

Cllr Dexter Smith

Leader, Slough Borough Council
25 Windsor Road
Slough
SL1 2EL

1 November 2024

Jim McMahon OBE MP

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Dear Minister,

I am writing in response to your letter on 22 October outlining the next steps for the improvement underway here at Slough Borough Council.

Your proposal of continued intervention for the next two years, along with new directions, has been well received. As council leader, I fully support the best value commissioners' recommendation to continue working with us. We are unified as a council in our approach to this and our commitment to a better future.

The introduction of the Managing Director Commissioner role and the proposed appointment of our current interim Chief Executive to this position is a welcome move that will provide stronger links between commissioners and senior corporate management. This enables us, the council's political administration and all elected Members, to drive the change we want to see.

This positive stance is not to play down the serious nature of the challenges we face.

There is significant improvement needed across the council and we are building on the foundations already in place to deliver the necessary fundamental change. We also recognise that the council's financial position is still uncertain, and analysis of historic finances shows that there are still areas to be addressed. These legacy issues potentially impact not only our current position but also our financial outlook, and we do not take this lightly.

As such, the commissioners' fifth letter is very helpful in setting out the enormity of the situation. The commissioners' letter also referenced the importance of exceptional financial support, which we are in no doubt is needed as part of our wider recovery process.

As we work towards a better future for our council, we are looking at best practices elsewhere to consider how Slough can balance the twin demands of making further savings while managing increasing demand for our services. There is more we can and must do. The extension of intervention is a key part of helping us to succeed.

At this point, I would like to put on record the impressive hard work and dedication shown by staff across the council, many of whom go above and beyond every day to serve the residents of our borough. I would like to express my thanks to those who show such commitment. In addition, the stabilisation of the current Corporate Leadership Team is helping to transform the council at all levels.

We know there is a need to press forward and make the difficult decisions that will reshape our council to become a more efficient and smaller organisation and put a spotlight on the potential of Slough as a place to be proud of. While progress can take time, especially when the scale of the change is vast and multifaceted, we are committed to increasing the pace of recovery for the good of all we serve. We are grateful for the resources and expertise being provided to Slough to make this happen.

Yours sincerely,



CLLR DEXTER SMITH
LEADER, SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL