBC         | A   |
| AC-006            | Closing | Future reports to the Board should include an update on compliance with the Intervention Directions   | 29-Sep-22   | IRB       | Stephen Brown     | <b>13/10/22</b> - New style reporting for the IRB has been agreed and will be delivered for the Nov Board, with an expectation on continued development as we go forward.  | 13/1-22           | 29-Sep-22   | G   |

## Open and Closing Actions

| Ref     | Status | Description of Action   | Date Raised | Raised By | Owner                              | Progress | Date Last Updated | Target Date | RAG |
|---------|--------|---|-------------|-----------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------|-----|
| AC-007  | Open   | Stephen Brown agreed to take forward work to look into lessons learned from the capability assessments done as part of the 'Our Futures' restructure, including how the organisation who did 'gate one' assessments were commissioned and if scrutiny/audit should be involved in this processes.   | 29-Sep-22   | IRB       | Stephen Brown                      |          |                   | TBC         | G   |
| AC-008  | Open   | Cllr Smith and Cllr Swindlehurst to discuss the detail of Cllr Smith's work with the property management company involved with the new Director of Housing and Property when they are in-post.  | 29-Sep-22   | IRB       | Cllr Smith<br>Cllr<br>Swindlehurst |          |                   | TBC         | G   |
| Page 17 | Open   | Max Caller suggested having a regular meeting with the DfE Commissioner, Leader, Cabinet Member and any others they want to bring on a regular basis, noting that this may be most efficient on a day where there is a 'Getting to Good' Board planned. Lucy to raise with DfE Team / Commissioner. | 29-Sep-22   | IRB       | Lucy Storr                         |          | 21-Oct-22         |             | G   |

## Headlines

### Reporting & Assurance

- A new framework for reporting and assurance has been developed, including this revised slide deck.
- The framework has a closer focus on the directions.

### Strategy & Transformation

- Leadership capacity has been significantly increased in Strategy & Transformation.
- The council is now in a position to develop the necessary programme management, governance<sup>page 18</sup> and assurance arrangements.
- In collaboration with CLT and SLT, this will bring greater drive and rigour in the implementation of the corporate plan and the delivery of the directions.
- The initial service plans have been completed. SLT is now overseeing their further development and ensuring a coherent approach across SBC – see Functional Capability Assessments.

## Headlines

### Culture Change, Structure & Workforce

- Stephen Brown has now been appointed Chief Executive.
- He will be overseeing the creation of a team to develop and lead a comprehensive culture change programme. The team will be advised by an experienced consultant – Nick Kemp – who has agreed to support SBC on a part-time basis.
- An internal communications plan has been developed and will be rolled from November. This will pick up key themes the culture change programme needs to address.
- We have also launched a revised performance management framework and second set of mandatory training.
- The Standards Committee has received reports on whistle-blowing policy, Member register of interests, learning from Committee for Standards in Public Life, and code of conduct complaints.
- Training has been provided to top three tiers of officers on member and officers' roles and responsibilities and the member officer protocol.
- The council's Race Equality and Celebrating Heritage (REACH) Network has hosted a special event for Black History Month.

## Headlines

### Financial update

- There has been notable progress in the submission of accounts.
- Asset sales are currently forecasting up to circa £200m in 2022/23. There is a major risk if the sales do not materialise. The capitalisation direction is showing a major reduction, arising from the above.
- Significant progress has been made in the savings delivery risk assessment with services.
- The new finance structure has been approved, recruitment will complete Autumn 22, subject to candidates.
- The financial strategy is unchanged and starting to come to fruition

## Headlines

### **Governance & Scrutiny – see Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Action Plan**

- New Monitoring Officer – Stephen Taylor – has been appointed, with Principal Lawyer continuing to support as deputy MO.
- He will be establishing a new Governance working group, to oversee the further development and deliver of the democratic governance and scrutiny action plans.
- Scrutiny is setting up three focused Task and Finish reviews on Contracts, Complaints and SCF business planning; is preparing for scrutiny of budget/savings in Nov-Dec and preparing proactive Council response to final CfGS report for publication end of November.  
Page 21
- Completion of SCF governance review.
- Continued improvements on quality of member level reports.
- Corporate Schedule developed and launched with guidance and directorate-level shared ownership/accountability- timescales clarified and better publicised amongst senior leadership for decision-making reports and processes including Cabinet and Asset Disposal Sub-Committee.

## Headlines

### **Creation of Housing & Property Directorate**

- The consultation and implementation splitting services from Place and Community to Housing & Property has been completed, creating two separate directorates.
- The ED for Housing & Property has now started.
- A transition with officers is underway to ensure that there is continuity in service provision.
- This will improve leadership capacity and address many legacy issues arising from the Our Futures restructure.

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### **Contract Management**

- The council has implemented a centralised contracts register to improve the management and oversight of contracts and allow the council to plan procurement activity more effectively.
- Recruitment has been initiated to move towards a permanent in-house team.

# Commissioner's Directives Progress Summary

| Ref | Direction  | CLT Lead (Strategic) | SLT Lead (Operational)       | Member (Political)   | Target Completion | RAG            |                | Commentary / Progress  |
|-----|--|----------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
|     |  |                      |                              |  |                   | Curr.          | Trend          |  |
| 1   | Functional Capability Assessment                 | Sarah Hayward        | Dean Tyler                   |  | 01-Dec-22         | <span>C</span> | <span>=</span> | <b>14/10</b> - Service plans have been completed, which will address gaps in capability. These are continuing to be iterated to ensure coherence across services and alignment with the corporate plan. SLT will act as the governance body for the service planning. Next steps are to develop reporting arrangements for monitoring progress in delivery, and ensure lessons for next year are captured.   |
| 2   | Avoid Poor Governance or Financial Mismanagement | Steve Mair           | Steve Muldoon / Liton Rahman | Leader / Cabinet Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets | Continuous        | <span>G</span> | <span>▲</span> | <b>28/10</b> - Extensive finance business plan completed March 2022. Developed a medium and long term financial planning framework. Implemented changes to obtain best value for money. Ensuring financial implications of decisions are understood. Improving capacity, capability and culture to enable future success and monitoring of progress through the Finance Action plan. Embedding strong Financial Governance and risk management. Further improvements in Governance and Culture across the council will also contribute towards the delivery of this direction. |
| 3a  | Financial Sustainability Action Plan             | Steven Mair          | Steve Muldoon / Liton Rahman | Leader / Cabinet Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets | 31-Mar-29         | <span>G</span> | <span>▲</span> | <b>13/10</b> - The Finance action plan covers 10 years in detail from 2015/16 to 2024/25 and is supplemented by a 14 year active financial model (to 2028/29). Key elements are: Accounts, Assets sales, Capitalisation direction, Revenue budgets, Borrowings, MRP, DSG, Internal audit, Risks and mitigations Finance structure and Directions/recommendations from DLUHC, GT, CIPFA, Directions. The plan is regularly updated.   |
| 3b  | Democratic Governance Action Plan                | Stephen Tayler       | Alexander Polak              | Leader   | 01-Dec-22         | <span>A</span> | <span>▲</span> | <b>17/10</b> - The Monitoring Officer completed the latest Democratic Services Action Plan in September, with continuity from the relevant sections of earlier finance action plan reports, and clear links back to DLUHC directions and various external inspection findings. The sections include: decision-making, Audit, Scrutiny (see below), Member-Officer relations, whole-council elections and companies governance. It remains a live document.   |
| 3c  | Scrutiny Action Plan                             | Stephen Tayler       | Alexander Polak              | Chair, Overview & Scrutiny Committee                             | 01-Oct-22         | <span>R</span> | <span>▲</span> | <b>17/10</b> - The Monitoring Officer completed the latest Democratic Services Action Plan in September (as above) including a section on Scrutiny showing clear links back to the DLUHC directions and various external inspection findings. A proactive Council response to final CfGS report is in development for publication at the end of November which will update the scrutiny action plan, which remains a live document   |

