

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Target Operating Model – Direction of Travel update
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Chahal, Deputy Leader of the Council – Financial Oversight, Council Assets, Procurement and Revenue & Benefits
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sonia Khan – Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Andrew Merritt-Morling – Interim Programme Manager
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Key Decision:</b>	YES
<b>Exempt:</b>	NO
<b>Decision Subject To Call In:</b>	NO
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 - The Case for Change Appendix 2 - Proposed new Operating Model – what it means in detail Appendix 3 - Design Principles underpinning the proposed new Operating Model

### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress made with respect to developing Phase I of the Target Operating Model (TOM) direction of travel. It sets out the principles for how, as part of Phase I, the Council will consciously operate in new and different ways in the future and be more agile, effective and efficient in the way it delivers services. It outlines a way forward for Phase II of the TOM programme.
- 1.2 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Approve the direction of travel around which the new model for Slough Borough Council will be built as set out in Section 2 and Section 3 and Appendix 2.
  - b) Approve the proposed stakeholder engagement process set out in Section 3.11.

### Reason

- 1.3 The Council has been under statutory intervention of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government since December 2021 and needs to make significant improvements in order to demonstrate it can meet its duty of best value. This requires a robust and resourced transformation plan aligned to an agreed target operating model to drive forward the change required.

## Commissioner Review

*"This paper explains why the council has to review how it works to make sure it is as efficient as possible. At its crudest the Council must find a cheaper way of doing its work because it cannot afford to carry on as it is. That review should produce a new way of working, an operating model. The new model does not happen overnight, it is something that has to be worked towards. It is a target, hence Target Operating Model.*

*The paper goes on to say what will influence the development of the new model. **It does not set out the new model itself yet.** Developing and introducing a new model is a complicated and expensive enterprise. Without very strong project management it may never happen so councillors will want to keep a close eye on the programme to ensure that it is being rigorously pursued. The progress to date has not been exemplary so the scope for further delay is very limited. The council will also want to think about how best to bring in external support to help it in this task."*

## 2.0 Context

- 2.1 We The Council are working within an incredibly challenging financial context with increasing future demand from residents to address more complex issues. Society is also changing rapidly, with different expectations and needs. If the Council does not proactively choose the future shape and direction it intends going in, the Council could just end up in a downward spiral.
- 2.2 In June 2021 the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced an external assurance review of Slough Borough Council's (SBC) financial position and the strength of its wider governance arrangements, following its request for exceptional financial support. The two reviews found that the council had failed to comply with its best value duty of continuous improvement and that it was unable to become financially self-sustaining without considerable Government support.
- 2.3 SBC was subsequently placed under intervention by the Minister of State for Equalities and Levelling Up Communities within MHCLG in December 2021, and Commissioners were appointed to oversee the council's recovery and improvement, alongside a set of Directions under the Local Government Act. The council and children's company are also under Directions regarding children's services improvement and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service improvement. The latter is a local area-wide recovery programme.
- 2.4 The challenges for Slough Borough Council remain incredibly complex. The scale and nature of the Council's financial challenges mean that it is difficult for the Council to achieve financial sustainability without radical and swift action. As with other councils, the demand on public services is increasing, and the needs of residents are becoming more complex, with stark and persistent inequality. The Council has not progressed the preventative work, service redesign and remodelling across place and systems that others, faced with constrained public finances and increasing demand, have embarked on. Indeed, Slough's public

services need improvement across many areas. All of this is having an impact on residents, partners and the Council's workforce. In response, since earlier this year, SBC have been developing a new operating model to move towards. This is about seeking to come up with a viable and sustainable way of meeting residents' needs, as one of the smallest unitary authorities in England.

2.5 This operating model gives SBC the opportunity to rethink how it works and what it does, and to centre its approach to equality – and how it tackles inequality, eliminate discrimination and bias and build community relations. This will help the Council get things right the first time and ensure effective reach. It recognises that it has to become better at doing the basics well, whilst becoming smaller and more flexible in its working, more targeted and preventative. This is a genuine opportunity to do things differently, innovate, take a joined-up approach and bring in external opportunity. Slough as a place has excellent connectivity and economic potential, and harnessing these benefits for residents has to be part of its operating model. The Council are however trying to do this at pace, and in a very challenging financial context. It knows therefore that the potential equality and community impacts of this change are huge and cumulative.

2.6 In summary, the key defining features of Slough's proposed operating model means Slough Council will:

#### **Overall shape and feel of the Council**

- Be smaller and more flexible – operating out of fewer buildings;
- Offer fewer and more consistent points of access and more transparent ways to track progress and responses, getting things right first time;
- Take a digital first approach in how it works, and how residents access information and services, freeing up time for those who need it;
- Focus on doing the basics well and consistently right across all services, ensuring it takes a "One Council" approach;
- Use Council resources appropriately – funding what it should be funding and ensuring partners play their part;
- Take a commercial and value-for-money mindset, to successfully navigate the financial and social challenges all councils face;
- Be more inclusive, with a thriving workforce who are once again proud to be able to say they work for Slough Borough Council.

#### **Council services**

- Be more aware and accountable for its statutory duties, roles and regulatory frameworks, but not restricted by them;
- Be better able to understand, prevent and manage demand for services – tackling root causes to support preventable and early intervention responses to challenging, complex and deep-rooted issues;
- Prioritise what it delivers – ensuring universal services such as waste are provided to an acceptable and consistent level whilst specialist support is targeted and triaged to protect the most vulnerable.

#### **Place leadership**

- Enable or commission other activity through partners and communities;
- Focus the Council on shaping Slough as a place, to build sustainable prosperity for all, help make Slough a better place to live, and provide opportunity for everyone.

2.7 At the core of what Slough Borough Council are trying to achieve is working more closely with its residents and local communities to ensure it enables and empowers service users, families and communities to live better and more independent lives.

2.8 The proposed direction of travel identifies 5 primary workstreams. Two of these workstreams (WS) are directly related and deliverable through the work of the proposed operating model and will form the basis of detailed work that has already commenced. These two areas are:

- **WS1: Council Service Review and Design** – undertaking detailed end-to-end service reviews to understand all the functions currently carried out within the Council, the various parameters under which they operate 3 establish the “Current State” and redesign them in line with the key defining features of the new operating model. Redesigns of services will focus primarily on resident outcomes/outputs, demand management, prevention/early intervention, and developing community partnerships. The service reviews will be phased and will focus initially on those areas where there are the biggest opportunities to improve resident experience and where the greatest financial challenges exist for the Council. These service reviews will be more than just reviewing how we do things, but be fundamental root and branch examinations to look at what we want to achieve with our residents and communities, and address how we do it through, where possible, co-design, co-creation and collaboration with service users and community groups;
- **WS2: Customer and Digital First** – an integral part of the Service Review and Design process is to fully understand the customer journey and experience. The intention will be to comprehensively grasp the way customers come into contact with the Council and how this contact is managed throughout. The aim will be to ensure that the Council are putting time into interaction that is of value to customers and to simplify routes into the Council and pathways, integrate digitisation where possible to enable those who can self-serve to do so, so that the Council can better manage demand to free up valuable resource so it is able to direct more targeted support to those in most need. By automating its back-office processes as much as possible, the intention is to simplify, shorten and drive out inefficiencies, releasing more time and money to improve the customer experience. As part of this work, the Council will need to define what its customer facing offer is and where it is located, and this will inform decisions about workplace (see WS3).

