APPENDIX A   **Slough Borough Council**

Report To:	**Cabinet**
Date:	20th January 2025
Subject:	Improvement and Recovery Action Plan 2024 – 2026
Lead Member:	Cllr Dexter Smith – Leader of the Council
Chief Officer:	Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement
Contact Officer:	Roland John, Recovery PMO Officer
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject to Call In:	YES
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Cabinet - Improvement and Recovery Action Plan

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report presents an updated action plan showing how the Council will take action to become a Best Value Council by November 2026.

1.2 Slough Borough Council was placed under intervention by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 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 1999. The Council's Children Social Care Services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service are also under intervention of the Department for Education and have an appointed DfE Commissioner.

1.3 Since then the Council has been under Directions issued in December 2021 and updated in September 2022. On 22nd October 2024, the Council was advised that the Secretary of State was minded issuing new Directions to extend the intervention until November 2026 and a further set of Directions were proposed. The extension of the intervention and new directions were confirmed on 20th November 2024.

1.4 The Action Plan presented in this report sets out how the Council will take action to become a Best Value Council and respond to these specific directions, focusing on the next 6 months. This is in line with the most recent directions detailed in this report: "there must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months." A full Improvement and Recovery Action Plan setting out two year success measures and milestones will be brought back to Cabinet by April 2025. This Action Plan and the full two year plan will build on the refresh of the recovery programme in response to the Commissioners' fourth letter

published in February 2024. This refresh was published in July 2024. The Financial Improvement Plan is a key part of the improvement and recovery action plan.

1.5 A number of external, internal and peer reviews and audits have been undertaken since the Council has been under intervention. This Action Plan seeks to make sense of all of these improvements identified in one place, whilst not substituting for reporting and accountability which is separate.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

(a) Agree the action plan that is provided in Appendix 1
(b) Note that a full two year action plan will be brought back to Cabinet by April 2025

Reason for recommendation

It is necessary to have an action plan that sets out actions required, incrementally, to become a Best Value Council and to meet the directions.

Having an improvement and recovery plan is also a direction, and the specifics of what is required to be included in this plan have been detailed in the most recent letter from MHCLG to the Chief Executive, dated 20th November 2024
[Slough Borough Council: Letter to the Managing Director Commissioner (20 November 2024) - GOV.UK](#)

Commissioner Review

"Commissioners note the recovery plan work to date and look forward to seeing the full 2 year recovery plan in April of this year."

2. Report

Introductory paragraph

This report presents at Appendix 1 an Improvement and Recovery Action Plan showing the action that will be prioritised in the next 6 months towards the Council becoming a Best Value Council by November 2026.

This Action Plan responds to the Secretary of State Directions issued in December 2021 and updated in September 2022 and the most recent Directions received on 20th November 2024.

Options considered

1. Publish a comprehensive two-year action plan that:
- Responds to what is required to be included in an Improvement and Recovery Action Plan, as set out in the November 2024 Directions
- Responds to the unmet Directions from 2021 and 2022
- Sets out wider actions to become a Best Value Council
- Makes sense of other review and audit recommendations

The action plan presented in this report sets out the immediate 6 month milestones and a full two year plan will follow by April 2025.

<u>**Recommended**</u> **– as this will ensure we can take a co-ordinated approach to actions required to improve and recovery that proactively addresses what is needed to become a Best Value Council rather than reactively responding to different drivers for change.**

2. Publish a two-year action plan that sets out the minimal requirements in the November 2024 Direction
Not recommended - as it is important meaningfully to take ownership of all improvements needed and not be reactive

3. Continue to use the Recovery Plan proposed to July 2024 Cabinet
Not recommended - as it is important meaningfully to take ownership of all improvements needed and not be reactive and because this would not take account of the November Directions.

Background
2.1 In June 2021 the Communities Secretary announced an external assurance review of Slough Borough Council's 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.

2.2 The Council was subsequently placed under intervention by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 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 1999. The Council's children social care services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service are also under intervention of the Department for Education and have an appointed DfE Commissioner.

2.3 Delivering Best Value is a core theme within those aspects of the Council's recovery. In response to the Directions, the council published its recovery and improvement plan – 'Doing Right by Slough' in May 2022.

2.4 The last full update was taken to Cabinet in November 2024. This followed a refresh of the recovery programme in response to the Commissioners' fourth letter published in February 2024. This refresh was published in July 2024, with a quarterly progress report. Progress is reported under three "pillars"- Financial Improvement, Transformation and Children's Improvement.

2.5 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 (currently vacant). The functions will support all the associated programmes of change, transformation and re-organisation that will ultimately enable the Council to achieve sustained financial stability and improved public services and to adopt a new operating model.

2.6 On 22nd October 2024, the Council was advised that the Secretary of State was minded issuing new Directions to extend the intervention until 30th November 2026, with an opportunity for the Council to respond in writing. This was accompanied by the Commissioners' fifth report, dated 30th April 2024 and update letter, dated 9th September

2024. The Leader formally responded to confirm that the extension of the intervention is welcomed.

2.7 The Action Plan presents the complex process that the Council needs to go through to put the foundational work required to be a Best Value Council which involves building its data, systems and capacity to deliver the basics well, improve, recover, and transform. This detailed is set against the extremely difficult financial position that Slough is in that means investing in the basics and the scale of improvement needed is challenging. The Action Plan presented in this report sets out how the Council will take action to become a Best Value Council and respond to these specific directions, focusing on the next 6 months. This is in line with the most recent directions detailed in this report: "there must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months." A full Improvement and Recovery Action Plan setting out two year success measures and milestones will be brought back to Cabinet by April 2025. Both this and the two year plan will build on the detailed Improvement and Recovery Progress Update submitted to Cabinet on 18th November 2024.

2.8 Alongside this, the Council will also need to transform, as all Councils are having to do, to meet resident needs and improve the borough, to meet rising demand and extremely challenging resourcing constraints. This is the focus of the Operating Model. The Direction for Travel was also submitted to Cabinet on 18th November 2024. A route map for the Operating Model will be taken to Cabinet in March 2025. The Improvement and Recovery Action Plan and Operating Model need to be considered together, along with Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan.

2.9 The November Direction sets out that the Council is required to:

- Prepare, agree and implement an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, with resource allocated accordingly.

- This may include or draw upon improvement or action plans prepared before the date of these Directions.

- The plan is to set out measures to be undertaken, together with milestones and delivery targets against which to measure performance, in order to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, finance and commercial functions, thereby securing compliance with the best value duty. There must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months and the Plan should include at a minimum:

- a) A new Target Operating Model (TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities.

- b) A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the new TOM and transformation plan and demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.