## Commissioner's Directives Progress Summary

| Ref | Direction                                       | CLT Lead (Strategic) | SLT Lead (Operational) | Member (Political)  | Target Completion | RAG   |       | Commentary / Progress  |
|-----|---|----------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------|-------|-------|--|
|     |   |                      |                        |   |                   | Curr. | Trend |  |
| 3d  | Internal Audit Action Plan                      | Steven Mair          | Mike Thomas            | Cabinet Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets         | 31-Mar-23         | A     | ▲     | <b>19/10 - Pre 21/22</b> internal audits - there are now 235 actions or 85 per cent completed from a total of 276 actions. Pre-21/22 internal audits - there are now 103 actions or 36% completed from a total of 279 actions. 20% are not yet due for completion. As per the direction, the existing service has been revised and a fully costed internal audit function has been completed   |
| 3e  | Procurement and Contract Management Action Plan | Steven Mair          | Clare Priest           | Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Procurement & Performance | 12-Jan-23         | G     | ▲     | <b>20/09 -</b> Work has been progressing well to fully capture / document SBC contracts that are in place, and to ensure suitable ownership / management internally.   |
| 3f  | Information Technology Action Plan              | Stephen Brown        | Simon SharkeyWoods     | Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Procurement & Performance | 11-Jan-23         | A     | ▲     | <b>22/09 -</b> Simon Sharkey Woods has been confirmed as Associate Director Chief Digital & Information Officer.<br><b>17/10 -</b> Draft high level goals that align to government directions, corporate plan and the need to drive savings being developed.   |
| 3g  | Officer Structure and Scheme of Delegation      | Gavin Jones          | Sarah Wilson (MO)      | Leader  | 01-Oct-22         | A     | ▲     | <b>22/09 -</b> Appropriate new hires to complete the senior officer structure are progressing well, incl. the Head of Comms and Associate Director of Transformation.<br><b>21/09 -</b> Where possible, and as 'Directed' permanent appointments are being sought, however a pragmatic approach and interims are being hired where appropriate to move forward quickly.                        |
| 4   | Improvement Plan Monthly Reporting              | Sarah Hayward        | Tony Wisken            | Leader  | 01-Nov-23         | A     | ▲     | <b>14/10 -</b> First new style reporting with improved content and evidence produced for the Oct-22 IRB.<br><b>22/09 -</b> Initial draft produced for review with Improvement and Recovery Board.  |
| 5   | Cultural Change Programme                       | Stephen Brown        | Surjit Nagra           | Leader  | 03-Mar-23         | R     | ▲     | <b>14/10 -</b> Recruitment of a suitable lead Officer is underway, however this has not prevented progress to get underway within individual directorates in response to the overall themes of the Directions. Once the new lead Officer is in position a formal Programme will be put in place to pull this good work together, establish an organisational level plan and track effectively. |

## Commissioner's Directives Progress Summary

| Ref | Direction                      | CLT Lead<br>(Strategic) | SLT Lead<br>(Operational) | Member<br>(Political)   | Target<br>Completion | RAG   |       | Commentary / Progress  |
|-----|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------|-------|-------|--|
|     |                                |                         |                           |   |                      | Curr. | Trend |  |
| 6   | Subsidiary Company Review      | Steven Mair             | Steve Muldoon             | Cabinet Member for Financial Oversight & Council Assets         | 02-Apr-23            | A     | ▲     | <b>19/10</b> - The Council had 11 companies - one (SCF) is excluded from this direction, six have been shut, three are currently being very actively managed. Major progress has been made in governance, asset sales, financial information, directors. Would be green were it not for outstanding issues relating to shareholders. |
| 7   | Evidence Based Decision Making | Sarah Hayward           | Sarah Wilson (MO)         | Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Procurement & Performance | 02-Apr-23            | A     | ▲     | <b>14/10</b> - Internal restructure has implemented improved structures and leadership for the Data & Insight Functions. Additional evidence of the decision making processes has been included in the IRB reporting.  |

An extensive finance business plan completed March 2022 set out our vision to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of Slough by making sure every pound of public money is spent wisely and the financial implications of all decisions are understood.

We have:

- Developed a medium and long term financial planning framework – now embedded in the work around the capitalisation direction, approach to savings, budget and financial reporting processes.
- Implemented changes to obtain best value for taxpayers money – through changes to the Commercial team and better understanding of contracts and contract management; use of the ECP process to challenge all expenditure, revision of contract procedure rules and associated training.  
Page 26
- Ensured the financial implications of decisions are understood – developing business case analysis and reviewing council companies; improved risk management arrangements.
- Operated an efficient and effectively customer focussed department – reviewing the systems and processes and the way in which Agresso has been utilised, reviewing our teams development and training needs, succession planning.

We have also:

- Improved capacity, capability and culture to enable future success – through the departmental restructure, the recruitment of experienced interims to assist with all aspects of the change agenda; and monitoring of progress through the finance action plan.
- Embedded strong financial governance and risk management – completing annual accounts; reviewing previous annual governance statements; developing new financial procedure rules; agreeing a revised risk management strategy and supporting processes; introducing a S106 governance group with a framework being developed and a monitoring function to be introduced.

### Governance

#### Progress:

- Report templates for all member level decision-making have been amended to include a commissioner comments section and with commissioners consulted as part of clearance process.
- Officer training has been devised and delivered to top three tiers of management on local government decision-making, following consultation with commissioners on topics covered and content of presentation.
- Cabinet portfolios have been refreshed to align with corporate plan and priorities.

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#### Next steps are:

- To devise a bite size training programme for officers to cover a variety of topics on good governance.
- Working with the commissioners and their chief of staff to devise a framework for commissioner decision-making and advice and guidance.

## Finance Update - Savings Delivery Risk Assessment

Direction 3.a

### 2023/24 Savings Delivery Risk Assessment (figures in £'000s)

| As @ 31-Oct-22              | Saving Totals       |                                      | Deliverability RAG Assessment |                        |                 |                  |           | Saving Mitigations |                |          |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------|----------|
|                             | Original (Baseline) | Total so far (excl. Non-Deliverable) | Non-Deliverable               | Red (no credible plan) | Amber (at risk) | Green (on track) | Delivered | Agreed Sustainable | Agreed One-off | Proposed |
| Adults                      | 4,873               | 4,962                                | 0                             | 0                      | 1,504           | 3,458            | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| Childrens                   | 790                 | 0                                    | 0                             | 0                      | 0               | 0                | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| COO                         | 1,277               | 184                                  | 100                           | 0                      | 140             | 44               | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| COO/Finance                 | 667                 | 667                                  | 0                             | 0                      | 0               | 667              | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| Finance                     | 2,292               | 0                                    | 0                             | 0                      | 0               | 0                | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| Place                       | 4,902               | 4,902                                | 0                             | 406                    | 1,000           | 3,496            | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| Cross-Council               | 1,800               | 0                                    | 0                             | 0                      | 0               | 0                | 0         | 0                  | 0              | 0        |
| <b>Total Slough Savings</b> | <b>16,601</b>       | <b>10,715</b>                        | <b>100</b>                    | <b>406</b>             | <b>2,644</b>    | <b>7,665</b>     | <b>0</b>  | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>       | <b>0</b> |
|                             |                     |                                      | 0.6%                          | 2.4%                   | 15.9%           | 46.2%            | 0.0%      |                    |                |          |



|                               |     |     |       |       |   |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|---|
| Movement from Previous Period | 100 | 406 | 2,644 | 7,665 | 0 |
| Previous Period               | 0   | 0   | 0     | 0     | 0 |

### Accounts

- The 18/19 accounts have been submitted. These are likely to be audited by December and be a limitation of scope opinion. The audit work is under review.
- The 19/20 accounts have been submitted.
- The 20/21 accounts will be submitted in January 2023.

### Budget

- Budget for 2022/23 – the month six forecast is currently being prepared and is projecting the Council will be within budget.
- The 2023/24 budget development continues, and the savings challenge is currently in progress.
- Proposals are also starting to be gathered for 2024/25.

### Structure

- The new finance structure has been approved, recruitment will complete Autumn 22, subject to candidates.