2.9 The detailed design work for the three other workstreams, whilst identified as part of the TOM design process, will be addressed separately as part of the wider Transformation work being undertaken by the Council currently. These three additional workstreams are:

- **WS3: Workforce and Workplace Development** – reviewing and redesigning how it works more efficiently and effectively. This is particularly important as the Council will need to be much smaller than it is today, both physically (in terms of location and resources) and in terms of the scale of offer which will require the Council to work more closely and collaboratively with community groups and external partners to co-design, co-produce and co-deliver services. This will require the Council and its staff to be more

agile, ensuring it can deploy resources to the right place at the right time. Staff will also need to be equipped and enabled to make informed, evidence-led decisions to improve customer experience. This workstream will help determine the decisions that the Council needs to make about its estate.

- **WS4: Establishing Conditions for Success** – ensuring that in addition to its workforce, the Council have the right conditions in place to facilitate the Slough Council of the future. There is a complex range of Conditions for Success that have been identified, spanning many interconnecting layers. These have both an outward looking and internal focus. An explanation of the Conditions for Success can be found in section 3.8. Each component identified will initially be established as a project within the Workstream, but the intention will be to gradually integrate them into usual Council ways of operating.
- **WS5: Recovery and Improvement** – already well established and focused on navigating Slough Borough Council out of intervention. This workstream is about building a sustainable Council, that puts the residents first, is able to manage future demand challenges and withstand unplanned events.

## 3.0 Main Report

### Introduction

- 3.1 Slough Borough Council (SBC) is facing significant financial and demand pressures arising from reductions in public funding along with significant pressures in relation to its residents' demands for services and an increase in residents' expectations of service quality and delivery. This situation is at risk of placing the Council in an unsustainable position where projected budgets and services will not be sufficient to meet demand, without swift and radical action.
- 3.2 The direction of travel outlined within section 4.4 (below) will require a significant change to the way the council operates today. The Council will be much smaller in both terms of physical size and the number of buildings it operates from, and in the breadth and depth of service offer available to the residents of Slough. This means it will require fewer resources and the use of technology to automate and support the way it processes its work. It will mean it needs to work more closely with its communities and external partners to co-design, co-produce and in some cases co-deliver what is currently offered. It will also likely mean the Council will need to take tough decisions and stop doing things.
- 3.3 As of 31 October 2024, SBC has a considerable funding challenge. This equates to a considerable MTFs funding gap of circa £20.484million for 2025-26, as stated in another Cabinet report. Directorates are facing significant pressures to review their services in terms of:
  - why the service is needed;
  - what scope and standard is required;
  - how the service can best be delivered; and
  - potential for generating additional income.

- 3.4 In addition, there is a significant opportunity to improve the efficiency of Council operations. Analysis through workshops undertaken since approval was provided by SBC's Corporate Leadership Team to proceed with development of Slough's Target Operating Model (TOM) on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, has highlighted that the Council is likely to be behind other Local Authorities in relation to its maturity in operating streamlined and efficient process activity. This position will be tested by benchmarking data as part of a wider Activity Analysis that forms Phase II of the TOM development.
- 3.5 The need for the Council to be reshaped and reformed, to lower its costs and be more effective, is accepted by all. The Council is part way on the journey of designing this, alongside its stakeholders including members, staff, partners and residents. Getting the model right, devising an acceptable way of implementing this that learns the lessons of the past, and builds trust, is a major challenge over the next 12 months.
- 3.6 It is important to recognise that the TOM is not a quick fix to address the Council's immediate challenges, but it can inform action and guide those decisions. The TOM sets out a new direction of travel to establish an operating approach for the Council, which the Council will use to address its funding gap and deliver long term sustainability. Significant further action is required by the Council over the next two to three years to develop further iterations of the TOM and implement it, and to work through the cultural, structural and operational change and the tough decisions that will be required for the Council to achieve its three primary objectives of:
- Demonstrating it is able to stand on its own two feet and is able to prove it can make strategic decisions for itself;
  - That it is financially viable and sustainable, meaning that it is able to future forecast and scenario plan to help it address future shocks or significant increases in demand; and
  - That it places the customer first and staff feel once again proud to work for SBC.

## Options Considered

- 3.7 Maintain status quo – arguably hasn't worked – **NOT RECOMMENDED**
- 3.8 Design and adopt an SBC-lite model (effectively continuing what we already do but amend service levels and reduce staff incrementally) – considered not going to be able to deliver what is required to the extent or within the timelines needed to develop a sustainable Council to support Slough's residents – **NOT RECOMMENDED**
- 3.9 Design an "Enabling Model" - where residents are empowered and supported to do as much as they are able using tools available, allowing us to build on work with partners and other stakeholders to co-design and co-develop innovative solutions that are able to be targeted at the most vulnerable – outlined in this proposal. **RECOMMENDED**

## 4. Background and Detail

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Since the economic and financial crash of 2008-2010, the public sector has gone through unprecedented change following the subsequent introduction of a fiscal austerity programme by the UK Government in 2010. Local authorities have been at the centre of the austerity programme, bearing a greater share of financial savings than any other part of the public sector over the last 14 years. At the same time, the scale and complexity of need from residents coupled to public expectations of council services and how they are accessed have similarly changed beyond recognition. This has left councils with difficult choices about reducing levels of service, changing or reducing the ambitions they have for local communities or attempting to innovate and change how services are delivered.
- 4.1.2 The population of Slough is around 158,500 (Census 2021) and it is young, growing and dynamic. The council wants to ensure their future from an early age through education, local employment opportunities and availability of housing to meet their needs. People are living longer, and this adds pressure to local services such as adult social care to meet more complex needs while enabling people to live independently for as long as possible. More than two-thirds of the council's operational budget (69%) is spent on children's services and adult social care and supporting the most vulnerable members of the community. There are inequalities across Slough's population including household income, living conditions, well-being and health.
- 4.1.3 These pressures, allied to the continued challenges of Government Intervention following the s.114 announcement in 2021, alongside the declining national economic climate, suggests 2025/26 is set to be another difficult year financially for the council.
- 4.1.4 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) shows a balanced budget for 2024/25 but needs to address a cumulative budget gap of £43.110million by 2028/29. The council recognises it needs to change to meet these challenges whilst also keeping an absolute focus on its statutory, legal and regulatory responsibilities. The council also knows it can no longer provide services in the way it has in the past - it will not be able to provide everyone with everything. SBC's challenge is to rethink and change what it does and how it does it.
- 4.1.5 To rise to these challenges SBC has consciously chosen to innovate, seek radical change and fundamentally redesign its organisation. Continuing with a version of business as usual is not sustainable.
- 4.1.6 Slough Borough Council has an ambition to build on the strengths of communities and partnerships. This will require place leadership and stronger more impactful partnership working and more detailed considerations of other partners operating models and strategic plans so it takes a consistent approach across the system, as 'One Slough.'
- 4.1.7 At the heart of this ambition is to build a very different relationship with residents, their networks and communities. This means the Council will look to make its community engagement activity more systematic. This ambition requires a reorganised council that creates a new culture of community collaboration in Slough.
- 4.1.8 The operating model will require more consistent ways of operating as a Council, so that customers have a consistent experience of the Council and there are more

agile, aligned and integrated ways of working across the Council. It does not mean oversimplifying the very complex activity and roles undertaken by a Council.