- c) A review of the Authority against the CIPFA Financial Management Code to demonstrate its compliance, with recommendations to Commissioners to improve this activity within the first six months and implementation of improvements thereafter.

- d) A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.

- e) A review of the Authority's progress to risk maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives.

- f) Re-examining the review by the Authority of their companies that considered the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First), to make proposals in relation to financial viability and improving company governance.

- g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.

- h) An appropriately resourced digital strategy that supports effective business operations and links to the Authority's future operating model.

- i) Improving resident and public engagement.

2.10 The Action Plan is set out against the Best Value Framework:
- Continuous improvement
- Leadership
- Governance
- Culture
- Use of resources
- Service delivery
- Partnerships and community engagement

2.11 The objectives that are in the action plan are set out below. These high-level actions will now be used to reset or establish workstreams, project implementation documents and project plans, and then to reset the performance management framework and heat maps and governance used.

Evidence based decision making
- Embedding a corporate and service performance framework
- Corporate Delivery Plan and service planning for the 2025/26 financial year
- Develop shared evidence base to support decision making

Culture and Workforce
- Embedding professional development, performance management and appraisals as integral to continuous improvement
- Develop an inclusive high performance leadership culture that invites continuous feedback, learning, and improvement to be embedded within our new ways of working and help build trust with resident
- Development of leadership – officers
- Develop and implement a workforce strategy (People Strategy)

Partnerships, Communication and Engagement
- Resident engagement insights used to inform decision making
- Review complaint handling across Council
- Bring partners together to work on long term outcomes and place shaping.
- Engagement and collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets

Scrutiny and Governance
- Ensure the Council's Annual Governance Statement is an honest review of its governance and control framework and environment
- Developing a scrutiny function that is challenging and robust.
- A culture of cooperation, respect and trust between members and officers, and between departments exists, along with a commitment to transparent decision-making.
- Developing fit for purpose governance-systems and processes

Risk maturity
- A well-resourced, independent internal audit function that is planning and delivering audits that provide risk-based assurance, insights and value in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- Review of the Authority's Corporate Risk Dashboard to make it fit for purpose.

Strategic commissioning
- To standardise commissioning practice through the adoption of 'How to do Commissioning – A Practical Guide' and to make savings

Use of resources
- Modernising Digital, Data and Technology
- Refresh finance improvement action plan
- Implement a robust system of financial controls and reporting
- Compliance with the Prudential Framework,
- Review key finance strategies and policies (Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy)

- Undertake a review of the governance arrangements of all Council-owned companies (excluding SCF) to assure compliance, and secretarial functions are being delivered appropriately.

Overarching
- Put in place by end of Q3 24/25 a refreshed, resourced and well-planned overall improvement and recovery programme.
- Develop a plan that demonstrates how equality objectives are being proactively progressed.
- Improve data quality
- Develop a target operating model fully aligned to medium term financial plan to be implemented in phases during 2025/26

Appendix 1 has four sections:
- The priority actions and milestones for the next six months in the form of a Gantt chart.
- The action plan objectives mapped to the criteria that is set by central government relating to becoming a Best Value Council and also all the Directions received by the Council whilst under intervention.
- All relevant improvement actions identified by reviews and audits are also set out to ensure a coherent set of actions are progressed.
- A set of performance measures of success that identify the improvements the Council will focus on – these will be developed further as the full two year plan is developed. The measures will be integrated into the corporate performance framework for 2025/26. This framework is reported on to Cabinet every quarter.

3.   Implications of the Recommendation

3.1   Financial implications

- The recommendation of the report is to implement the Action Plan that has a series of objectives that maps the progress of the Council's improvement. Whilst there is no specific relationship between the objectives and financial implications, to achieve them will require the alignment of the council's financial resources to its objectives. This will be achieved by ensuring that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is aligned to the Corporate plan.

- £6.7m has already been identified in total, to support transformation. £4.7m has already been approved in budgets and a further £2m is earmarked for 2025/26. This funding is from the budget smoothing reserve.

- In monitoring its progress the Council will need to have regard to the level of financial investment required to support the programme. There is no additional investment being made by central government as a result of being under intervention.

3.2   Legal implications

3.2.1 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 and on 20 November 2024. The directions are 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.

3.2.2 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 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, functions relating to the appointment of persons to senior roles in council companies (except Slough Children First), functions associated with the Council's operating model and redesign of services to achieve value for money and financial sustainability and functions relating to the development, oversight and operation of an enhanced performance management framework for officers holding senior positions.

3.3   Risk management implications

The following is a risk on the corporate risk register: Risk 13 - Improvement and Recovery Planning Failure to deliver on the wide range of improvement and recovery actions specified in the Directions and various Government reports leads to further intervention.

Undertaking a review of progress against Best Value and the Directions is an essential part of assessing if the wide range of improvement and recovery actions are supporting the Council to become a Best Value Council.

3.4   Environmental implications

3.4.1   There are no direct Environmental implications from this report.

3.5   Equality implications

Earlier in 2024, the Council adopted new Equality Objectives, following consultation. These objectives cover both community facing and workforce diversity. They set out the long-term goals that will enable the Council to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and community needs. They consider how the Council needs to proactively promote equality and tackle inequality, tackle discrimination and foster good relations. Becoming a Best Value Council is a key part of being able to deliver the Council's Equality Objectives, as foundational work is needed to be able to sustain work that progresses Equality Objectives.

In September 2024, the Council participated in an LGA Peer Review looking at Equality. The Peer Review highlighted the importance of centring equality considerations in the Improvement and Recovery Plan. This is reflected in the focus on evidence based decision making and community engagement.