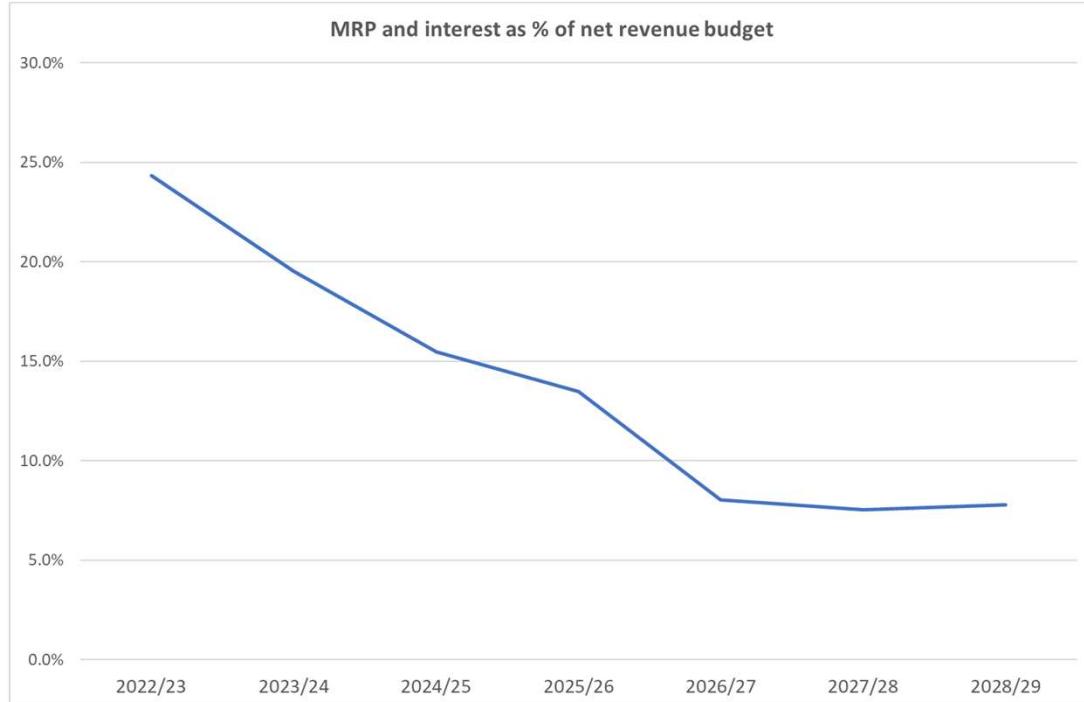
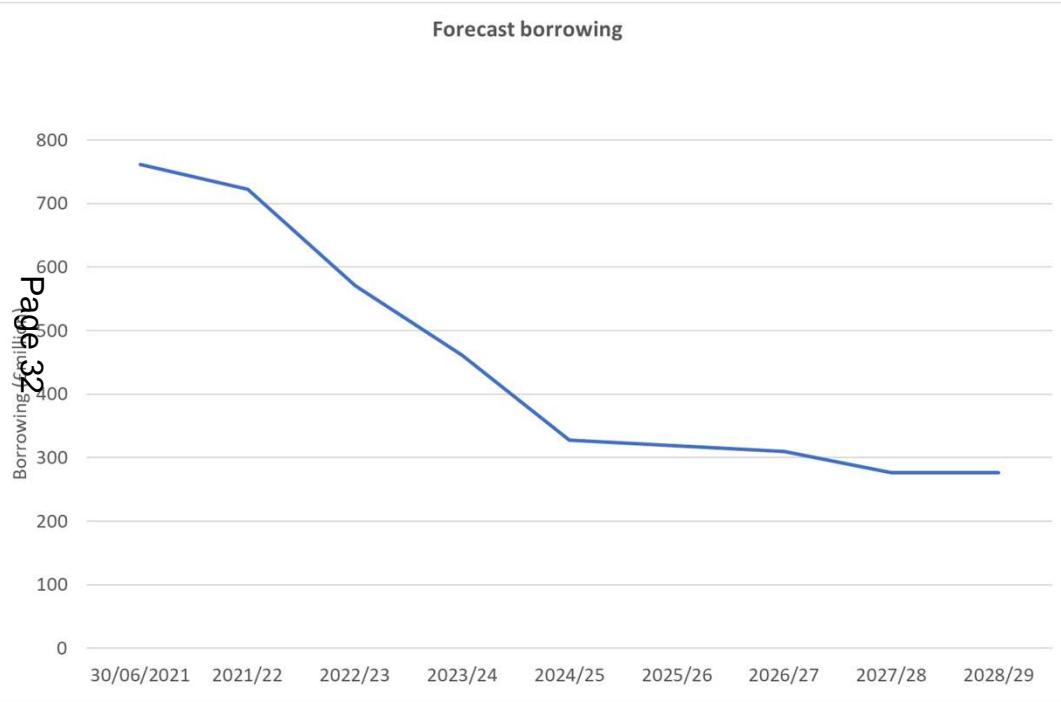
## Assets and Capitalisation

- Asset sales are currently forecasting up to circa £200m in 2022/23.
- This is a major risk if the sales do not materialise, currently assuming the sales come in according to current estimates, if so the Council is well in advance of the budgeted position..
- The capitalisation direction is showing a major reduction, largely, but not solely, arising from the above.

## Dedicated Schools Grant

- The DSG is forecasting to be balanced by 2025/26.
- Council on track to submit initial proposal for addressing in-year deficit by 13 January 2023.
- Final proposal required by 3 February 2023.
- Notification of approval expected in March 2023.
- Could result in write off of £27m of deficit.
- DfE very complementary about the Council's work on this.

All figures are volatile and subject to change.



## Asset Disposal - Progress Against Plan

Direction 3.a

The disposal programme commenced in July 2022 with the four out of borough assets.

Since then, eight properties have been brought to the market of which zero have completed, five are under offer and three are currently on the market. To date the disposal programme has generated £0.00m in capital receipts.

Within AY's Asset Review Report (dated July 2022), the potential receipt for this financial year (2022/2023) totals £108.00m. However, a total of £208.58m is now anticipated for the end of this financial year, out of which £0.00m has been received in capital receipts.

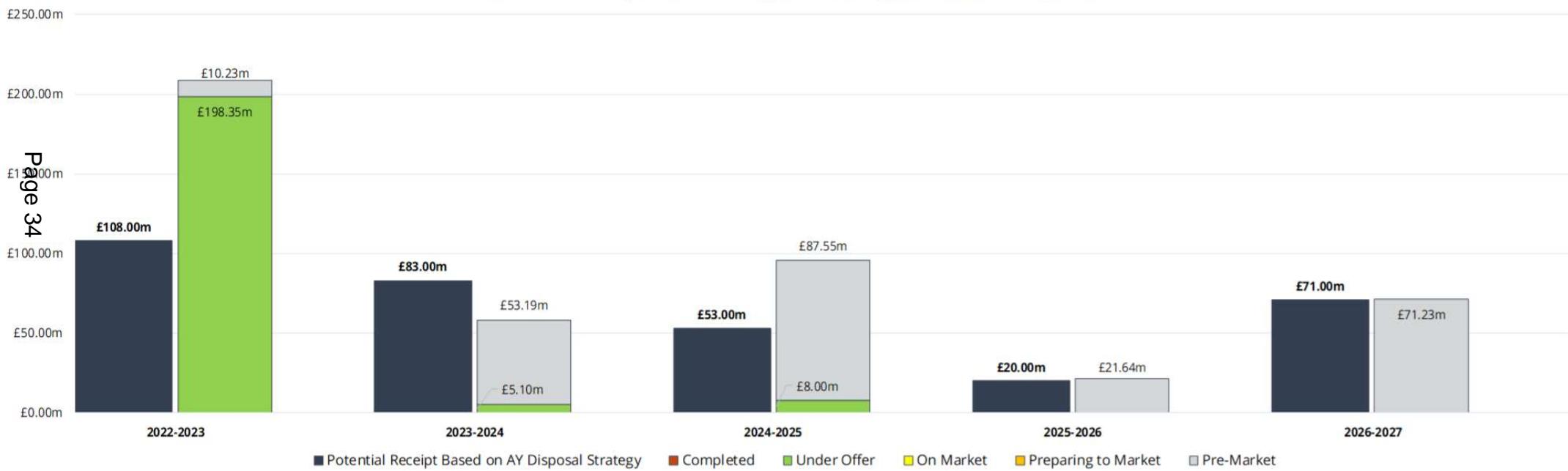
There are 20 properties on the disposal list for this financial year (2022/2023). Of these 20 properties, zero have completed, five are under offer and three are on the market.

|  | 2022/2023 |         | 2023/2024 |         |         | 2024/2025 |         |         |         | 2025/2026 |         |         |         | 2026/2027 |         |         |         |
|--|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | Q4 2022   | Q1 2023 | Q2 2023   | Q3 2023 | Q4 2023 | Q1 2024   | Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | Q1 2025   | Q2 2025 | Q3 2025 | Q4 2025 | Q1 2026   | Q2 2026 | Q3 2026 | Q4 2026 |
| Cumulative Potential Receipt Based on AY Disposal Strategy | £108.00m  |         | £191.00m  |         |         | £244.00m  |         |         |         | £264.00m  |         |         |         | £335.00m  |         |         |         |
| Incremental Potential Receipts                             | £108.00m  |         | £83.00m   |         |         | £53.00m   |         |         |         | £20.00m   |         |         |         | £71.00m   |         |         |         |
| Cumulative Anticipated Receipts                            | £208.58m  |         | £266.87m  |         |         | £362.42m  |         |         |         | £384.06m  |         |         |         | £455.29m  |         |         |         |
| Incremental Anticipated Receipts                           | £208.58m  |         | £58.29m   |         |         | £95.55m   |         |         |         | £21.64m   |         |         |         | £71.23m   |         |         |         |
| Actual Receipts  | £0.00m    | £0.00m  | £0.00m    | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m    | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m    | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m    | £0.00m  | £0.00m  | £0.00m  |