- 4.1.9 The council will also look to manage future demand for services through targeted intervention and prevention, always ensuring the most vulnerable know how to get the support they need. The operating model presents an important opportunity for it to be proactive in reducing inequalities, eliminating discrimination and building better community relations. There are significant opportunities in the proposed workstream 2 “**Customer Access and Digital First**” to improve access to services, particularly for those equality groups where it is known there is currently lower access or participation rates both generally and in specific service areas. The direction of travel also places a major emphasis on prevention and early intervention, which can help to tackle some of the root causes of inequalities that persist for some groups. The need to operate within clear financial parameters and deliver best value is compatible with improving the customer experience, and indeed offers significant opportunity. There is a commitment to deliver services (such as waste) at an acceptable and consistent service level, benefitting all customers and to continue to provide specialist support to the most vulnerable residents with targeted services.
- 4.1.10 The operating model outlined in this document provides the ‘blueprint’ for the delivery of an ambitious transformation programme for Slough Borough Council (SBC). It does not pretend to be a refined business case, a high-level organisational redesign or a costed implementation approach and plan. It does begin to build and draw on all existing projects and work relating to transformation and starts to bring it into a single integrated programme.
- 4.1.11 It proposes a direction of travel from which more detailed and costed implementation plans should be developed. This new operating model will wish to focus on delivering the optimum organisational shape for achieving SBC’s transformation journey.
- 4.1.12 It is important to recognise that TOM Phase I is not a quick fix to address the Council’s MTFs funding gap, but it can inform action and guide those decisions. TOM Phase II will set out a new proposed operating approach for the Council across all operational areas of the Council, which the Council will use to help address its funding gap and deliver longer-term sustainability. Significant further action is required by the Council as part of Phase II to implement the TOM Phase I and in parallel to develop the One Council view of all functions, work through the cultural, structural and operational change and build evidence to support and facilitate the tough decisions that will be required for the Council to achieve financial sustainability, demonstrate the Council is able to take its own strategic decisions, and benefit the residents of Slough whilst making the council a better, more prouder place to work for.
- 4.1.13 This approach supports the Council’s existing Corporate Plan 2023-2027. This explicitly states the type of Council we wish to be:
- Resident focused
  - Providing financial sustainability
  - Enabling residents and communities
  - Strengthening partnerships
  - Building trust



## 4.2 Historical Context

4.2.1 This isn't the first time Slough has attempted to introduce a new operating model. In 2019, "Our Futures" was introduced. For a number of reasons, including the intervention of the COVID19 Pandemic and the application of the s.114 notice which led to the Government Interventions, this was never fully implemented, although the restructuring elements had been. Feedback received from various sources, not least the Council's own staff and members of Scrutiny Committee point to the fact that more focus on implementation and change to support was needed. Taking this into account, the high-level direction of travel being outlined in this document differs significantly in a number of ways from the "Our Futures" programme:

- Instead of a "digital by default" approach that relied on the website as being the main entry point, the proposal now is for a "digital first" approach which encourages and allows those who are able to so, to do more for themselves using automation and self-service where appropriate. This will allow the limited resources to be redirected to support those who are unable to access services through digital means. The Council would be looking to streamline the number of digital access routes to its services and provide a front door to help those most vulnerable.
- Following on from this, the Council are exploring whether and to what extent the hubs are meeting the needs of those who cannot self-serve. Options being considered is whether a more centralised model is more appropriate for Slough, and whether it is better for the Council to go out into the communities with outreach (with partners), as opposed to residents coming to the Council.
- The scale of savings required is unlikely to be achieved at the scale to allow Slough to become a sustainable council from efficiencies alone. This means there will need to be tough decisions about what functions or services it retains but reorganise, those it chooses to offer through partners, or those it stops doing.
- Learning the lessons from Our Futures and other operating models, the Council is seeking to take a more multi-faceted approach, taking both a top-down as well as bottom-up approach, including involving staff in the solutions thinking. Going further, it is also proactively engaging partner organisations and community groups, who will be central to co-designing and co-creating solutions that benefit the residents of Slough.
- The Council is also actively identifying key dependencies, and considering not just the intended consequences of its proposals, but also so far as is possible, the unintended consequences. Central to this is its focus on establishing the Conditions for Success (see section 4.8).

## 4.3 Why we need to set a future direction for the Council

4.3.1 Slough Borough Council's current operating model can be described as decentralised, with "siloes" of service delivery aligned to each directorate. Each directorate, and the services within that directorate, have their own identity, culture and level of independence, which encourages a culture of operating independently rather than one of collaboration across services and between directorates.

- 4.3.2 But not all should be seen as negative. There are strong pockets of good practice (particularly within Children's Services, Adult Social Care, and Public Health), in the areas of community engagement and partnership working, for example. Indeed, since the Directions were first announced in December 2021, some Directorates are showing signs of improvement.
- 4.3.3 But these pockets of good practice are not evident throughout the Council. This view is supported by the Directorate-focused workshops that took place during June and July 2024 which identified significant levels of duplication and fragmentation across core processes such as resident enquiry handling/complaints, assessment, administration functions and other service enabling activity. They also highlighted material levels of corporate service activity (e.g. elements of communications, ICT/Digital, Property, HR, legal, etc.) taking place within Directorates as well as centrally.
- 4.3.4 Although no Activity Analysis was able to be conducted by the Council during Phase I of TOM development to identify and confirm the Council's maturity levels, it is likely that it is behind other Local Authorities in relation to its maturity in operating streamlined and efficient process activity. This will be confirmed and validated as an Activity Analysis will be conducted as part of Phase II TOM.
- 4.3.5 Approximately 59% of the workforce work within operational services which support the delivery of frontline operations, although, services are still holding vacancies, therefore this figure is likely to be greater. The actual percentage of activity associated with enabling services and front / middle office activity is dependent on both the efficiency of supporting processes and also the extent to which the Council delivers front line services internally.
- 4.3.6 The current operating model (our ways of working) is not sustainable. Slough Borough Council is now consciously deciding how it needs to operate in the future. In doing so, it needs to recognise it is working within an incredibly challenging financial context (both nationally and uniquely to Slough locally), with increasing demand pressures from its residents who, as a society, is also changing rapidly.
- 4.3.7 This presents SBC with an opportunity to show its residents that the Council can be well run and able to make good decisions based on evidence. It is an opportunity to show that Slough Council is putting residents first and not itself and is able to stand on its own two feet and make informed strategic decisions that help it become sustainable, financially stable and able to withstand future financial and non-financial demands and shocks. This will demonstrate Slough Council can be forward thinking about how it meets needs through future-forecasting and trend analysis to better manage demand and become a best-value Council.
- 4.3.8 This means the Council will be able to embed the approach set out in the 2023-2027 Corporate Plan about the type of Council it wishes to be based on the five published principles:
- Resident focused
  - Providing financial sustainability
  - Enabling residents and communities
  - Strengthening partnerships
  - Building trust

#### 4.4 What the Council needs to look like – the direction of travel

4.4.1 In paragraph 1.7, the Council set out at a headline level what it needs to look like. The table below sets out in more detail what this means in general terms. This table is not exhaustive and is subject to further sign-off.

Summary	Areas of further focus
<b>Look and feel of Council</b>	
<b>Smaller and more flexible - operating out of fewer buildings</b>	Smaller footprint of buildings SBC currently operates from (e.g. Observatory House and Depot). Assessing what this means for other buildings the Council operates out of and for the services contained within them. Exploring existing use of, or opportunity to increase number of community run assets.
<b>Offer fewer and more consistent points of access, getting things right first time</b>	Currently offer up to 8 different means of access for our residents. This is confusing and inconsistent for our residents, so how do we rationalise this? One single electronic point of access and one physical front door for the most vulnerable?
<b>Take a digital first approach in how we work, freeing up time for those who need it</b>	Giving consideration to how we help those who are able to do more for themselves and offering the opportunity to do things online (e.g. book venues). For example, only 62% of Slough residents pay Council Tax online – average for other Berkshire Councils stand at 78%. Focus on internal automation to integrate efficiency into our processes.
<b>Focus on doing the basics well - “One Council” approach</b>	Making sure our staff are empowered to make decisions to put things right first time for residents, or introduce them to a person sitting in the right part of the Council – improving resident experience. Introducing reliability of core services (e.g. waste, etc), meeting response time targets, reducing complaints, etc?
<b>Using council resource appropriately</b>	Funding what SBC should be funding – ensuring other partners are able to share costs, make fair contributions and meet their financial obligations to us
<b>Take a commercial and value-for-money mindset beyond income generation</b>	Ensuring we recover all costs the Council is entitled to reclaim and ensuring we are able to generate income or reclaim fees from those who can pay. Ensuring we reclaim appropriate costs from our partners and do not subsidise commercial activity
<b>Inclusive and thriving workforce</b>	Progress activity to change culture and introduce more consistent management, develop staff engagement and recognition and take action to promote workforce diversity and an inclusive leadership style.