4.   **Background Papers**

None

This page is intentionally left blank

Slough Borough Council

Legend:
- ◆ Milestone
- Behind Progress
- Complete
- Ongoing/Planned

#	Workstream	Lead Officer	Best Value Heading	Objective	Task	Start (w/c)	Finish (w/c)
	Risk maturity	Director of Finance (Corporate)	Continuous Improvement & Governance	A well-resourced, independent, internal audit function that is planning and delivering audits that provide risk-based assurance, insights and value in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.	An internal audit team that is adequately resourced	02-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
	Risk maturity				Independence impairments and workarounds approved by the A&G Committee (PSIAS requirement)	03-Feb-25	30-Jun-25
	Risk maturity				Provided assurance to Audit & Governance Committee that it is operating in compliance with the revised Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (yet to be published, mandatory wef April 2025)	01-Apr-25	30-Jun-25
	Risk maturity				Appropriate risk-based audit planning mechanisms in place	01-Jan-25	30-Jun-25
	Risk maturity				An improving track record of delivering internal audit reports to Members that provide the assurance they are expecting	02-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
	Risk maturity	Director of Finance (Corporate)	Leadership	Review of the Authority's Corporate Risk Dashboard to make it fit for purpose.	Review risk management strategy	06-Jan-25	31-Jan-25
	Risk maturity				Create and embed formal risk management escalation process for directorate risks	02-Feb-25	28-Feb-25
	Risk maturity				Horizon scanning workshops	03-Mar-25	31-Mar-25
	Risk maturity				Ongoing review of corporate and directorate risks on a quarterly basis	02-Dec-24	31-Dec-25
	Culture	Director of HR and Workforce Transformation	Culture	Develop an inclusive high performance leadership culture that invites continuous feedback, learning, and improvement to be embedded within our new ways of working and help build trust with resident	CLT agree and sign off revised version of the PID	01-Nov-24	31-Jan-25
	Culture				Agree and recruit additional resources to support the Culture Change project	02-Dec-24	28-Feb-25
	Culture				Undertake assessment of the organisation to gauge maturity level, using existing staff data and self-assessment with Recovery Leadership Group	01-Jan-25	31-Mar-25
	Culture				Analyse findings to identify gaps and opportunities, review PID and measures of success	03-Mar-25	30-Apr-25
	Culture				Draft a roadmap based on the findings from the maturity index work	03-Mar-25	30-Apr-25
	Culture				Forward plan programme of events at Quarterly Leadership sessions (To include external speakers)	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
	Workforce	Director of HR and Workforce Transformation	Continuous Improvement	Embedding professional development, performance management and appraisals as integral to continuous	A refreshed approach to appraisals, supported by full suite of guidance	14-Nov-24	31-Mar-25
	Workforce				Achieved 80% of appraisals complete	02-Mar-25	30-Sep-25
	Workforce	Director of HR and Workforce Transformation	Use of Resources	Develop and implement a workforce strategy (People Strategy)	Developed the final draft workforce strategy	02-Dec-24	28-Feb-25
	Workforce				People strategy signed off by CLT and Transformation Board	03-Mar-25	31-Mar-25
	Workforce				Commenced implementation of people strategy	01-Apr-25	30-Jun-25
	Workforce				Stock take on successes of various HR initiatives that have been delivered from Jan-June 2025	01-May-25	30-Jun-25
	Customer Service	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Continuous Improvement	Review complaint handling across Council	Scope out and started a review how complaints is handled across all council services including Slough Children's First	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
	Customer Service				Map as is complaints user journey and review complaints policy & complaints handling system	03-Feb-25	31-Mar-25
	Customer Service				Map to be complaints user journey	01-Mar-25	30-Apr-25
	Customer Service				Review how member casework is handled across all council services including Slough Children's First	01-Apr-25	31-May-25
	Scrutiny & Governance	Director of Law and Governance Service & Monitoring Officer	Governance	Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on High-quality councillor leadership, and governance behaviours (across all councillor groups and roles).	Launch Portfolio Management Approach in Cabinet Office	01-Jan-25	13-Jan-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Continued delivery of enhanced member induction and development plan	01-Nov-24	13-Jan-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Get new agreement to the member 'role profiles', launch and raise awareness	03-Feb-25	14-Apr-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Upgrade the Mayoral programme, with clear links to corporate objectives and culture change objectives	06-May-24	20-Jun-25
	Scrutiny & Governance	Director of Law and Governance	Culture	Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on High quality officer-member relationships and behaviours	Enhance role of LM&Ds in early engagement on issues, with cabinet members briefed to lead on issues; define roles and expectations at	04-Nov-24	13-Jan-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Increase visibility of standards processes and outcomes in the council, including performance against timescales	18-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Schedule a review of member and officer codes.	06-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Embed governance training in forthcoming new induction / leadership development programmes	18-May-25	04-Jul-25
	Scrutiny & Governance	Director of Law and Governance	Culture	Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on High quality Officer governance behaviours	Restructure of Democratic Services management arrangements to secure permanent leadership & management of the team	21-Oct-24	31-Mar-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Launch new phase of officer governance training efforts	10-Mar-25	30-May-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Re-run scrutiny training for present cohort of senior leaders, with member involvement	03-Feb-25	30-Apr-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Review the suitability of the current cabinet and committee sign-off	03-Feb-25	10-Mar-25
	Scrutiny & Governance	Director of Law and Governance	Governance	Developing fit for purpose governance-systems and processes	Arrangements to be set up locally or jointly for scrutiny of health.	02-Sep-24	02-May-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Upgrade the process for production of the AGS:	09-Sep-24	07-Mar-25
	Scrutiny & Governance				Conduct full Service Assurance Statement process to inform production of 2024/25 AGS		
	Scrutiny & Governance				Review quality management approach to public reports	06-Jan-25	30-May-25
	Digital, data and technology	Director of Digital, Data and Technology	Use of Resources	Digitally enabling the delivery of the Target Operating Model	Digitally Enabled Transformation (DET) Phase 0 team in place	02-Dec-24	31-Jan-25