### Progress Chart

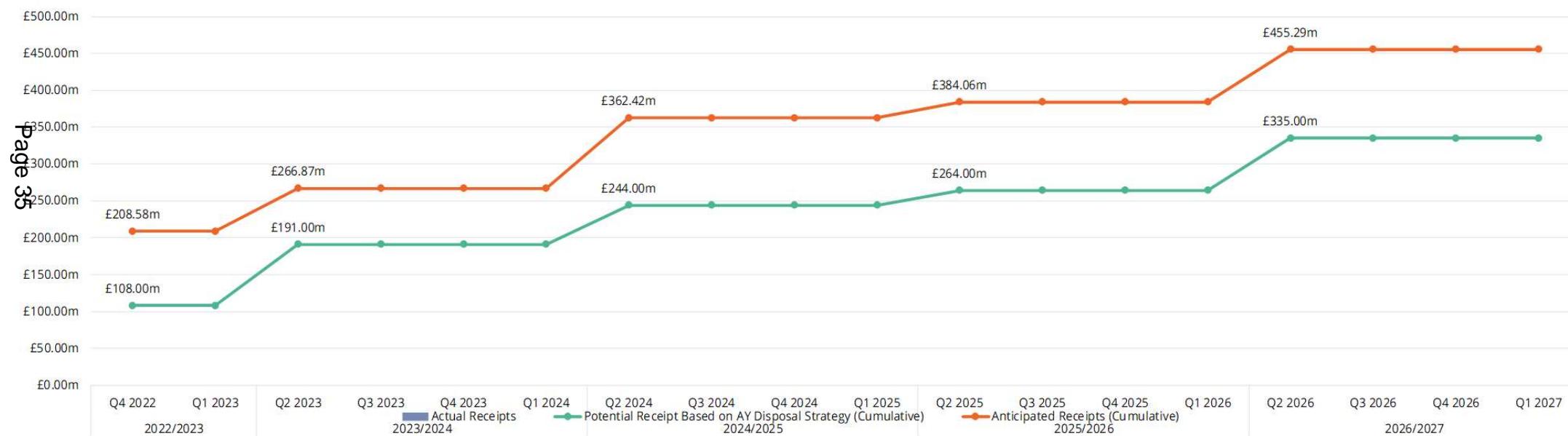
AVISON YOUNG Slough  
Borough Council

Baseline Receipts from AY Disposal Strategy vs. Current Progress



### Cumulative Disposals

**Cumulative Target vs Cumulative Forecast vs Actual**



## Progress

- New Monitoring Officer (MO) – Stephen Taylor – has been appointed, with Principal Lawyer continuing as deputy MO.
- New Head of Governance and Scrutiny appointed, working with Principal Lawyer to support MO with delivery of governance improvement and undertake statutory scrutiny officer role.
- One overarching, governance action plan prepared, this will complement new cabinet and full council formal corporate reporting formats.
- Continued improvements on quality of member level reports, including reports on asset disposal decisions, to include clear valuation evidence, new asset disposal strategy and a split part 1 / part 2 reporting methodology.
- We have reviewed the complaints handling process – with findings included in the annual report to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.
- A report has been prepared for Customer and Community scrutiny, to set up a Complaints Task & Finish Group.
- A review of member casework is also being undertaken.

## Progress continued

- Corporate Schedule developed and launched with guidance containing a forward look for Member and senior officer decision-making up to 2023 election. The process embeds accountability and improves co-ordination of corporate activity.
- Officer training on local government decision-making delivered to top three tiers of management.
- Cabinet portfolios have been refreshed to align with corporate plan and priorities, as well as to creating greater capacity for leadership of the council's recovery and financial strategy.
- A further refresh is expected following the May elections, to improve alignment with the new directorate structure.  
Page 37
- The Governance review of SCF is complete and to be presented to SCF and Cabinet to agree recommended actions.
- Officer training on report writing and decision-making in local government has been developed.
- Amendments to the Constitution in relation to democratic decision-making, including: public participation rules in cabinet meetings; backbench member participation rules in cabinet meetings, new asset disposal cabinet committee; and changes to reserved functions to clarify decisions to be made at cabinet level.

**Next actions**

- establishing a new Governance working group, lead by the MO, to oversee the further development, and delivery, of the democratic governance and scrutiny action plans.
- Devise a framework for commissioner decision-making and advice and guidance.
- Programme of Member/Officer culture change to be further developed, starting with exploration of themes and issues already identified, new themes and issues will be added as identified.
- Further Officer governance training on key governance themes, including member officer relations and report writing.  
page 38
- Ensure role of MO, position in structure and management responsibilities is reviewed as part of the wider senior leadership changes.
- Deliver whole-council elections, along with a programme of work aimed at realising the opportunities offered, including member support, member-development, constitutional and process improvement, member & officer culture and behavioural change, and developments to the council's short, medium and long-term strategic planning.

## Progress

- Experienced interim officer commenced as Statutory Scrutiny Officer in July.
- Funding has been agreed to reinstate some operational capacity for ongoing scrutiny support within the Democratic Services team, subject to successful recruitment
- Bespoke training will be delivered to all members of scrutiny following May 2023 election
- Annual work planning event took place, leading to three focused task and finish groups being set up and work commencing.

## Next actions

- Progress three focused Task and Finish reviews on Contracts, Complaints and SCF business planning, prepare for scrutiny of budget/savings in Nov-Dec; develop medium-term work programmes following; and prepare proactive Council response to final CfGS report for publication for the end of November.
- Recruit officer resource to team
- Continued officer and member training on role of scrutiny pre-and post-election
- Annual work planning event spanning the elections to blend experience and new ideas

Progress on actioning internal audits was slow or non-existent for several years.

### **Pre 21/22 internal audits:**

- Progress has been made in closing down management actions from previous financial years.
- There are now 235 actions or 85 per cent completed from a total of 276 actions.

### **21/22 internal audits:**

- There are now 103 actions or 36% completed from a total of 279 actions.
- 20% are not yet due for completion.

### **22/23 internal audits:**

- Internal audit plan agreed in July 2022 – 6 assignments in progress
- Reports on progress of implementing recommendations are made to every Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, the Risk and Audit Board and the CLT Assurance meetings.

### Progress

- Revised terms of reference for Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, including separation of Standards Committee from Audit function was completed and approved in January 2022.
- Key recommendation from CIPFA / DLUHC was to undertake option appraisal of Internal Audit. This was completed and agreed by Cabinet in March 2022.
- Training for Audit and Corporate Governance Committee members, co-delivered by officers and the LGA in July 2022. Further training being set up for future meetings.
- Improved reporting to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on risk management (against new risk management strategy) and progress against internal audit actions.
- Internal Risk and Audit Board identifying themes to inform improvements. Discussion with internal audit to move annual audit plan to move thematic basis to better target risk.

### Next steps

- Recruitment to new in-house internal audit team by Q1 2023 – adverts out week commencing 31 October
- Responses to IA recommendations reported monthly to CLT assurance meeting and quarterly to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.
- Revised audit plan to July 2023 Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.
- Quality review of new IA function to be scheduled for 2024.  
Page 42
- Training programme for members to be delivered during 2023/24.

The contract register is being actively used to identify procurement activity to ensure this is done in a timely way, and to identify opportunities to make savings through contract re-procurement.

Staff training has progressed to ensure the organisation is well informed on governance.

A report on progress went to Cabinet on 17/10.

### **Key improvements to date**

Improving the council's contract procedure rules and procurement and contract management governance, to improve decision making at the appropriate levels.

- Informing staff through a training programme.
- Implemented a centralised contracts register to improve the management and oversight of contracts and allows the council to plan procurement activity more effectively.
- Moving away from relying on expensive consultancy support, by initiating recruitment to a permanent in-house team.

**Savings through detailed review of the council's contracts register**

- The contracts register is being actively used to identify opportunities to drive savings and value for money. As a result of the reviews, savings of £1.8m have been identified. Note: the majority of these savings have been put into the Council's MTFS.

**Further key development activities**

- Implement the contracts register on the council's finance system, so contracts can be easily linked to budgets and spend – by March 2023.
- Development of a framework to ensure there is a co-ordinated and consistent approach to contract management – from January 2023.
- Ensure KPI's are meaningful and monitored effectively – from January 2023.
- Programme of continuous contracts register reviews to ensure the council is getting the best value for money – from September 2023 and six monthly thereafter.
- Implement the actions in the procurement and contract management strategy that have not yet been undertaken, throughout the 2023/24 financial year.
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee have launched a Contracts T&F Group to enhance improvement activity by bringing in additional councillor-level oversight, understanding and challenge.