<b>Staff once again being proud to work for SBC</b>	Improving the culture of the Council and the overall working environment to such an extent that staff begin to feel valued and cared for, as evidenced by steadily increasing positivity in staff surveys. Aim is to get staff proactively promoting SBC as a place to work to friends and family.
<b>Council services</b>	
<b>More aware and accountable for our statutory duties, but not restricted to them.</b>	Consistently delivering to a good standard what we are legally obliged to deliver for residents of Slough but taking it further to focus more on prevention or early intervention, anticipating future demand needs.
<b>Better able understand, prevent, and manage demand.</b>	Understanding and tackling root causes to support prevention and early intervention (e.g. homelessness and temporary accommodation demand)
<b>Prioritise what we deliver - ensure it is targeted and triaged to protect the most vulnerable</b>	Being able to look at what the Council continues to do, and to prioritise these in collaboration with community groups (e.g. building on where we are well positioned, or ensuring we can demonstrate value for money for residents)
<b>Place leadership</b>	
<b>Enable or commission other activity through partners and communities</b>	Co-designing targeted and triaged responses to protect the most vulnerable. Ensuring that we build on good practice already in place in Adults and Children's social care, and adopting approach right across the Council.
<b>Focus on shaping Slough the place, to build sustainable prosperity for all</b>	Improving opportunities for our residents (job creation, better quality housing, more attractive place to live) and creating environment to build prosperity in a sustained way (e.g. increase job opportunities, skills training, etc.)

#### **4.5 What this means for how Slough Borough Council will need to work in future**

- 4.5.1 The direction of travel outlined within section 4.4 (above) will require a significant change to the way the council operates today. The Council will be much smaller in both terms of physical size and the number of buildings it operates from, and in the breadth and depth of service offer available to the residents of Slough. This means it will require fewer resources and the use of technology to automate and support the way it processes its work. It will mean it needs to work more closely with its communities and external partners to co-design, co-produce and in some cases co-deliver what is currently offered. It will also likely mean it will need to take tough decisions and stop doing things.
- 4.5.2 Fundamentally, the way Slough operates today will be very different from the way Slough operates tomorrow. Its workforce will need to be more flexible and agile so that the Council is able to anticipate demand pressures for example, and direct resources to where they are most needed.

- 4.5.3 SBC's staff will need to be better equipped to capture, store, retrieve and cascade data to help support its customers, using a "tell us once" principle. This data will then need to be developed into insight that will allow our more empowered workforce be more informed by the data so that they are able to take operational decisions that are based on transparent and logical processes which are continuously improved.
- 4.5.4 These processes, underpinned by data and supported by an empowered workforce will help the Council to work with community groups to review and improve the breadth of services accessible to our residents. Staff will be empowered and supported to work in a more outward-facing way and develop partnerships by working more collaboratively with local communities, faith groups and other local services. Staff will have the delegated authority to refer and introduce residents to our partners to support residents and help them remain independent for as long as possible.
- 4.5.5 Furthermore, staff will look for opportunities to work with partners across the borough to help tackle root causes and to support preventative and early intervention.

## **4.6 Immediate Priorities**

- 4.6.1 Paragraphs 1.9 and 1.10 set out at a high level five priority workstreams that are designed to address areas that improve customer experience as well as help put the Council on the road to a more sustainable financial position. These will form the basis of more detailed work that has already commenced. Two of the workstreams identified in paragraph 1.9 are core to the direct delivery of the proposed Operating Model and the direction of travel for more detailed work is set out in the paragraphs below.

### **End-to-End Service Reviews**

- 4.6.2 As already mentioned, the Council will need to look, feel and operate in a very different way than it does today in order to live within its means, demonstrate it is able to take control, make informed decisions, and put its residents first.
- 4.6.3 A crucial component to understanding how the Council will need to look and operate in the future will be having clarity about how the Council currently works. This is known as either the "As Is" or "Current State". This is crucial to understand because the Council needs to know:
- Why it does things the way it does,
  - how it makes informed decisions
  - what the customer experience is and how it can be improved
  - where the customer access points are and where blockages occur
  - where hand-off or decision points are within the process and how these are managed
  - what effort is put into the process and how long given processes take from start to finish, and
  - what the outcomes and outputs are from the process
- 4.6.4 In addition to the points identified above, the Council should also know whether any partners are involved in the process, what components of the process are manual

and which are automated, and what the dependencies are (intended or unintended) on customer experience or other parts of the Council.

- 4.6.5 Ultimately, the data learned from undertaking this process review will provide the Council with a rich evidence base that will allow it to identify how these processes can be improved. Improvements in process take many different forms with a number of measures used to assess success against objectives (e.g. enhanced resident experience, more streamlined number of steps, faster processing times, higher resident satisfaction rates, etc.). This will be built into the process review work.
- 4.6.6 There are various ways Councils and other public sector bodies address these using tried and tested methodologies.
- 4.6.7 The focus of the end-to-end service reviews will initially be on those areas of the Council where there is the highest demand and/or overspends. This will allow the Council to address the biggest areas for challenge and where there are likely to be early low-hanging fruit that will improve the customer experience whilst allowing the Council to improve efficiency and stabilise its financial position. It is proposed that Phase I of this work will focus on homelessness and temporary accommodation, and Adult Social Care. These will be carried out in parallel. A critical path setting out the phasing of the service review work is in the process of being finalised jointly with colleagues in finance and transformation and this will be shared with Members before the end of 2024.

### **Customer Access using Digital First principles**

- 4.6.8 Directly linked to the work of the Service Review and Design outlined above will be how the Council shortens the customer journey, assists and support those who can do more for themselves so it can target additional support to the most vulnerable and improve the overall customer experience – using Digital First principles.
- 4.6.9 It is important to point out and be explicit upfront that adopting Digital First principles is not Digital by Default. Digital is not just about technology, it's about having practices and processes which make sense, are simple and work. It is about having the appropriate technology which meets the needs of both internal and external users, supports the Council's business processes, and is secure, flexible and simple to use. It is also about making sure SBC has the right organisational culture in place which supports and encourages its staff to optimise the use of digital to meet the needs of their customers.
- 4.6.10 To this end, detailed recommendations for improving customer access using digital first principles will need to be developed throughout the autumn. As implied, these will be informed by what flows out of the end-to-end service reviews. Indicative elements for further consideration are outlined below, although it is important to point out these are not being offered as firm suggestions until the detailed work is complete.
- 4.6.11 As an organisation SBC has chosen to adopt a set of principles to work to, which will make sure it provides the best possible customer experience. These proposed principles are set out below. SBC will always aim to:

1. Put the customer at the heart of everything it does. This means we will keep our promises, make sure residents only need to tell us once (where possible), and ensure every contact made provides an opportunity to add value to the resident
2. Make its digital channels so good that customers prefer to use them
3. Continuously seek feedback and evidence to improve how SBC do things
4. Create a culture that listens to what customers want, and takes the time to understand what they need
5. Continue to recognise that some customers need support to contact the Council digitally, and maintain alternative ways of contacting it for its most vulnerable customers
6. Support its staff to provide the best possible experience to its residents, and invest in staff training and understanding of digital and good customer service
7. Invest in the right technology to meet the Council's ambitions.

4.6.12 These principles will be tested and shaped through engagement with residents, businesses, council staff and partners to make sure they reflect the needs of Slough's residents and customers.