Category	Responsible	Area	Task	Start	End
Digital, data and technology			DET Phase 1 plan and business case	06-Jan-25	31-Mar-25
Digital, data and technology			Commence Phase1	01-Apr-25	30-Apr-25
Digital, data and technology	Director of Digital, Data and Technology	Use of Resources	Modernising Digital, Data and Technology — Procurement of disaster recovery and back up as a service	31-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
Digital, data and technology			Confirmation of delivery plan	02-Dec-24	28-Feb-25
Digital, data			Back up as a service provisional go live	01-May-25	30-May-25
Digital, data			Migration of aggresso to cloud	03-Mar-25	30-Jun-25
Digital, data			Migration of liquid logic to cloud	01-Apr-25	30-Sep-25
Digital, data			Public sector network security certification - Progress update report	02-Jun-25	30-Jun-25
Digital, data			Migration plan for OneDrive & SharePoint	03-Mar-25	30-Jun-25
Evidence based decision making	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Continuous Improvement	Embedding a corporate and service performance framework — Implemented new mechanisms for collection and assurance of performance information and for service level commentary about performance	01-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
Evidence based	Engagement		Developed Lead Members role in corporate performance management framework	01-Apr-25	30-Jun-25
Evidence based decision			Refreshed the corporate performance framework for 2025/26	01-Apr-25	30-Jun-25
Evidence based decision	Director of Strategy Change and	Leadership	Corporate Delivery Plan and service planning for the 2025/26 financial year — Developed storyboards connecting each directorate to corporate plan, linking corporate performance KPIs	03-Feb-25	30-Apr-25
Evidence based	Resident Engagement		Developed an oversight of all strategies and of progress against outcomes. This will also highlight gaps and actions needed and where delivery plans are required. Published a review of progress against	03-Feb-25	30-Apr-25
Evidence based decision			The Council will have re-introduced a Corporate Delivery Plan and full service planning aligned to the medium term financial strategy. The delivery plan and service plans will capture how key activities will deliver against equalities objectives.	03-Feb-25	30-Sep-25
Evidence based decision making	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Leadership	Develop shared evidence base to support decision making — Developed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Slough- a joint collaboration between Strategy and Public Health / Developed one shared approach to using evidence landing page for evidence base	03-Feb-25	30-Jun-25
Cross cutting	Director of Strategy Change and	Improvement and Recovery Programme (overarching programme)	Put in place by end of Q3 24/25 a refreshed, resourced and well-planned overall improvement and recovery programme. — Review and reset all projects and programmes linked to the Improvement and Recovery Plan and strengthening of benefits of programme and better articulation of inputs / resources	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
Cross cutting	Resident Engagement		Refresh RAG rating and Best Value Heat Map linked to reset of benefits and linking of resources	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
Cross cutting			Improved ownership of plan by Directors and Lead members evidenced by more distributed ownership	01-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
Cross cutting	Director of Strategy	Improvement and Recovery Programme (overarching programme)	Develop a plan that demonstrates how equality objectives are being proactively progressed. — Developed the role and voice of staff in workforce equality – by strengthening existing networks and encouraging new ones	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
Cross cutting	Change and Resident Engagement		Established a board involving senior officers and staff groups, to oversee actions being progressed on workforce equality and delivering Slough's equality objectives / Forged a stronger link between improvement and recovery, the council's operating model and its culture to ensure equality is at the heart of the way we improve, change and transform.	01-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
Communications & engagement	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Continuous improvement	Resident engagement insights used to inform decision making — Develop community insight tool bringing together insight from surveys, engagement, consultation and resident feedback.	03-Feb-25	30-Sep-25
Communications & engagement	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Partnership and Community Engagement	Bring partners together to work on long term outcomes and place shaping. — Developed stakeholder overview and map for Slough Borough Council to inform all partnerships and community engagement work	01-Jan-25	31-Mar-25
Communications & engagement			Development of stakeholder database to enable co-ordinated resident/partner engagement,	01-Jan-25	31-Mar-25
Communications & engagement			Undertaken partnerships review and stocktake to understand areas for development and put in place refreshed approach to partnership working	01-Jan-25	30-Jun-25
Communications & engagement			State of Slough event	03-Feb-25	31-Jul-25

Theme	Owner	Service	Action	Task	Start	End
Communications & engagement	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Service delivery	Engagement and collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets	Developed an overarching strategic communications plan	01-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
Communications & engagement				Developed a proactive and systematic resident engagement framework that guides the way we communicate and engage with residents, in a more segmented and sophisticated way	03-Feb-25	31-Jul-25
Communications & engagement				Developed a gateway to ensure greater consistency in consultation –with support and approval managed corporately	03-Feb-25	31-Jul-25
Communications & engagement				Commissioned a Residents Survey for March 2025 and also start work to engage and then consult residents on the medium term financial plan and operating model.	01-Jan-25	30-May-25
Communications				Identified ways to maintain and build cohesion.	03-Feb-25	31-Jul-25
Target Operating Model	Director of Digital, Data and Technology	Target Operating Model	Improve data quality	Temporary engagement of a data architect to oversee setup of the new tools	01-Jan-25	30-Jun-25
Target Operating Model				Acquisition of basic technology to enable the creation of shared data warehouse(s)	01-Jan-25	30-Jun-25
Target Operating Model				Establishment of a small central data team	01-Jan-25	30-Jun-25
Target Operating Model	Director of Strategy Change and Resident Engagement	Target Operating Model	Develop a target operating model fully aligned to medium term financial plan to be implemented in phases during 2025/26	Developed cases for change for areas that have been mapped as end to end service reviews	02-Dec-24	31-Jan-25
Target Operating Model				Established programme governance and control, underpinned by programme management of all aspects of the Operating Model	02-Dec-24	31-Jan-25
Target Operating				Developed scope for front door, assessment and digitisation	02-Dec-24	28-Feb-25
Target Operating				Developed blue print for future operating model showing implementation over 25/26	01-Jan-25	31-Mar-25
Strategic Commissioning	Director of resources / Commissioning	Use of resources / service delivery	To standardise commissioning practice through the adoption of 'How to do Commissioning – A Practical Guide' and to make savings	Review new Procurement Act against current processes and draft PID for commissioning redesign	02-Dec-24	31-Mar-25
Strategic Commissioning				Review commissioning, procurement and contract management activity; From review of contracts registers (SCF and the Council), identify opportunities for consolidation, negotiation, termination etc	01-Jan-25	31-Jan-25
Strategic Commissioning				Review of spot purchasing and individual purchasing to identify opportunities (top 20 spend) for consolidation, re-negotiation, re-procurement on an alternative	01-Jan-25	31-Jan-25
Strategic Commissioning				Commence commissioning health check and review workstreams commissioning forward plans	03-Feb-25	28-Feb-25
Financial improvement	Executive Director Finance & Commercial	Use of resources	Refresh finance improvement action plan	Highly developed project plan, identifying key milestones and incorporating all internal and external recommendations to discharge	04-Nov-24	31-Dec-24
Financial improvement				Implemented internal controls on high risk areas, developed further financial procedures completed a baseline assessment of CIPFA FM code	06-Jan-25	30-Apr-25
Financial improvement	Executive Director Finance & Commercial	Use of Resources	Implement a robust system of financial controls and reporting	Create action plan for updating the policies and procedures	09-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
Financial improvement				Perform gap analysis of internal policies and procedures	09-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
Financial improvement				Identify, prioritise and remedy non-compliant legislative requirements	09-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
Financial improvement				Develop schedule of procedures and refresh dates	09-Dec-24	30-Jun-25
Financial improvement				Publish internal Finance policies and procedures	06-Jan-25	28-Feb-25
Financial improvement	Executive Director Finance & Commercial	Use of Resources	Compliance with the Prudential Framework	Treasury management mid-year review	10-Oct-24	03-Dec-24
Financial improvement				Update the Treasury Manual	02-Dec-24	28-Feb-25
Financial improvement	Executive Director Finance & Commercial	Use of Resources	Review key finance strategies and policies (Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy)	Capital strategy and MRP policy approved by Full Council in February 2025	03-Feb-25	28-Feb-25
Financial improvement				Develop Anti-fraud and corruption culture strategy and action plan	03-Mar-25	31-Mar-25