**The ICT & Digital Team has the ambition to:**

- Establish technology services that are reliable and effective for our staff, and that empower front-line services to continually improve their efficiency
- Build a trusted public facing digital presence that is simple to use, and significantly increases the proportion of self-service by residents
- Provide as many core services as possible through secure public cloud Software-as-a-Service options, leading to less need for expensive technical infrastructure and deep technical specialists
- Support all transformation activity as the Council moves to a new operating model that is affordable, and is still able to provide quality services to residents

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**To achieve this the team has:**

- Restructured the roles within the team and are currently recruiting internally before going to market
- Opened exploratory discussions with specialist suppliers on ways to rapidly improve our digital presence
- Progressed a new hosting arrangement for our core ERP system (Agresso) that saves significant money
- Established stronger connections at SLT, and with our new PMO team to ensure work priorities are aligned to the government directions, a focus on savings, and the corporate plan
- Continued activity on the plan for remediating and modernising legacy technology infrastructure
- Committed to inviting O&S challenge and oversight and updating Cabinet in December to ensure democratic oversight

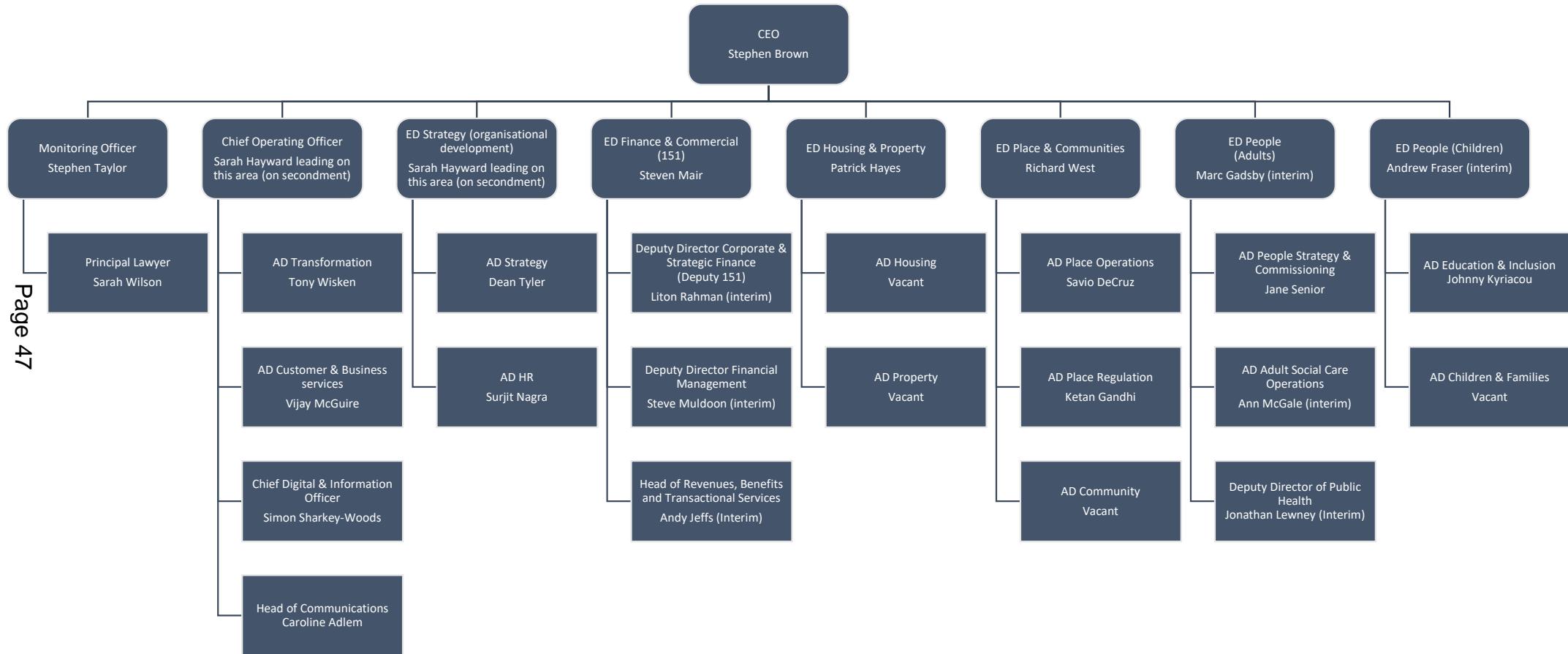
## Organisational Structure - Senior Recruitment Update

Direction 3.g

| Ref   | Directorate | Tier | Position                           | Owner         | RAG  |       | Target Date | Incumbent      | Commentary / Progress   |
|-------|-------------|------|------------------------------------|---------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------|---|
|       |             |      |                                    |               | Curr.  | Trend |             |                |   |
| P-004 | COO         | 1    | Monitoring Officer                 | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #ccc; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> C    | =     | 26-Nov-22   | Stephen Taylor | <b>13/10</b> Stephen Taylor has joined SBC.   |
| P-001 | COO         | 2    | AD Transformation                  | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #ffd700; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> A | ▲     | 12-Sep-22   | Tony Wisken    | <b>03/10</b> Tony Wisken joined SBC on <b>12/09</b> , on a secondment basis from Essex County Council. Formal contract details still pending. |
| P-002 | COO         | 3    | Head of Communication              | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #ccc; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> C    | =     | 19-Sep-22   | Caroline Adlem | <b>03/10</b> Caroline joined SBC on <b>19/09</b> .  |
| P-005 | Finance     | 1    | ED Finance and Commercial Services | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | ▲     | 01-Mar-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Final interviews to take place in Jan-23.  |
| P-012 | Finance     | 2    | DD Corporate & Strategic Finance   | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | ▲     | 01-Mar-23   | Liton Rahman   | <b>31/10</b> Final interviews to take place in Jan-23. Liton Rahman is current interim.   |
| P-013 | Finance     | 2    | DD Financial Management            | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | ▲     | 01-Mar-23   | Steve Muldoon  | <b>31/10</b> Final interviews to take place in Jan-23. Steve Muldoon is current interim.  |
| P-014 | People      |      | AD People (Adults)                 | Surjit Nagra  | <span style="background-color: #ccc; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> C    | ▲     | 10-Oct-22   |                | <b>13/10</b> An interim has been engaged for this position.   |
| P-006 | People      | 1    | ED People (Adults)                 | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | ▲     | 01-Feb-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Interview scheduled for w/c 24-Oct.  |
| P-007 | People      | 1    | ED People (Children's)             | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #ffd700; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> A | =     | 01-Feb-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Applications are currently under review to consider next steps.  |
| P-003 | Place       | 1    | ED Housing and Property            | Stephen Brown | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | ▲     | 17-Oct-22   | Patrick Hayes  | <b>13/10</b> Patrick Hayes has been appointed and will be joining SBC on 17-Oct.  |
| P-009 | Place       | 2    | AD Community                       | Surjit Nagra  | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | =     | 01-Feb-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Closing date for advertisement 17-Oct.   |
| P-010 | Place       | 2    | AD Housing                         | Surjit Nagra  | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | =     | 01-Feb-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Closing date for advertisement 17-Oct.   |
| P-008 | Place       | 2    | AD Property                        | Surjit Nagra  | <span style="background-color: #6aa84f; border-radius: 50%; width: 1em; height: 1em; display: inline-block;"></span> G | =     | 01-Feb-23   |                | <b>13/10</b> Closing date for advertisement 17-Oct.   |

# Organisational Structure - Senior Recruitment Update

Direction 3.g



### Progress

- An internal communications plan has been developed and be rolled from November, which will support culture change and includes, roadshows, newsletters, a staff survey and blogs and vlogs
- The council's Race Equality and Celebrating Heritage (REACH) Network has hosted a special event for Black History Month
- We are launching the revised performance management framework, starting with appraisals / review meetings to get the workforce aligned to the corporate plan and service delivery plans
- The recruitment process is being streamlined to accommodate the pace required to recruit to vacant posts
- The second set of mandatory training for the organisation has been launched – to ensure that have a baseline knowledge of issues that the organisation requires of us employees of the council

- Following reviews, the Standards Committee has received reports on: whistle blowing; member's register of interests and declarations of interests; learning from the committee for standards in public life; and, an update on code of conduct complaints
- The council will hold governance workshops for senior officers - using the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's governance toolkit.
- The Councillors Code of Conduct has been amended to adopt LGA Model Code of Conduct
- Training has been provided to top three tiers of officers on member and officers' roles and responsibilities and the member officer protocol, which has been amended to clarify training expectations.  
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- LGA Support has been offered to political groups and chairs of committees and meetings have been held with group leaders on concerns and conduct issues.
- Further action has been taken in regard to access to information rules, member casework and member communication.

### Next Steps

- The Chief Executive will be overseeing the creation of a team to develop and lead a comprehensive culture change programme. The team will be advised by an experienced consultant – Nick Kemp – who has agreed to support SBC on a part-time basis.
- Member induction and development programme following May elections
- Further workshops for senior officers utilising CfGS governance framework funded by LGA
- Interviews are being conducted to recruit expertise for organisational development and a "plan B" is being developed given the market limitations Slough is experiencing

The Council had 11 companies:

- six have been shut.
- four are currently being very actively managed.
- one, low risk, will follow in 23/24.
- Reviews of GRE5, SUR and SCF have been undertaken.
- Directors have been replaced for all, apart from DISH.
- An officer corporate oversight board has been established to provide support to representatives.  
Page 51
- Council capital programme commitments for the companies have been reduced by at least £65m.
- Programme to accelerate asset disposals to generate cash receipts of c.£40m in 22/23 and 23/24.
- Loan repayments to the Council have been accelerated, SUR loan facility reduced from £9m to £2m in 12 months.
- Additional external funding obtained to reduce Council's financial exposure e.g. grant of £9m for GRE5.
- Reduced operating costs for SUR and JEH with reduced scale of operations.