4.6.13 We know that not all our customers are able to contact the Council digitally. For those that want to use its digital offer but need help to do so, the Council will support them to build their digital confidence, by offering support to increase their skills, providing access to computers and continuing to ensure the borough has the best connectivity to make sure everyone can access the internet. SBC will keep its telephone and non-digital services for those who still need them – caring for and supporting the most vulnerable in the Slough communities is, and will always remain, the Council's most important priority.

4.6.14 **Front facing reception at OH** – A main customer reception will be set up at Observatory House to be responsive to customer needs. SBC will treat customers politely, with dignity and respect. It will provide a safe and secure environment for customers and will encourage and support them to access services online where possible. The Council will move to a more agile model by introducing floor walkers to assist rather than customer service advisors sitting behind desks. It will be prepared to provide additional support to customers who really need it. SBC will signpost customers effectively to organisations where appropriate and ensure a seamless handover.

## 4.7 Benefits

4.7.1 Phase I TOM, as proposed, leading into Phase II, has been designed to provide significant benefits for both customers and the Council. These are set out below:

### ***For Customers, this will mean***

- Prioritising the needs of customers in the delivery for services to all residents
- Improving resident and customer experiences by capturing and analysing resident intelligence to provide a better understanding and assessment of customer needs;
- Designing and delivering services in ways that best address those resident needs; enabling customers to be self-reliant by providing access to Council services through a wider, more efficient, effective and convenient choice of channels making best use of latest digital technology and delivering improvements in the speed and quality of resident service;

- Maintaining a determined focus on jobs for local people through a continued, strong attention on economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities, thereby supporting customers and communities to be more self-sufficient;
- Providing services as early as possible by placing a strong focus on prevention and early intervention; and
- Spending a greater proportion of the Council’s budget on services that benefit all residents through maximising the budget that is available for front line services.

***For the Council, this will mean:***

- Improving outcomes for residents by optimising as much of the public sector spend in the borough as possible by working more collaboratively and in partnership with SBC’s communities and other partners;
- Reducing and managing demand, in the medium to long term, by reducing the level of dependency on “personal” services;
- Reducing costs and becoming sustainable in the long term, which will involve:
  - improving the efficiency and effectiveness and reducing the cost of enabling services;
  - securing the most cost-effective means of delivering frontline services to the right standards;
  - becoming less dependent on government grants by generating additional income (e.g. from trading) to support the delivery of front line services;
  - identifying innovative ways to reduce overheads and/or increase the value of Council assets;
- Making evidence-based decisions through the regular use of business intelligence including resident insight and needs assessment;
- Collaborating with other bodies to leverage synergies in customer intelligence, insight and needs assessment, in frontline service design and delivery, and in the delivery of enabling services; and
- Establishing a new organisational model and culture that is customer focused and collaborative.

**4.8 Conditions for Success**

- 4.8.1 As part of the TOM Phase I development, the design team identified a set of conditions that it felt needed to be made integral to the TOM process. These were approved by the Council’s Corporate Leadership Team and comprise two components: (i) internally focused – how we work, and (ii) externally focused – community and place. Details of both set of conditions for success are given in the tables below:
- 4.8.2 Internally focused – how we work: these conditions for success focus on what needs to happen within Slough Borough Council to enable change and embed good practice.

<p><b>Stable financial foundations</b></p>	<p><b>Financial resilience and stability</b> is key to being able to develop an operating model that can be developed in phases in the next few years</p>
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<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>Standardised and consistent processes to support the Council in operating effectively on a day-to-day basis</b> , taking advantage of economies of scale. Freeing operational staff up to do what they were employed to do.
<b>Strategic and Democratic Core</b>	<b>Brings together the key capabilities of the Council to define its strategy, priority aims and vision</b> , and manage/support the delivery and monitoring of those aims through a golden thread of KPIs. It will help the whole Council to think ahead and adopt a horizon-scanning mentality to identify risk, anticipate demand, and to flex to meet those changes.
<b>Strategic Commissioning, procurement, contract &amp; performance management</b>	<b>A consistent framework of business processes through which the Council makes decisions about what it will deliver to achieve its strategic objectives</b> , and how it will deliver and manage those products/services. This includes commissioning, de-commissioning, procurement and contract management – ensuring these are aligned from end-to-end and regularly reviewed to assess best value
<b>Strategic Communications</b>	<b>Early and ongoing engagement with our residents and partners</b> so that they know what is being proposed. Anecdotal evidence suggests our partners and staff are only too aware of the challenges being faced by the Council and are waiting for SBC to proactively engage with them. A large-scale exercise to map our primary stakeholders is currently being undertaken at pace involving staff right across the Council.
<b>Organisational Intelligence</b>	<b>Provides information, intelligence and insight</b> to/from a range of residents including businesses, partners and staff within the organisation, to create a single version of the truth, based on data that is of robust quality. It will prove to be an enabler for transparent decision making across the Council based on evidence.
<b>Positive Culture and Behaviours</b>	Developing a <b>flexible workforce</b> who are proud to be part of the Slough family, are <b>proactive in their pursuit of positive outcomes</b> for the residents of Slough, and who consistently demonstrate behaviours that contribute to a “One Council” view, and work with partners to deliver a “One Slough” approach.

4.8.3 Externally focused – communities and place: these conditions for success focus on how people and communities are empowered to access services for the benefit of all residents and the improvement of the borough. A proactive approach with a people centric focus that also protects the vulnerable.

<b>Strong and resilient communities</b>	<b>Residents, communities, partners work together to build resilience in communities</b> , empowering residents to support themselves and each other, and creating opportunities in communities and helping to build trust and reach into diverse communities. It also helps build good community relations and cohesion.
<b>Resident access &amp; management</b>	<b>Access point for customers (residents, businesses, partners) that gives a consistent customer experience, service and outcomes across all channels.</b> It uses information intelligently to give a holistic view of the resident, and to decide whether and how services are provided using rules based-assessments that are robust and transparent.
<b>Effective service delivery</b>	More limited range of services directly delivered by Council staff and instead proactive engagement with communities to indirectly support residents through commissioned partners/providers to residents and businesses.
<b>Partnership Working</b>	SBC can no longer afford to work the way it does, nor deliver everything it currently does alone, and neither is that likely to be the best model for public service. SBC needs to shift <b>towards more enabling and convening and proactive engagement with our partners across sectors to develop longer-term relationships towards shared goals.</b> It will be about working with our communities and potential partners. It could mean co-design, co-production, co-location and co-delivery.
<b>Equality Diversity, Inclusion</b>	<b>By proactively taking action to inequality, eliminate discrimination and bias and build community relations</b> , we will be better able to meet and anticipate needs support prevention and early intervention, get things right the first time and ensure effective reach. All aspects of the operating model will also need to be grounded in detailed analysis on the impact of proposals on Slough's residents.
<b>Economic Growth and Devolution</b>	An <b>economically prosperous place</b> that benefits residents will help <b>build our business base and revenue, enable residents to be more financially resilient and bring investment that can help the town be more vibrant and sustainable.</b>

## 4.9 Design Principles

4.9.1 The programme team developed a set of proposed Design Principles to guide design of the operating model and its components (e.g. process design, technology, organisation design). These were presented to CLT who helped refine and develop the design principles further. These design principles helped with consistency and assisted decision making. The draft design principles developed with CLT will be further tested and validated during detailed service level workshops as part of TOM Phase II in-line with the SBC philosophy of continuous improvement.

4.9.2 A more detailed explanation of the design principles can be found in Appendix 3. These will be used throughout the TOM Implementation Programme to inform and guide key decisions.

#### 4.10 **Work undertaken so far**

4.10.1 Since February the Council has been working on the establishment of a clear programme of work to develop a future operating model. Following an initial proposed direction of travel in April, sign-off to formally proceed was given by the Council's Corporate Leadership Team on 17th May.