This page is intentionally left blank

Improvement and Recovery Action Plan

#	Workstream	Best Value Heading	Objective	Rational	Government Direction	Progress
	Risk maturity	Continuous Improvement & Governance	A well-resourced, independent internal audit function that is planning and delivering audits that provide risk-based assurance, insights and value in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.	Internal Audit within Slough has struggled to provide assurance to the standards that might be expected of a complex organisation facing significant challenges.	**Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of internal audit, which addresses outstanding management actions and includes the commissioning of an independent review of the internal audit contract and a fully costed plan for establishing an internal audit function that reflects best practice.	Internal Audit faces ongoing challenges. Whilst improvements are taking place, there is still progress for improvement in a number of areas. As at 30th September 2024: • 41 Medium and Low risk actions from 2021/22 were overdue: • 14 High and 40 Medium and Low risk actions from 2022/23 were overdue: • 3 High and 23 Medium and Low risk actions from 2023/24 were overdue. 6.2 A slight increase in the number of Medium and Low risk actions from 2023/24 resulted from recommendations becoming overdue since the end of August 2024. 6.3 A detailed analysis of overdue actions was presented to the October Committee meeting.
	Risk maturity	Leadership	Review of the Authority's Corporate Risk Dashboard to make it fit for purpose.	A mature approach to risk management is essential to ensure good governance and decision making. Robust systems should be in place and owned by members for identifying, reporting, mitigating and regularly reviewing risk.	**November 2024:** A review of the Authority's progress to risk maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives.	The Council's risk management methodology is being revised alongside the development of a risk appetite statement for Members to approve to provide the basis for their acceptable level of risk. This is underpinning work to develop key risk indicators and risk reporting to help inform decision-making, along with identifying and training departmental risk champions and hosting workshops for risk horizon-scanning. Risk owners have been tasked with reviewing the risks they are responsible for, and submitting the updated Q2 2024/25 risk information using the revised Corporate Risk dashboard The underlying Risk Strategy is being reviewed.
		Culture	Develop an inclusive high performance leadership culture that invites continuous feedback, learning,	A positive organisational culture is needed to be productive and impactful and to	**November direction:** A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a	Following the staff survey which was undertaken last year that revealed very low confidence in the leadership (44%) and that staff were not being empowered to implement change (46%), workshops were carried out to better understand the culture in winter 2023.

Theme	Category	Action	Description		Progress and Actions
Culture		and improvement to be embedded within our new ways of working and help build trust with resident	enable change and transformation to happen.	comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.	Following this and engagement with staff involved in championing the culture change, a reset was undertaken, under the direction of an Executive Director. Staff Talk about sessions, which are "roadshows" with the Chief Executive and Leadership, were relaunched over summer (late July and August), with over 150 attendees for the two held. Over 90% of responses said they found it "very or slightly useful". The Our People Forum was formed to grow staff engagement in the Culture Change Programme so they can champion this in the wider workforce. The forum has met monthly since the programme was rest in May, and has representation from all areas across the business and at different grades. The forum has been pivotal in user testing new/revised HR products such as the revamp of the Diversity capture page on Agresso and the new 1:1 and end of year appraisal forms and helping design the staff engagement survey. Alongside this, three staff engagement networks are also being supported – for Disability, Race and Women. These were highlighted as positive developments in the Equality Peer Review. Introducing staff engagement networks, equality commitments and culture change is now a permanent item on corporate induction sessions. The Staff Equality Networks have also started a dialogue with the Corporate Leadership Team as part of formalising their role. A new staff survey has just been completed and has helped inform a reset of the culture change programme.
Workforce Workforce	Continuous Improvement	Embedding professional development, performance management and appraisals as integral to continuous improvement	Professional development and appraisal at all staff levels is built into day-to-day work, with poor performance identified, monitored and effectively	As above	Making appraisals and one to ones more routine has been a priority. The recent 2023/24 appraisal cycle closed at 79% completion. This is a significant improvement on completion rates from previous years that averaged at 15%. It is important, however, that the focus is not just on completion rates but on making this as meaningful as possible. Since then, work has been undertaken to make the whole process of objective setting, review and one to one recording more streamlined, working closely with the Council's Our People Forum.
Workforce Workforce Workforce Workforce	Use of Resources	Develop and implement a workforce strategy (People Strategy)	Our people are most important asset and we need to provide a clear roadmap on how we will support and manage them to thrive. The People Plan will set this out and clear measurables	As above	The restructure of senior leadership (Executive Directors and Directors) has been completed. All the tier 2 director vacancies are now filled with permanent appointments. In September 2024, the Council participated in an LGA Peer Review looking at Equality. The Peer Review reported back that the Council's new leadership were committed to equality. The Peer Review also highlighted the impact that the senior leadership restructure had had on staff, and this needs to be considered further as part of improvement and recovery and equality plans.
Customer Customer Service	Continuous Improvement	Review complaint handling across Council	The authority has an effective and accessible complaints		The statutory and corporate annual complaints report for 2023-24 went to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on 30th September 2024. The report included figures and a narrative on the root cause for complaints as well as a section on

Category	Theme	Action	Objective	Progress and Actions
Customer Service / Customer Service / Customer Service			process and provides appropriate redress to help build trust in the Council and improve Council services. The council is currently non-compliant with the code and plans	learning and improvement. The housing ombudsman self-assessment was included as an appendix as well as being published on the Council website as required.
Scrutiny & Governance	Governance	Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on High-quality councillor leadership, and governance behaviours (across all councillor groups and roles).	**Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of democratic services **Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny function	The Leader and Cabinet Members are committed to developing their leadership role, and the leadership role of all Members, 18 months into a new administration. In this time, there have been two cabinet reshuffles, which has meant new Lead Members have had to be onboarded and supported to develop into their role.

With support from the LGA, the majority of cabinet members and Committee Chairs have been matched with experienced Members from other Councils as mentors. The administration leadership is also committed to a training programme with the LGA. The Chair of Audit and Corporate Governance Committee's mentor has attended meetings to offer feedback and support to the chair in managing member dynamics within the meeting.

Management development support has started – in response to a survey that 48% of line managers responded to, a programme of bite size sessions was delivered to upskill in the areas of Change , Performance Management, Finance and Coaching others.