**Next steps**

- Anticipated capital receipts from sales are:
  - 2022/23: £22m
  - 2023/24: £8m
  - 2024/25: £10m
- Above excludes JEH which will be worked up for the exit plan.
- <sup>Page 52</sup>Business plans for JEH, GRE5, SCF to Cabinet in March 2023.
- JEH review to Cabinet March 2023.
- Exit from GRE5 when works complete/legal claim settled.
- DISH review and changes planned for 2023/24.
- SUR estimated exit plan 2024/25.

*Further information on subsidiary companies has been included in the appendix.*

### Progress

- Monthly reporting against the new Corporate Recovery and Improvement Plan has been established with CLT and Improvement & Recovery Board
- We have established a Data Strategy and Governance Board to oversee improvements in quality and consistency of data management and reporting across the council
- Member training now includes making informed decisions, based on evidence provided.
- <sup>Page 53</sup>The council has sought to improved transparency in decision-making through the increased use of Part 1/Part 2 reports where confidential information needs to be presented
- Councillor led decision-making - lead members are briefed and take ownership of reports and pre-meeting briefings with scrutiny members
- Pro-bono advice has been received from Microsoft on options for new technologies to more effectively use data in decision-making
- We are establishing a consistent platform – Citizen Space – across the council to improve resident consultation and engagement in decision making. 10 further members of staff across different services have been trained it its use and will be used to train others.

### Progress

- Public participation rules and rules for backbench comments and questions, have been changed to give rights to participate in cabinet meetings
- We are also establishing a consistent platform – Citizen Space – across the council to improve resident consultation and engagement in decision making. 10 further members of staff across different services have been trained in its use and will be used to train others.

Examples of improvements in evidence based decision making have been included in the appendix.

### Next steps

- Options to bring the council to a consistently ‘good’ level against this Direction were presented to CLT in early October. Follow-up discussions are planned in November.
- The investment and technological improvements required to achieve are being considered within 23/24 and 24/25 budget conversations.
- Continue rolling out Citizen Space resident consultation and engagement platform across the council throughout November.
- Develop strategy for better involving children and young people in decision-making effecting them.
- Review further action that can be taken to increased resident engagement in decision-making, including within policy formulation at an earlier stage.
- Scrutiny - task and finish groups are currently reviewing data – including on complaints - and other relevant information to inform future policy decisions.

## Any Other Business?



Strategy and Transformation

# Improvement and Recovery Board Appendices

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- Recent Governance Decisions Taken in Support of Improvement and Recovery
- Previous IRB Decisions Taken
- Cost Saving Initiatives
- Functional Capability Assessments Update (Complete Direction)
- Subsidiary Company Review – further detail (Direction 6)
- Evidence based decision making examples (Direction 7)
- Corporate Risk Register (extract)
- Key Service Updates

## Recent Governance Decisions Taken in Support of Improvement and Recovery

| Ref    | Report & Subject   | Date      | Chief & Contact Officers  | Portfolio                                       | Key Decision | Summary of Decision  | Related Direction and Contribution to Recovery   | Link to Document  |
|--------|--|-----------|---|---|--------------|--|--|---|
| GD-022 | Scrutiny Task & Finish Group - Slough Children First Business Planning                         | 24-Oct-22 | Andrew Fraser<br>-----<br>Alexander Polak                       | Children's Services, Lifelong Learning & Skills | No           | Approve the creation of a Task & Finish Group to review Slough Children First Business Planning  | <b>2 Avoid Poor Governance or Financial Mismanagement</b><br><b>3b Democratic Services Action Plan</b><br><b>3c Scrutiny Action Plan:</b><br>Allows for an informed review into the arrangements surrounding the company and to make recommendations to Cabinet in time to influence budget setting decisions. | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s73221/Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20SCF%20corporate%20reports%20and%20plans.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s73221/Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20SCF%20corporate%20reports%20and%20plans.pdf</a> |
| GD-021 | Scrutiny Task & Finish Group - Complaints Handling   | 20-Oct-22 | Stephen Brown<br>-----<br>Alexander Polak                       | Customer Services, Procurement and Performance  | No           | Approve the creation of a Complaints Handling Task and Finish Group                              | <b>2 Avoid Poor Governance or Financial Mismanagement</b><br><b>3b Democratic Services Action Plan</b><br><b>3c Scrutiny Action Plan:</b><br>Complaints represents an important area for the overall governance of the authority and a valuable source of performance information.                             | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s73128/Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20Complaints%20Handling.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s73128/Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20-%20Complaints%20Handling.pdf</a>                                     |
| GD-017 | Cabinet Corporate Debt Management Policy   | 17-Oct-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Steven Mair                             | Financial Oversight and Council Assets          | No           | Approve a Corporate Debt Recovery Policy to support the maximisation of debt collection          | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners comment that the policy should balance the need to protect the public purse and support residents and businesses  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72981/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72981/Report.pdf</a>   |
| GD-018 | Cabinet Update on Procurement and Contract Management  | 17-Oct-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Clare Priest                            | Procurement and Performance                     | No           | Update on key developments by the Commercial team to improve procurement and contract management | <b>3e Procurement and Contract Management Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners recognise the good progress to build a contract register although this needs regular management with updates to Commissioner   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72986/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72986/Report.pdf</a>   |
| GD-019 | Cabinet Recommendations from the Cabinet Committee on Asset Disposals: Asset Disposal Strategy | 17-Oct-22 | Richard West / Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Fin Garvey / Peter Worth | Financial Oversight and Council Assets          | Yes          | Agree the Asset Disposal Strategy and the declaration of assets listed as surplus                | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Adoption of the strategy and delivery at pace are essential to financial sustainability.  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72967/Cabinet%20Paper%20on%20Asset%20Disposal%20Strategy.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72967/Cabinet%20Paper%20on%20Asset%20Disposal%20Strategy.pdf</a>   |

## Recent Governance Decisions Taken in Support of Improvement and Recovery

| Ref    | Report & Subject   | Date      | Chief & Contact Officers   | Portfolio                              | Key Decision | Summary of Decision   | Related Direction and Contribution to Recovery  | Link to Document  |
|--------|--|-----------|--|--|--------------|---|---|---|
| GD-020 | Cabinet Recommendations from the Cabinet Committee on Asset Disposals: Montem site   | 17-Oct-22 | Richard West / Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Dean Tyler / Carmel Booth | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | Yes          | Disposal of Montem Lane asset   | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners view the disposal as essential to meet the financial recovery goals and is considered to be best value in the market today.  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72948/Report%20Part%20I.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72948/Report%20Part%20I.pdf</a>   |
| GD-012 | Cabinet Finance Action Plan - update   | 21-Sep-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Steven Mair                              | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | No           | Update on the work to respond to the serious financial challenges and recommendations made by external agencies | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners pleased to see progress on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the CIPFA review, DLUHC Governance Review, Grant Thornton recommendations and the Directions | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72493/September%202022%20FAP%20Revised%20Master%2019.9.22%20v7.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72493/September%202022%20FAP%20Revised%20Master%2019.9.22%20v7.pdf</a>   |
| GD-013 | P <del>age 59</del> Cabinet Financial Update Report - 2022/23  | 21-Sep-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Steven Mair                              | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | No           | Forecast revenue and capital outturn position for 2022/23 with risks and mitigations.                           | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners note the forecast for a balanced position on the general fund however there is a shortfall against the savings targets and expect a robust Scrutiny process for 2023/24 budget | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72494/1%20Monitoring%20Report%202022-2-23%20P4%20DRAFT%20MASTER%2019.9.22%20v4.2.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72494/1%20Monitoring%20Report%202022-2-23%20P4%20DRAFT%20MASTER%2019.9.22%20v4.2.pdf</a>       |
| GD-014 | Cabinet Update on the procurement forward plan for services in excess of £180,000 and works in excess of £1 million in 2022/23 | 21-Sep-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Clare Priest                             | Procurement and Performance            | Yes          | Authority for commencement of procurement for contracts to be let in 2022/23                                    | <b>3e Procurement and Contract Management Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners have reviewed the report  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72291/180%20Contracts%20over%20180k%20cabinet%20report%2022.23%20Sept%20update%20v6.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72291/180%20Contracts%20over%20180k%20cabinet%20report%2022.23%20Sept%20update%20v6.pdf</a> |
| GD-015 | Cabinet Waste Collection and Disposal Savings  | 21-Sep-22 | Richard West<br>-----<br>Savio DeCruz                            | Transport and the Local Environment    | Yes          | Agree a range of charges related to waste and disposal as well as frequency of collections                      | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners decided not to comment to allow freedom for Scrutiny to give consideration to the issue  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72367/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72367/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf</a>   |