4.10.2 A delivery group was established, meeting weekly, to drive progress with work starting immediately on validating data that would, for the first time, provide a single view of precisely what the council looked like across a number of areas at a functional level. This included financial parameters, staff composition, digital/ICT infrastructure, key contracts, locations of operation and key overarching processes. The group also commissioned a full validation of supplier spend against the Council's contracts register, the results of which are feeding into further commissioning and procurement work.

4.10.3 Over the period of May to July 2024, SBC adopted an evidence-based approach to baselining the current organisation and identifying areas of opportunity for improvement and efficiency to inform the new operating model. Using this proven methodology and a significant amount of data collection, the following activities were undertaken to inform this business case:

- Creation of a clear case for change including well-articulated design principles linked to the clear vision expressed within the Corporate Plan
- Design of a new direction of travel for an operating model based on five workstreams (comprising a combination of cross-cutting themes or where the council is spending significantly more than it should be)
- Analysis of the council's spending and earnings profile, including outlying areas of spend where there is significant unplanned or under-managed demand.
- Robust review of the composition of the council's workforce
- Assessment of the council's current and desired culture
- Review of the technology and systems that enable the council
- Deep dive into the council's contractual arrangements

4.10.4 Workshops with cross-directorate representation took place during June and July to establish the "As Is" position. During the same timeframe, six enabling themes were created to help establish an architecture and infrastructure to underpin a new model which were eventually folded into the 5 workstreams identified as being central to the delivery of Slough's Operating Model for Phase II TOM development.

4.10.5 Combining the analysis (para. 4.3.4) and outputs from the workshops (para. 4.3.5) helped highlight some areas where improvements and efficiencies could be generated and where further work needed to be developed, for example:

- poor online functionality is limiting channel shift and resident self-serve

- old technology infrastructure is in need of modernisation because there are multiple systems that don't talk to each other and some good systems that need implementing more fully
- processes are overcomplicated, paper based and involve multiple handoffs and duplication, and
- and customer services activity and ethos lack investment and profile.

#### **4.11 Stakeholder Engagement**

- 4.11.1 A number of stakeholders have been identified. From an internal perspective, these include staff (individuals as well as through staff forums), trade unions, and Members. From an external perspective, these include community groups, local voluntary and community service groups, faith groups, and statutory partners.
- 4.11.2 Staff and Unions have been engaged and this engagement will continue. Staff kept abreast of the TOM development through a variety of means, including staff briefings, CEO briefings, members of the TOM team presenting to directorate DLT's and a variety of other means.
- 4.11.3 A more concentrated engagement process to socialise the direction of travel before it goes to Cabinet in November is currently in the process of being designed and will have taken place before the 18<sup>th</sup> November Cabinet discussion. This will signal the start of a more intensive dialogue with our community and voluntary partners (including statutory groups, faith groups, local charities, Slough CVS and its partners, etc.), as well as with staff, unions and Members.
- 4.11.4 A longer-term engagement process, comprising both informal engagement and more formal consultation, is in the process of being developed. These will be time to take place with developments flowing from the end-to-end service reviews as more detail is established but before firm decisions are made. Details on this engagement process will be announced and kept updated as the implementation of the TOM principles are progressed.

#### **4.12 Resource Implications**

- 4.12.1 The Council is now establishing a more comprehensive programme office and transformation function that drives continuous improvement, keeping both corporate and improvement plans under review, under one permanent Head of Service for Change and Programmes.
- 4.12.2 The functions will support all the associated programmes of change, transformation and re-organisation that will ultimately enable Slough Borough Council to achieve sustained financial stability and improved public services and to adopt a new operating model:

- Scale up the improvement and transformation capacity to support the improvement and recovery plan – through programme management office capacity.
- Scale up the improvement and transformation capacity within corporate support services- finance, procurement, data and performance, digital, ICT, HR/OD and governance.
- Scale up the improvement and transformation capacity within frontline services.
- Develop the capacity and capability to implement the operating model – including internal and external capacity and capability, via contractors and or strategic partners.
- Scope out the development work needed to create the right conditions for success focusing on partnership development and community engagement.

## 5. Implications of the Recommendation

### 5.1 Financial implications **[Mandatory]**

*[All Financial Implications supporting narratives and appendices must be written by finance staff in conjunction with service colleagues and should be ultimately agreed with the S151 prior to their inclusion in any report (this also applies to reports to bodies in addition to Cabinet) and be written in accordance with the Council's agreed financial implications standard.]*

- 5.1.1 The Target Operating Model programme is a hugely significant piece of work for the Council that will have considerable financial implications. These will become more apparent as the programme develops to identify proposals that reflect the proposed shape and feel of the Council and the structure of services that it provides for the residents of Slough.
- 5.1.2 The development of the programme will need to be in alignment with the Council's financial procedures and will inform future iterations of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 5.1.3 £6.7m has been identified in total, to support all transformation through to 25/26, of which £1.563m is forecast to have been spent by March 2025.
- 5.1.4 To support the next stages of the TOM programme a further £0.393m has been allocated to the Operating Model Programme Office and Delivery team - to lead on implementation of the operating model- with Programme Management, Delivery, business analytics and service redesign. This is intended to support the team as they develop a more detailed route map for consideration by Cabinet in March 2025.
- 5.1.5 Should it be necessary to incur any additional cost as this work progresses these will be subject to Council financial control procedures.

### 5.2 Legal implications

- 5.2.1 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.

5.2.2 Annex A of the directions set out the action the Council is required to take. Annex B 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.

5.2.3 In the MHCLG letter of 22 October 2022 to the Council, MHCLG confirmed that the Secretary of State was minded to issue new Directions. These include a list of actions for the Council to take including preparing, agreeing and implementing an improvement and recovery plan with prescribed matters to be included in this. It is anticipated that MHCLG will make a decision on any future Directions in November, following a short representation period.

### 5.3 *Risk management implications*

5.3.1 The table below sets out the key risks identified by the TOM Weekly Delivery Group.

Risk	Summary	Mitigations
Financial Challenges	Inability to contain overall committed expenditure within the current available resources within 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial delivery of the savings plan and in-year MTFs targets</li> <li>• Base budget pressures held within budgeted growth allowance</li> <li>• Maximisation of capital receipts to fund transformation</li> <li>• Minimal cash-flow impact (e.g. only pre-planned borrowing)</li> </ul>
Optimisation of SBC	Failure to optimise organisation efficiency will lead to further pressure on already stretched resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term impact on performance will be assessed to ensure undue pressures are not placed on the workforce</li> <li>• Identification of a comprehensive new model for the future, to which the Council will move over the coming months.</li> </ul>

Service Plans	Misaligned or contradictory plans for service delivery	The operating model will provide a clear way to navigate delivery of a wide range of services in a co-ordinated way. Where necessary, specific Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessments (ESHIA), or an overarching ESHIA, will be completed
Reduced Capacity	Capacity will be reduced leading to less ability to deliver services	Forward planning and staff communication will be critical in navigating the change to a new way of working
Trade Unions	TU Challenge	Regular communications with recognised Trade Unions. Early sight, where possible and appropriate of workforce communication and formal reports. Ensure collective consultation procedures and adherence to employment legislation are followed.
Time		Plan to deliver financial survival and build sustainability into future years. Ongoing discussions led by finance with MHCLG.
Data & Insight	Data not always consistent and therefore challenges around developing single version of the truth	

#### 5.4 *Environmental implications*

5.4.1 None identified.

#### 5.5 *Equality implications*

5.5.1 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.

All aspects of the future operating model will be grounded in detailed analysis of the impact of the proposals on Slough residents. Current and future service-users will comprise all protected equality characteristics, with services in the council operating model ranging from universal provision to highly targeted in their user profile. We recognise that these impacts will vary, both positively and potentially negatively, on some equality groups more than others depending on the specific service proposal. Where a potential negative impact is identified, we will seek to mitigate this wherever possible.