A successful introductory managerial leadership meeting in June launched of a year-long programme of quarterly sessions for tier 1-3

An initial set of Management Information (MI) dashboards have been established utilising PowerBI for corporate and service. Dashboards also offer a new method to engage Lead Members in understanding performance and developing policy

The 2023-24 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in July 2024. It is an honest self assessment, that highlights areas for development in bold, as well as summarising the learning from external reviews and internal audits. |
| Scrutiny & Governance | Culture | Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on | **Earlier direction:** Implement a programme of cultural change to rebuild trust between officers and members | Member induction and development programmes have been devised with input from elected members. Particular areas of focus were the training commissioned from Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) for scrutiny members. It is important to note that earlier in 2024, an Independent Group was formed from 7 former Labour Party Members. One former Conservative Members stands as an independent, not in |

Domain	Category	Theme	Objective	Direction	Progress and Actions
Scrutiny & Governance		High quality officer-member relationships and behaviours	enabling successful delivery of the wider improvement and recovery programme.		any group. This needs consideration as part of Member Development.
Scrutiny & Governance					A cross-party Member Development Working Group has agreed a programme of all-member training sessions to be provided by a mixture of LGA and in-house providers, in line with the Member Development Plan agreed by Standards in March 2024.
Scrutiny & Governance					This continues to be driven as a key workstream of the Transformation Programme. Progress is also reported through the Annual Governance Statement last updated in July 2024. Key progress points to highlight in this report are summarised below:
					The Member survey was conducted and reported to Standards Committee meetings in October 2023 and March 2024.
					The Member officer relations protocol was updated, based on a good practice model code, and approved by Full Council in January 2024 and is being actively promoted by the Monitoring Officer.
					The Members' register of interests was published and the refreshed and a report on
Scrutiny & Governance	Culture	Build a strong, self-sustaining culture of good governance amongst members and officers, by focusing on High quality Officer governance behaviours	To improve the effectiveness of governance and scrutiny in Slough Borough Council, enabling successful delivery of the wider improvement and recovery programme.		Member induction and development programmes have been devised with input from elected members. Particular areas of focus were the training commissioned from Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) for scrutiny members. It is important to note that earlier in 2024, an Independent Group was formed from 7 former Labour Party Members. One former Conservative Members stands as an independent, not in any group. This needs consideration as part of Member Development.
Scrutiny & Governance					A cross-party Member Development Working Group has agreed a programme of all-member training sessions to be provided by a mixture of LGA and in-house providers, in line with the Member Development Plan agreed by Standards in March 2024.
Scrutiny & Governance	Governance	Developing fit for purpose governance-systems and processes	To improve the effectiveness of governance and scrutiny in Slough Borough Council, enabling successful delivery of the wider improvement and recovery programme.		The Local Code of Conduct for Employees and Corporate Code of Governance (based on CIPFA / Solace framework) were revised and approved as constitutional changes at May Annual Council 2024.
Scrutiny & Governance					The Council's Contract Procedure Rules, last updated in January 2024, confirm that all procurement activity must be undertaken with regard to high standards of probity and in accordance with the ethical framework in the Constitution.
Digital, data	Use of Resources	Digitally enabling the delivery of the Target Operating Model	To ensure the Councils technology can meet the demands and needs of residents and staff	**November 2024:** An appropriately resourced digital strategy that supports effective business operations and links to the Authority's future operating model.	Agreement of the strategic approach to digitally transformation at November cabinet.
Digital, data and technology	Use of Resources	Modernising Digital, Data and Technology	Outstanding projects are critical to the	**Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in	In December 2022, following its mobilisation stage, it was reported to Cabinet that the programme comprised 40 projects, which were to be delivered in two years. As of

			Progress and Actions
Digital, data and technology		security and continuing availability of the ICT service, in line with the original objective of the programme;	September 2024, the total size of the portfolio pipeline, as reported to the Recovery Board, had increased to 141 projects. 75 of these have been delivered. However, five projects from 2022 critical to security and stability still remain to be delivered.
Digital, data and technology			The Modernisation Programme was launched in March 2022. In December 2022, following its mobilisation stage, it was reported to Cabinet that the programme comprised 40 projects, across four workstreams:
Digital, data and technology			Cloud migration of line of business applications
Digital, data and technology			Cyber security and resilience
Digital, data and technology			End user computing
Digital, data and technology			Replacing aged infrastructure
Digital, data and technology			In March 2024, the Council received the LGA's Digital 360 review. A Digital 360 is a funded improvement tool, managed and delivered by the local government sector. The team was asked to explore the question "How are the goals and vision for Slough's people, place and organisation supported by digitalisation, now, next and future?" with a particular focus on the operating model, pace of change, roles and responsibilities and risks. The review found that the Council had made some progress in improving its core infrastructure and technology, leading to it being more resilient and some progress in developing core IT processes.
			As of September 2024 (when the current Director of Digital, Data and Technology joined), 43 further projects had been completed (making a total of 75 completed since inception), but a further 53 projects had been added, bringing the total portfolio size to 141. Key examples of progress include;
			The corporate data centre was migrated from a Slough location to a Crown Commercial Services hosting site in Hampshire, reducing organisational vulnerability (because of geographical distance) and saving £80k pa.
			A migration to new Wide Area Network technology (SD-WAN) has saved £140k pa and provides greater performance and resilience for access to many cloud-based applications (by avoiding the need for connections to pass via the data centre). Work on translation capability and on the accessibility of our website has moved Slough from being in 250th place for accessibility amongst UK councils in September
Evidence based	Continuous Improvement	Embedding a corporate and service performance framework	Embedding a corporate and service performance framework enables the administration
Evidence based decision making			Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2024/25, linked to the corporate plan were agreed jointly by corporate leadership and Lead Members. Progress against these KPIs is reviewed by Corporate Leadership on a monthly basis, and by Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This has been in place since the start of 2024/25. To support benchmarking, the Council has joined LG Inform, which is a benchmarking tool.

Theme	Area	Action		Milestone	Progress and Actions
Evidence based decision making			and Council to identify and take action where there is poor performance against the outcomes that can have the greatest impact on residents. The need to improve the approach taken is identified by Best Value auditors and in the Annual Governance Statement.		An initial set of Management Information (MI) dashboards have been established utilising PowerBI for corporate and service (Adults, Education, Housing, Complaints and Casework, SEND, Public Health) reporting and insight. Executive Directors, senior managers, and team leaders can use data to understand trends and to take corrective action.
Evidence based decision making	Leadership	Corporate Delivery Plan and service planning for the 2025/26 financial year	Service plans are clearly linked to a local authority's priorities, strategic plans and longer-term planning – a golden thread that runs through to individual objectives and accountability. The need for strategies to be better linked together and focus on delivery has been identified in the Annual Governance Statement.		The Slough Insights Pack informed the Corporate Plan 2023-2027, which was refreshed following the all-out elections in 2023. The Corporate Plan helped frame new Equality Objectives, which were adopted in April 2024, following consultation. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2024/25 are linked to the corporate plan.
Evidence based decision making					
Evidence based decision making					
Evidence based decision making	Leadership	Develop shared evidence base to support decision making	Service delivery is evidence-based, customer and resident focused, and meet the needs of different groups within the community.	**November 2024:** Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking. **Earlier direction:** take steps to enable better and evidence-based	The Council has now established a Public Health Team for Slough, under the direction of a permanent Director of Public Health, having previously had a shared service. This includes a Public Health Intelligence Unit. Along with the officer who works on Slough Insights Pack, this brings much needed additional analytic and strategic capacity to enable the Council to focus on ensuring service delivery impacts on long term outcomes, with performance data that helps us understand what is making an impact.