## Recent Governance Decisions Taken in Support of Improvement and Recovery

| Ref    | Report & Subject   | Date      | Chief & Contact Officers  | Portfolio                                      | Key Decision | Summary of Decision   | Related Direction and Contribution to Recovery  | Link to Document  |
|--------|--|-----------|---|--|--------------|---|---|---|
| GD-016 | Cabinet Disposal of Council Assets in Wolverhampton, Bradford, Gosport and Basingstoke | 21-Sep-22 | Richard West / Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Fin Garvey / Peter Worth | Financial Oversight and Council Assets         | Yes          | Approve four asset sales located outside the borough to generate net savings to the revenue budget and capital receipts               | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>The disposals are essential to meet the financial recovery goals and are best value in the market today  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72368/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s72368/Report.pdf</a>                                       |
| GD-004 | Cabinet Financial Action Plan - update   | 18-Jul-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Steven Mair                             | Financial Oversight and Council Assets         | No           | Update on the work to respond to the serious financial challenges and recommendations made by external agencies                       | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners pleased to see progress with the identified actions  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70263/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70263/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf</a> |
| GD-005 | Cabinet Risk Management Strategy   | 18-Jul-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Clare Priest / Mike Thomas              | Financial Oversight and Council Assets         | No           | Approve Risk Management Strategy for 2022/23 including risk management workshops  | <b>2 Avoid Poor Governance or Financial Mismanagement</b><br><b>3b Democratic Services Action Plan</b><br><b>3c Scrutiny Action Plan (Risk):</b><br>Commissioners support the strategy to effectively manage risk | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70251/Report%20and%20Appendix.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70251/Report%20and%20Appendix.pdf</a>     |
| GD-006 | Cabinet Senior management team restructure   | 18-Jul-22 | Gavin Jones<br>-----<br>Gavin Jones                             | Leader of the Council                          | No           | Approve change from a 6 to 7 directorate model with changes to services under each directorate to improve capacity and capability     | <b>3g Officer Structure and Scheme of Delegation:</b><br>Commissioners endorse the new structure and arrangements   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70252/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70252/Report.pdf</a>                                       |
| GD-007 | Cabinet IT Team Restructure  | 18-Jul-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Simon SharkeyWoods                      | Customer Services, Procurement and Performance | No           | Endorse the consultation process for the revised structure of IT including addition of key posts                                      | <b>3f Information Technology Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners content with proposals to enable the efficient and effective delivery of services - will need careful monitoring                                   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70254/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70254/Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf</a> |
| GD-008 | Cabinet Adult Social Care Debt Recovery Policy   | 18-Jul-22 | Marc Gadsby<br>-----<br>Marc Gadsby                             | Social Care and Public Health                  | Yes          | Approve the Adult Social Care Debt Recovery Policy to ensure the Council achieves value for money in its debt collection arrangements | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners content with the proposals   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70260/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70260/Report.pdf</a>                                       |

## Recent Governance Decisions Taken in Support of Improvement and Recovery

| Ref    | Report & Subject  | Date      | Chief & Contact Officers   | Portfolio                              | Key Decision | Summary of Decision  | Related Direction and Contribution to Recovery   | Link to Document  |
|--------|---|-----------|--|--|--------------|--|--|---|
| GD-009 | Cabinet Options to increase income from leisure contract              | 18-Jul-22 | Richard West<br>-----<br>Liz Jones                               | Leisure, Culture and Communities       | Yes          | Approve the negotiated management fee, suspension of the community-based action programme, introduction of above inflation price increases | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners agree with the recommendations given the status of the contract, will need to consider carefully the longer term provision of services  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70264/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70264/Report.pdf</a>   |
| GD-010 | Cabinet Charging for Garden Waste Collection                          | 18-Jul-22 | Richard West<br>-----<br>Savio DeCruz                            | Transport and the Local Environment    | Yes          | Introduce a charge for garden waste to improve the financial position of the authority   | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners content with the proposals  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70265/Report%20and%20Appendix.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70265/Report%20and%20Appendix.pdf</a>   |
| GD-011 | Cabinet Slough Urban Renewal Disposals update                         | 18-Jul-22 | Richard West / Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Dean Tyler / Carmel Booth | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | Yes          | Approve the disposal strategy for three SUR sites to generate disposal receipts at the earliest opportunity                                | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners agree the recommendations reflect the need to secure value for money, reduce the Council's liabilities and risks  | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70271/Report%20and%20Part%20I%20Appendix.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70271/Report%20and%20Part%20I%20Appendix.pdf</a>   |
| GD-003 | 61 Scrutiny Task & Finish Group - Contract Management and Procurement | 14-Jul-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Alexander Polak                          | Procurement and Performance            | No           | Approve the creation of a Task & Finish Group to review Contract Management and Procurement  | <b>3c Scrutiny Action Plan. 3e Procurement and Contract Management Action Plan:</b><br>Allows for an informed review of contract management and procurement at SBC, including the initial procurement phase, performance monitoring and mitigation, and organisational learning. | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70436/Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Commercial%20and%20Contract%20Management.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s70436/Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Commercial%20and%20Contract%20Management.pdf</a> |
| GD-001 | Cabinet Finance Department Restructure                                | 20-Jun-22 | Steven Mair<br>-----<br>Mike Thomas                              | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | No           | Restructure of services to improve capacity and capability   | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan</b><br><b>3g Officer structure and Scheme of Delegation:</b><br>Commissioners content with the proposed structure   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s69649/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s69649/Report.pdf</a>   |
| GD-002 | Cabinet Improvement & Recovery - Asset Disposals programme            | 20-Jun-22 | Richard West<br>-----<br>Fin Garvey                              | Financial Oversight and Council Assets | No           | Agreement to next steps in the advancement of the Asset Disposal Programme   | <b>3a Financial Sustainability Action Plan:</b><br>Commissioners clear that asset disposal is a fundamental component of the Improvement and Recovery Plan   | <a href="https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s69643/Report.pdf">https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/documents/s69643/Report.pdf</a>   |

## Previous Improvement and Recovery Board Decisions Taken

| Ref   | Status  | Description of Decision  | Impact / Rationale of Decision  | Date Raised | Raised By | Owner         | Consulted Parties | Date Last Updated | RAG | Date Closed |
|-------|---------|--|---|-------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|-------------|
| D-001 | Closing | Stephen Brown committed to providing a regular savings monitor to lead Members.                      | Lead Members will be communicated to effectively regarding the savings plans and progress.              | 22-Aug-22   | IRB       | Stephen Brown |                   | 22-Aug-22         | G   | 13-Oct-22   |
| D-002 | Closing | Future reports to the Board should include an update on compliance with the Intervention Directions. | Commissioners will gain increased confidence that SBC are fully addressing the Intervention Directions. | 25-Aug-22   | IRB       | Stephen Brown |                   | 13-Oct-22         | G   |             |

Service plans have been completed, which will seek to address gaps in capability identified in the functional capability assessments.

These are continuing to be iterated to ensure coherence across services and alignment with the corporate plan.

SLT will act as the governance body for the service plans - with meetings taking place weekly. Next steps are to develop reporting arrangements for monitoring progress in delivery, and ensure lessons for next year are captured.

SLT is also focussing on how a One Council approach can be applied to strategic priority areas – such as the Local Plan, Regulation & Enforcement, Recruitment & Retention, Communications and Programme Management.

**GRE5**

- Company limited by shares, sole purpose to own and manage Nova House, a residential block of flats.
- Report to cabinet and full council to set out options and regularise the loan arrangement.
- New directors appointed based on skills audit.
- Separation between board and shareholder function, with shareholder decisions made at officer, cabinet or council level as appropriate (loan arrangement agreed by full council)
- Securing of funding and commissioning of developer for cladding works.
- <sup>Page 69</sup>Exit arrangements expected in financial year 2024/25 due to works contract and ongoing litigation.

**SUR**

- SUR is not a company, it is a limited liability partnership, with specific limited liability partnerships created underneath for each scheme.
- Its purpose is to manage and deliver regeneration schemes.
- Cabinet reports on progress on each site managed via SUR.
- Corporate oversight board to strengthen governance and management arrangements.
- New Executive Director of Housing and Property will have lead responsibility for exit arrangements once current schemes are complete or alternative arrangements entered into.