However, the reshaping of the operating model presents an important opportunity for us to be proactive in reducing inequalities, eliminating discrimination and building better community relations. There are significant opportunities in the proposed workstream **Customer Access and Digital First** to improve access to services, particularly for those equality groups where it is known there is currently lower access or participation rates both generally and in specific service areas. The direction of travel also places a major emphasis on prevention and early intervention, which can help to tackle some of the root causes of inequalities that persist for some groups. The need to operate within clear financial parameters and deliver best value is compatible with improving the resident experience, and indeed offers significant opportunity. There is a commitment to deliver universal services (such as waste) at an acceptable and consistent service level, benefitting all residents and to continue to provide specialist support to the most vulnerable residents with targeted services.

However, with currently 2/3 of council budgets supporting the most vulnerable adults and children, including those with disabilities, detailed equality impact assessments will be undertaken to understand not only the specific impact of a service proposal but also the cumulative impacts of the overall operating model. This will involve understanding current and future users and ensuring that we understand where activities might have the potential to create inequalities or make existing inequalities worse.

As the PSED is non-delegable, we will ensure that equalities impacts will be fully considered for any service contracted out by a third party.

The PSED also applies to our employees and through the **Workforce and Workforce Development** workstream there is commitment to embed diversity and inclusion and improve equality for our employees. This again represents a significant opportunity to improve equality for our workforce. All organisational change process will be subject to an equality impact assessment.

## 5.6 *Workforce implications*

- 5.6.1 A reshaping of the operational portfolio will have some impact on SBC staff. In addition to changes to working location or role requirements, the change in operational context will naturally unsettle some of our staff. The key to minimising this will be to ensure staff are engaged in a clear and timely manner, leaders are supported in ensuring their teams are change ready and the HR has the right



capability to support any changes that lead to a smaller staff number. The full impact of this cannot yet be fully assessed.

## 5.7 *Property implications*

5.7.1 The Estate Strategy and Asset Disposal Programme are key to establishing the future size, nature and management arrangements for the future retained property portfolio.

## **APPENDIX I – The Case for Change**

### ***Demand Pressures***

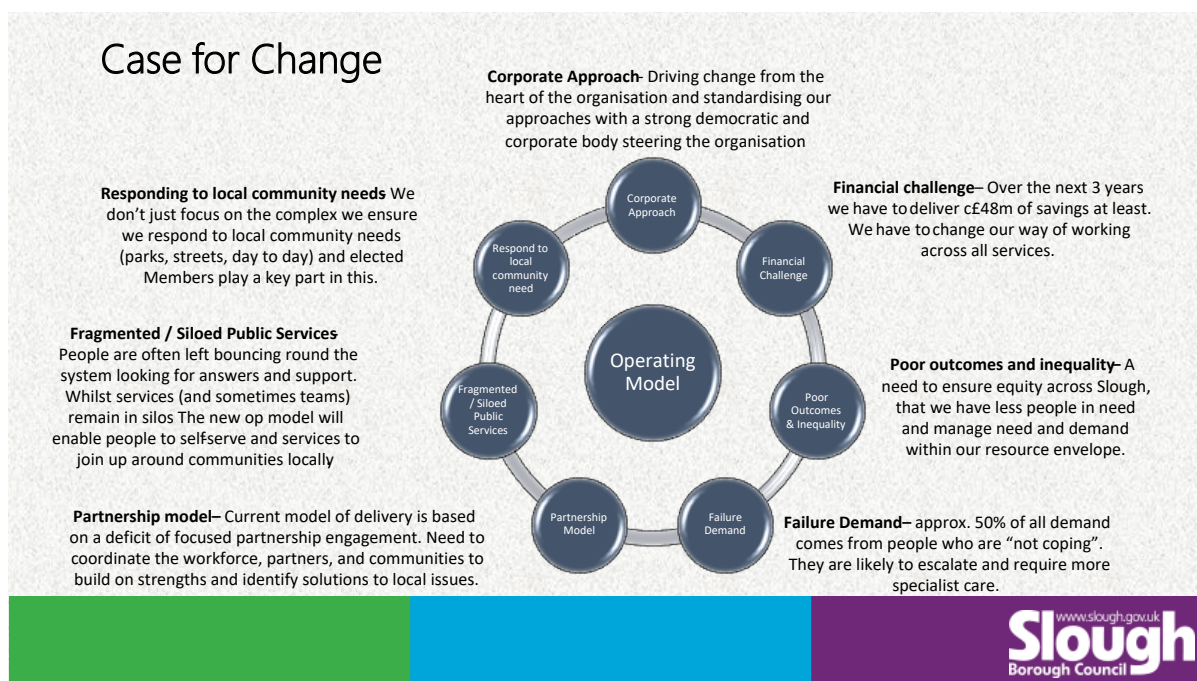
- 1 Like many Councils, Slough is facing significant demand pressures as a result of changes in resident needs and expectations driven through changing demography, lifestyles and growth of new technologies and media. In addition to this rising demand the Council is challenged with year-on-year reductions in government grants, specifically in some high-cost services, which is placing the Council in an unsustainable position where projected budgets and services will not be sufficient to meet demand in the medium or longer term.
- 2 Implementing the TOM's cross-cutting Conditions for Success will be critical in supporting the Council to manage, and where possible help reduce the demand for such services and, correspondingly, the costs to the Council. The TOM's cross cutting themes are a key driver of the commissioning approach and are seeking to help the Council to better manage and influence demand through prevention and early intervention, building community self-reliance and utilising partnerships to achieve greater outcomes from diminishing resources. Such partnerships are likely to include greater integration of social care and health, with stronger links between adult social care and health in particular, in line with the current government's emerging thinking.

### ***Inefficiency in Council operations***

- 3 Within Phase II of the TOM, we recommend a detailed Activity Analysis be undertaken as a first stage of assessing where the Council currently is by gathering information around key processes across the Council. The Activity Analysis will help highlight the areas that warrant further exploration to understand potential change. This data will be able to be compared with other local authority organisations to draw comparisons and highlight areas for improvement.
- 4 This will also allow Slough to assess its maturity to change against other councils, and assess to what extent it is able to operate streamlined and efficient process activity.
- 5 As it stands, Slough could be considered to still be an organisation that currently takes a silo based approach to transformation and that to achieve the transformation savings that are required the Council will require more radical solutions than a focus on discrete internal change projects.
- 6 One of the first actions commenced following approval by CLT to proceed with TOM development on 17<sup>th</sup> May was to work with colleagues right across the Council to create a One Council map that focuses on key areas: key functions, financial parameters, staffing and establishment, ICT and digital infrastructure, and contracts and commercial agreements.
- 7 Analysis of the high-level data captured as part of this exercise shows the level of effort currently being applied across frontline operations and back office. It

concludes that approximately 59% of the workforce work within operational services which support the delivery of frontline operations, although, services are still holding vacancies, therefore this figure is likely to be greater. The actual percentage of activity associated with enabling services and front / middle office activity is dependent on both the efficiency of supporting processes and also the degree to which the Council delivers services internally (as opposed to sourcing services through partnerships or external providers).

- 8 Discussions flowing from the Directorate-level workshops highlight varying levels of duplication and fragmentation across core processes, such as resident enquiry handling, assessment, administration functions enabling service delivery, etc. More detailed assessment of this should be undertaken in Phase II of the TOM.
- 9 The workshops also highlight that levels of consolidated corporate services functions are still taking place in varying forms within Directorates (e.g. communications, information technology, legal, human resources, etc). This suggests Slough Council has potential to become more effective and efficient in how it delivers certain processes. By stopping a level of activity, eliminating duplication across Directorates and improving co-ordination, the Council would be better placed to protect front-line services and increase the productivity of service delivery teams. Additionally, there are opportunities to create a more consistent resident experience.
- 10 Slough Borough Council needs to move urgently towards becoming efficient and to free up resources so that they can be invested in and redirected to where they will add most value. The council needs to build in agility and a sustainable cost-base so as to be able to demonstrate it is able to stand on its own two feet and withstand future shocks (both financial and non-financial).