Cross cutting	Improvement and Recovery Programme (overarching programme)	Put in place by end of Q3 24/25 a refreshed, resourced and well-planned overall improvement and recovery programme.	An organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement is needed, driven by an established transformation function or programme, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.	Prepare, agree and implement an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, with resource allocated accordingly. This may include or draw upon improvement or action plans prepared before the date of these Directions. The plan is to set out measures to be undertaken, together with milestones and delivery targets against which to measure performance, in order to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, finance and commercial functions, thereby securing compliance with the best value duty. There must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months. **Earlier direction:** To report to the Commissioners on the delivery of the Improvement Plan at six monthly intervals, or at such intervals as the Commissioners may direct, and adopt any recommendations of the Commissioners with respect to the Improvement Plan and its	The absence of a resourced and well-planned overall transformation programme was highlighted in the fourth commissioners' report in February 2024 and in the Value of Money External Audit in October 2024. Following the fourth report, immediate project capacity was created to support the three pillars of recovery – under a Transformation Programme, Financial Improvement Programme and Children's Improvement Programme, as reported to Cabinet in July 2024. Transformational capacity was also created directly in Adults, Children's, Governance and Organisational Development. The Council is therefore establishing an improvement and recovery programme management office, under one permanent Head of Service for Change and Programmes. Current roles have been extended to the end of 2024 /25. Structures has been approved until the end of 2025/26 and will be implemented once budgets for 2025/26 are approved.
Cross cutting					
Cross cutting					
Cross cutting	Improvement	Develop a plan that	Embedding equality		Leadership (officer and members) are committed to advancing equality

Theme	Programme	Objective	Direction	November 2024 direction	Progress and Actions
Cross cutting	and Recovery Programme (overarching programme)	demonstrates how equality objectives are being proactively progressed.	will enable the Council to deliver more efficient public services and tackle inequalities.		Equality can be viewed through the narrow lens of race, ethnicity and religion and there is a need to widen that lens to incorporate other inequalities There are some green shoots of change; staff and partners are wanting to be part of the work to deliver a more inclusive Slough The approach to community engagement is underdeveloped and should form part of the new target operating model There is limited diversity at the most senior levels of the council and a feeling there needs to be more commitment to developing existing Slough staff Most senior leaders are new and are not yet entirely trusted Equalities needs to be central to the work of the council's improvement and recovery board The organisational and financial challenges the council is still facing are continuing to have an adverse effect on the feeling of wellbeing amongst staff
Communications & engagement	Continuous improvement	Resident engagement insights used to inform decision making	The systematic engagement of residents should support continuous improvement, influencing performance management and decision making. Direction: Improve resident and public engagement is a 2024 direction.	November 2024 direction: Improve resident and public engagement.	There are pockets of good practice in how the Council uses resident insight to support continuous improvement, in Adults, Children's and Housing. For example, a regular co-production network in adults engages on commissioning and operational issues and will help inform the preparation for the CQC inspection. The recent LGA Equality Peer review identified this and other work as good practice. Currently, the council uses the Citizen Space platform for online consultations, survey and other online engagement. As of July 2024, the council has completed 41 consultations on Citizen Space. The responses to consultations have been considered during final decision making, for example in the decisions about Children's Centres and Equality Objectives. The "We Asked, You Said, We Did" feature on Citizen Space, has been used since May 2024 which then uploads a summary of the responses and outcomes from closed consultations once the final outcomes/decisions have been made. These summaries can be viewed on the individual consultation pages and on a dedicated page.
Communications & engagement Communications & engagement Communications & engagement Communications & engagement	Partnership and Community Engagement	Bring partners together to work on long term outcomes and place shaping. The council could be playing a much stronger convening role with partners. The Council's partnerships are currently reactive, based on the statutory partnerships needed around community safety, safeguarding and health and wellbeing.		Improving resident and public engagement.	Both Members and corporate leadership are involved in the Berkshire Prosperity Board which is helping position Slough in the wider regional economy, to help ensure benefits can be secured for Slough. There is also a focus politically and corporately on encouraging growth, shaping the town centre and securing the economic benefits from the very significant business base in Slough. The Single Planning Zone consultation, town centre plans and work to bring in higher education providers are all examples of this place leadership. The Health and Wellbeing Board is being developed further, and Health and Wellbeing Priorities are being developed that are preventative and outcome focused, and will help embed public health approaches across the system. These will be explored through informal workshops over the course of the next 9-months. There is the opportunity through this to help the Council, and wider system focus more on the long term outcomes in the corporate plan.

					Progress and Actions
Communications & engagement	Service delivery	Engagement and collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets	There is early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs and assets, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services. In some cases, this involves the co-design and/or co-production of services. Partners and local residents are involved in developing indicators and targets, and monitoring and managing lack of performance. The authority may be beginning to experiment with more participative forms of decision-making.	Improving resident and public engagement.	Currently, the council uses the Citizen Space platform for online consultations, survey and other online engagement. As of July 2024, the council has completed 41 consultations on Citizen Space (29 public and 12 private, with 2 more that are currently open). The responses to consultations have been considered during final decision making, for example in the decisions about Children's Centres and Equality Objectives. The "We Asked, You Said, We Did" feature on Citizen Space, has been used which then uploads a summary of the responses and outcomes from closed consultations once the final outcomes/decisions have been made. The first of these was uploaded for the Equality Objectives consultation in May 2024. These summaries can be viewed on the individual consultation pages and on a dedicated page. The recent LGA Equality Peer review identified that there was also some really good practice around service user engagement in Adult Social Care (ASC), Adult Social Care Commissioning and Education which could serve as models for other services A more proactive and systematic resident engagement framework is being developed in collaboration with leads from across the Council. The Council has now established a Public Health Team for Slough, under the direction of a permanent Director of Public Health, having previously had a shared service across Bracknell Forest Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This brings much needed additional analytic and strategic capacity to enable the Council to focus on ensuring service delivery impacts on long term outcomes, with performance data that helps us understand what is making an impact. The Council has now established a Public Health Team for Slough, under the direction of a permanent Director of Public Health, having previously had a shared service across Bracknell Forest Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. This brings much needed additional analytic and strategic capacity to enable the Council to focus on ensuring service delivery impacts on long term outcomes, with performance data that helps us understand what is making an impact.
Target Operating Model	Target Operating Model	Improve data quality	Decisions and services need to be evidence based and clearly aligned to priorities	November 2024: Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including	The council has a performance and insights team within its Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement function, and also has data analysts within individual business areas. However, it lacks fundamental enablers that enable these capabilities to deliver reliable management information and data insight that enables action. Specific