### **JEH**

- JEH is a company limited by shares. Its sole purpose is to acquire and hold housing properties.
- External review by Local Partnerships, funded by LGA.
- Loan arrangement regularised.
- New directors appointed with monthly board meetings.
- New SLA between Council and JEH to ensure transparency around services provided and cost recovery.
- Separation of banking arrangements put in place.

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### **Development Initiative Slough Housing (DISH)**

- Company limited by shares set up in 1988 for sole purpose of leasing and managing 54 properties.
- Properties are all tenanted with stability in its tenants.
- Options review and exit strategy scheduled for financial year 2023/24 due to lower risks.

**Slough Children First (SCF)**

- SCF is a company limited by guarantee. It was set up under the statutory direction of the SoS for Education.
- Articles of association were amended in April 2021 to make it wholly owned by the Council. Articles clearly set out reserved matters.
- The board of directors is made up of paid executive directors, independent non-executive directors and council nominated directors.
- The board is relatively new with most directors having been appointed since April 2021.
- A skills audit of the board has been undertaken.
- The Council has undertaken a detailed governance review, which is being reported to Cabinet.
- The Council will also work with the DfE on an options appraisal for delivery of statutory children's social care functions to consider whether the current model remains the most effective one to improve services.

## **Experimental Bus Lanes, Cabinet, 17 January 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=6749>

Comprehensive appendices on:

- Consultation feedback
- Monitoring data
- Journey times
- Air quality

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## **Corporate Energy Procurement Strategy, Cabinet, 17 January 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=6749>

Included data on:

- Potential energy costs
- Fixed price options
- Predictions for future use, informed by expert advice and analysis

## **Slough Library Service Plan and new delivery model, Cabinet, 21 March 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=6751&Ver=4>

Included:

- Needs assessment
- CIPFA benchmarking comparisons
- Equality Impact Assessment data
- Consultation results

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## **Finance Department Restructure, Cabinet, 20 June 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=7050&Ver=4>

Included benchmarking data with 2 other Local Authorities

## **Finance Department Restructure, Cabinet, 20 June 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=7050&Ver=4>

Included data on cost over time, including net spend and number of items supplied.

## **Home to school transport & Bus Enhanced Partnership, Cabinet, 20 June & 17 October 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=7074&Ver=4>

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=7088&Ver=4>

The former included:

- Benchmarking data on contribution rates for 6 other LAs
- Cost per pupil of transport from 25 other LAs
- Consultation results (October)

 The latter included consultation feedback.

Both are examples of a two stage process with Cabinet approving both.

## **Waste Collection and Disposal Savings, Cabinet, 21 September 2022**

<https://democracy.slough.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=109&MId=8282&Ver=4>

Included:

- Data on frequency of collections for six Local Authorities
- Contaminated loads data
- Environmental impact projections

## Corporate Risk Register - Extract

### Corporate Risk Register Extract (excludes finance risks dealt with extensively elsewhere)

| Risk  | Inherent Risk | Current Risk | Target Risk | Direction of Travel |
|---|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Risk 1: Safety of Children and Young People   | 24            | 20           | 9           | ⬇️                  |
| Risk 2: Delivery of the Adult Social Care (ASC) Transformation Programme  | 18            | 15           | 8           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 3: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection   | 24            | 20           | 4           | ⬇️                  |
| Risk 4: Impact of the cost of living crisis on Slough's residents   | 24            | 18           | 6           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 5: Risk of the failure of statutory duty for provision of temporary accommodation  | 18            | 12           | 6           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 6: Service delivery risk due to workforce recruitment and retention issues   | 24            | 20           | 6           | ⬇️                  |
| Risk 7: The Council does not take adequate mitigation to reduce the risk of injury or death from incidents within the Council   | 20            | 12           | 6           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 8: Business Continuity and Emergency Planning  | 24            | 8            | 6           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 9: Cyber Security  | 15            | 9            | 6           | ↑️                  |
| Risk 13: Recovery and Renewal Plan  | 24            | 15           | 6           | ↔️                  |
| Risk 14: Risk that the lack of an agreed council-wide vision, principles and governance for building digital access for residents continues to lead to incoherent and poor quality digital services | 16            | 12           | 8           | ↔️                  |

Note: ↑ indicates risk assessment has improved since last review; ⬇️ indicates risk assessment has deteriorated since last review

## Key service updates

### Planning

- A clear programme plan is being put in place for the Local Plan, with a meaningful work programme:
  - A project update was presented to oversight group Sept 2022. Next Update late November 2022.
  - Budget requirement paper to be presented to finance – week commencing 8th November.
  - Procurement specification for evidence studies finalised November 2022.
  - Procurement Board approval – November 2022.
  - Report to Cabinet – January 2023 which will also outline the full local plan projected timetable.

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### Regulation & Enforcement

- A One Council approach to Regulation and Enforcement is being developed, with the first meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October.
- Whilst Regulation and Enforcement teams across the council have been working together, this approach is being developed to better share skills, knowledge and resource and start to undertake work as a collective – for example by identifying premises of concern and developing joined up approach

## Key service updates

### Community Safety

- The first proper use of a Community Trigger by the authority has been undertaken, resulting in an independent panel reviewing a specific long-term problem of Anti-Social Behaviour in Chalvey.

### Place Operations

- A Cabinet decision has been made about the future waste collection cycle; Place Scrutiny Panel reviewed and commented on the report and will conduct further scrutiny once cabinet proposals for the detail of implementation, including around recycling, are clearer.  
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- New Web forms to support new service changes at the DSO have been implemented and are now being used by residents to pay for Green Waste subscriptions or Schedule Bulky Waste removals.

### Building management & Business Support

- Facilities management and Business support have moved to the new Housing & Property Directorate - this will allow for effective re-alignment of contract and operational management of the council corporate buildings - which was disaggregated following the OF Restructure.

## Key service updates

### Customer services

- Customer services capacity and performance has improved on 2021 levels – see table.
- We have successfully recruited an Interim Group Manager for Customer Services, starting 24<sup>th</sup> October.
- They will lead a root and branch review of operational processes, design a new target operating model and support the development of the council's corporate digital road map.
- Progress has been made in joining up working between Libraries, customer services, and Facilities management to address the customer offering through the local access points.
- Officers are also being trained ahead of the launch of the new housing system.

## Key service updates

### People (Childrens)

- Home to school transport – The new H2S transport policy was adopted by Cabinet on 17/10/22. This will crystallise the LA's new approach and yield efficiencies. Independent Travel Training is a key area of new policy and requires careful implantation to safeguard young people.
- SEND Written Statement of Action - Progress overall is slower than expected. A Project Manager being sourced and New roles in the SEND service are being recruited. The WSOA is a multi-agency responsibility between social care, education and health.
- <sup>Page 75</sup>SEND Safety Valve - Bi-weekly meetings are taking place with the DfE. The council is forecasting in-year balance within four years. SBC is preparing submission for programme for February 2023.

## Key service updates

### People (Adults)

- *Re-ablement* – the Reablement consultation concluded on the 22nd and the recruitment activity has begun for 35 vacancies across the team. The financial efficiencies badged against the expected outcomes for the service rely greatly on the success of the recruitment to these posts.
- *Health and Social Care Integration* – the draft plan for the Better Care Fund 22-23 has been produced along with a Draft Narrative Plan 22-23, Metrics and Spending Plan. This has now been presented and agreed at the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Wellbeing Board.

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- Reports on recommissioning of the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Integrated Substance Misuse Service and Rough Sleepers Substance Misuse outreach service are going to Cabinet in November.
- *Public Health* - Cabinet has approved Health Visiting and School Nursing collaboration with East Berks LA's, dependent on a Task and Finish Group which has now been set up, chaired by Stuart Lines, East Berks Director of Public Health.

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**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2022/23**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

| COUNCILLOR           | 16/06/22<br>(Note: Scrutiny Training & Work Programming held, not a formal meeting) | 14/07/22 | 15/09/22<br>Cancelled | 13/10/22 | 17/11/22 | 01/12/22<br>(Extraordinary) | 12/01/23 | 23/02/23 | 16/03/23 |
|----------------------|---|----------|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Gahir (Chair)        | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Matloob (Vice-Chair) | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Akbar                | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Bal                  | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Basra                | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| P Bedi **            |   |          |                       |          |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Kaur                 | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| M Malik              | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| S Malik              | -   | P        |                       | P        |          |                             |          |          |          |
| Strutton **          | -   | P        |                       | Ab       |          |                             |          |          |          |

P = Present for whole meeting P\* = Present for part of meeting Ap = Apologies given Ab = Absent, no apologies given

\* The formal Committee meeting scheduled on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 was not required as all Panel appointments had been made at Annual Council in May 2022. The session was used as an all scrutiny training and work programming event.

\*\* Councillor Strutton resigned from the Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022. On the nomination of the Conservative Group, Councillor P Bedi was appointed to the vacancy on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 under delegated authority to fill casual vacancies.

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