- 12 By necessity, Slough Council will need to adopt a different relationship with our community, meaning services will need to be both designed and in some cases delivered by and with our communities. Our services should be seamless for our residents, underpinned by an organisation that is dynamic, driven by data/insight,

and effective use of technology. Staff will have the capacity and capability to help the organisation anticipate and respond to future demands and changes.

- 13 Our staff should, once again, feel proud to live and work in Slough and for Slough Borough Council respectively. Our residents and businesses – as well as our plethora of community-facing partners – will be instrumental in helping Slough Council to succeed and participate in developing solutions to local, regional and national challenges. No one will get left behind.
- 14 The change will need to take a “One Council – One Slough” approach, encompassing communities and partners as well as the council. Everything is in scope unless specifically descoped. The changes will recognise and build on the great practice that is already becoming increasingly evident to deliver and drive excellence.

## APPENDIX 2: Proposed new Operating Model – what it means in detail

### 3 Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the progress made with respect to developing Phase I of the Target Operating Model (TOM) direction of travel. It sets out how, as part of Phase I, the Council will operate in new and different ways in the future and be more agile, effective and efficient in the way it delivers services. It outlines a way forward for Phase II of the TOM programme.

We have made a conscious decision to make these changes for the better of our council and our residents. The Operating Model, also known as TOM is about having a way of working that makes us, as a Council, know what good looks like and consistently be doing well in key areas such as:

- Showing we can run the Council well and make good decisions;
- Putting residents first and valuing our staff
- Being financially responsible and forward thinking whilst working in an incredibly challenging financial context with increasing future demand from residents
- Responding to societal changes, with different expectations and needs.

There are three guiding principles for this project:

- Demonstrating we can stand on our own two feet and are able to prove we can make our own strategic decisions
- Placing residents first and making our staff feel appreciated
- Being financially viable and sustainable, meaning that we can future forecast and scenario plan to help us head-off or adequately respond to future shocks or significant increases in demand.

To move forward, we need to be more effective, and we need to co-design and co-produce solutions with partners. This requires a one council approach for how we work internally and externally. A new approach will help us to provide better support for residents, with a larger emphasis on independence and empowerment, while protecting the most vulnerable. Our council must become smaller and more flexible. It is important to be better at the basics and doing them well and to a consistent standard.

The development of Slough's proposed operating model offers a genuine opportunity to build on the priorities of the Corporate Plan to innovate, take a joined-up approach, generate revenue and improve our processes.

#### ***What does this look like for our council?***

- **Clear accountability for delivering our statutory duties** – ensuring clear accountability for our statutory duties and for keeping people safe, that is understood by staff, members and our residents.
- **Consistency** - ensuring a golden thread from the Council's strategic objectives, from Corporate Plan through to individual service plans and the

delivery of services where everyone understands how what they're doing contributes to the overarching strategy of improving healthy life expectancy.

- **Delivery in partnership** – building strong partnerships and use co-production approaches to enable a system-wide approach to service delivery, which puts residents at the centre.
- **Democratic and empowering** – Member involvement to drive change and deliver political priorities aligned to transformation journey that benefits residents.
- **Commercial and value for money approach** – taking a value-for-money approach and adopting a commercial mindset approach when designing services to maximise both efficiency and opportunities to demonstrate affordability, increase income and add value.

### ***What does this look like for our workforce?***

- **An agile workforce** - aligning teams and roles to the core pathways so that they make sense to people and enable high-quality and consistent service delivery by the right staff, in the right place at the right time.
- **Resilience and agility** – building a resilient and agile workforce that can adapt to changing circumstances, working wherever it best suits the resident and the Council.
- **Common purpose and shared identity** – embedding a common purpose and shared identity across the Council focused on realising the vision and case for change

### ***What does this look like for our residents?***

- **Use data and insight to improve** – using customer data and feedback to drive insight, service design and improvement.
- **Consistent journeys and pathways** – redesigning processes with the people at the centre, standardising key elements, simplifying and automating stages where it adds value, creating consistent processes across the council.
- **Digital First** – designing digital services that make it easy for people to do more for themselves online, providing support and alternative access options for those that need it
- **Resolve first time** – addressing issues at first point of contact through well-informed customer-facing staff and a “Tell Us Once” approach where we collect information only once.
- **Ensure people are well informed** – telling people what they are entitled to, what to expect, how we use their data and keep them informed about progress using up front information, advice and checks and sending automatic updates based on their preferences.
- **Proactively manage demand** – shaping service demand by designing effective and coherent early help and prevention into the system.
- **No one is left behind** – designing services that improve equality and fairness, so that no one is left behind by focusing on people's strengths and experience as well as their needs.

- **Prevention and Empowerment** – supporting our residents to do as much as possible for themselves and then develop targeted support that protects the most vulnerable.

## APPENDIX 3: TOM Design Principles

The programme team developed a set of proposed Design Principles to guide design of the operating model and its components (e.g. process design, technology, organisation design). These were presented to CLT who helped refine and develop the design principles further. These design principles helped with consistency and assisted decision making. The draft design principles developed with CLT will be further tested and validated during detailed service level workshops as part of TOM Phase II. The final set of agreed design principles is shown in the table below.

Foundations	<b>accountability for statutory duties</b> – ensure there is clear accountability for our statutory duties and for keeping people safe, that is understood by staff, members and our residents.
	<b>Establish golden thread</b> - ensure there is a golden thread from the Council’s strategic objectives, from Corporate Plan through to individual service plans and the delivery of services where everyone understands how what they’re doing contributes to the overarching strategy of improving healthy life expectancy
	<b>Delivery in partnership</b> – build strong partnerships and use co-production approaches to enable a system-wide approach to service delivery, which puts residents at the centre
	<b>Take a commercial approach</b> – take a value-for-money approach and adopt a commercial mindset approach when designing services to maximise both efficiency and opportunities to demonstrate affordability, increase income and add value
Team and Workforce Design	<b>An agile workforce:</b> right staff in the right place at the right time – align teams and roles to the core pathways so that they make sense to people and enable high-quality and consistent service delivery..
	<b>Resilience and agility</b> – build a resilient and flexible workforce that can adapt to changing circumstances, working wherever it best suits the customer and organisation.
	<b>Common purpose and shared identity</b> – embed a common purpose and shared identity across the council focused on realising the vision and case for change.
	<b>Use data and insight to improve</b> – use resident data and feedback to drive insight, service design and improvement/



<b>Resident-centred Design</b>	<b>Consistent journeys and pathways</b> – redesign processes with the people at the centre, standardising key elements, simplifying and automating stages where it adds value, creating consistent processes across the council.
	<b>Digital First</b> – design digital services that make it easy for people to do it online, providing support and alternative access options for those that need it.
	<b>Resolve first time</b> – address issues at first point of contact through well-informed customer-facing staff and a “Tell Us Once” approach where we collect information only once.
<b>Fostering Independence</b>	<b>Ensure people are well informed</b> – tell people what they are entitled to, what to expect, how we use their data and keep them informed about progress using up front information, advice and checks and sending automatic updates based on their preferences.
	<b>Proactively manage demand</b> – shape service demand by designing effective and coherent early help and prevention into the system.
	<b>No one is left behind</b> – design services that improve equality and fairness, so that no one is left behind by focusing on people’s strengths and experience as well as their needs.
	<b>Prevention and Empowerment</b> – support our residents to do as much as possible for themselves and then develop targeted support that protects the most vulnerable.