Theme	Use of resources / service delivery	Objective	Description	Direction	Progress and Actions
Target Operating Model				and strategic plans, which will reflect the priorities identified through community planning. Better insight will help the Council to develop more predictive analysis to inform preventative work and service planning.	enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking. aspects of the current arrangements that lead to the issues described are: The Council does not use standard tools or approaches for data processing and analytics, and has also been dependent in some areas on interim staff who have not documented their work. The result is that much historical data analytics work is neither usable nor maintainable. The Council does not have a data infrastructure that allows data from operational systems to be brought into a single store to be manipulated and analysed. Instead, analysis happens across disparate systems. In some cases, analysis is carried out on live – and therefore changing – data, which can lead to inconsistent and misleading results. A lack of standards and documentation of data has led to an overreliance on individuals. There is a lack of consistent corporate skills in both data analytics and reporting eg. dashboard development) and data engineering (e.g. "ETL": extraction, transformation and load).
Target Operating Model Target Operating Model Target Operating Model Target Operating Model		Develop a target operating model fully aligned to medium term financial plan to be implemented in phases during 2025/26	Current operating model (ways of working) is not sustainable. We need to consciously decide how Slough Borough Council operates We are working in an incredibly challenging financial context with increasing future demand from our residents.	A new Target Operating Model November 2024 Direction:(TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities. Earlier directions: undertake an assessment of the functional capability of all service areas identifying the gaps in capacity and capability,	Design principles linked to the clear vision expressed within the Corporate Plan Design of a new direction of travel for an operating model based setting out key features of the Council 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 End to end service reviews started in Adults and Temporary Accommodation Initial scoping of customer first / digital access workstream
Strategic Commissioning Strategic Commissioning Strategic Commissioning		To standardise commissioning practice through the adoption of 'How to do Commissioning – A Practical Guide' and to make savings	The approach to commissioning, contracting and contract management is weak, resulting in poor quality public services that do not represent value for money.	Earlier directions: An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper	An in-house team was recruited following the end of outsourcing arrangements for the procurement and contract management functions. This team have since introduced improvements made through an action plan including: Embedding best practice and learning – the training programme continues with knowledge drops and communications on SBC insight. Contracts register reviewed Leads have been allocated to x-cutting projects (Homecare, Direct Payments, Payment Cards, Advocacy, Transport)

Theme	Category	Action	Outcome / Measure		Progress and Actions
Strategic Commissioning					Initial discussions around aligning strategic commissioning redesign to TOM have commenced. The Council is currently reviewing its Contract Procedure Rules to take account of new procurement legislation. This will provide a further opportunity to ensure that ethics and values are embedded into procedures.
Financial improvement	Use of resources	Refresh finance improvement action plan	The financial strategy and budgets are clearly aligned with strategic priorities and there is a robust process for reviewing and setting the budget.		On the 18th of September 2023 Cabinet agreed a refresh of the Council's Finance Improvement Action Plan. As of June 2024, the Council aligned the Finance Improvement Plan with the Financial Management Code (FM Code) which is designed to support good practice in fiscal management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The Council continues to develop an approach to self-assess against the seven Best Value themes and the reporting of the progress of the Finance Improvement Plan is being aligned to the self-assessment. The primary focus however will be on the attainment of professional financial standards as set out in the CIPFA FM Code.
Financial improvement	Use of Resources	Implement a robust system of financial controls and reporting	A robust system of financial controls and reporting exists, which provide clear accountability and ensure compliance with statutory requirements and accounting standards.		Scoping of project continues. Themes include finance system, control accounts, procurement, spending controls. Reviewed portfolios to ensure the financial systems and Risk focusses on the control environment.
Financial improvement	Use of Resources	Compliance with the Prudential Framework			The implementation of the Treasury Management cash flow and reporting system is ongoing. The cash flow functions went live at the start of October. The outputs of the system were used for the revised Treasury Management Strategy and Mid-Year Report and to inform cash flow and borrowing decisions.
Financial improvement	Use of Resources	Review key finance strategies and policies (Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy)	A clearly presented Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy exists	A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the new TOM and transformation plan and demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.	

| Financial improvement | Use of Resources | Undertake a review of the governance arrangements of all Council-owned companies (excluding SCF) to assure compliance, and secretarial functions are being delivered appropriately. | To achieve best value the benefits and risks of council owned companies must be reviewed on a regular basis. | **November 2024:** Re-examining the review by the Authority of their companies that considered the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First), to make proposals in relation to financial viability and improving company governance. **Earlier direction:** Following the review by the Authority of their companies within six months consider the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First) | There has been a renewed focus on improving company governance, with the oversight of a company's specialist. An update on progress was reported at Cabinet Committee in September 2024. An initial desktop exercise has been undertaken to set out the current position on each company and a 'traffic light' system had been put in place to assess key activities relating to company governance, oversight and financial governance.

As reported then, the position, risks and reporting arrangements of each company are different. The significant weaknesses identified for James Elliman Homes were also set out in a separate report.

There had been more progress already made to strengthen governance and improve reporting of some other companies, particularly Slough Children First. |

Best Value Domain	Workstreams	Success measure	Source	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 target	2026/27 target (TBC)	Benchmark measure	Benchmark source	Currently Corporate KPI?
Continuous improvement	Crosscutting Community and Resident Engagement Target Operating Model	I am satisfied or fairly satisfied with place (resident)	Residents Survey	50%	N/A	Higher than 50%		76%	LGA National Benchmark	Y
		Percentage of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2	Annual Complaints Report	9%	10%		Below 10%			Y
		I am very or fairly satisfied with the way Slough Borough Council runs things (resident)	Residents Survey	30%	N/A		35%	60%		N (to review)
Leadership	Crosscutting Evidence based decision making Target Operating Model	I understand our vision and plans for the future (staff, residents, partners, businesses)	Staff Survey To scope for residents, partners and businesses	N/A	70.57% (staff)	73% (staff)	75% (staff)			N
		I have trust and confidence in my senior leadership team (staff)	Staff Survey	N/A	62.25%	65%	70%			N
		Overall vision score (staff)	Staff Survey	N/A	61%		65%	70.63% (survey benchmark)		N
		I understand the reason for decisions that the Councihas to take (staff, residents, partners, businesses)	To scope - new measure	N/A	N/A	New question	New question			N

Category		Measure	Data source				Benchmark			Y/N
		The Council is actively helping make Slough a better place for those who live and work there.	To scope - new measure Also LGA Peer Review							N
		I have confidence in SBC senior officers (members)	Member Survey Also LGA Peer Review	10%	20%					N
Culture	Culture and Workforce Target Operating Model	Staff survey: Response rate	Staff Survey	46%	53%	58%	Benchmark			N
		Staff survey: I am proud to work for this organisation	Staff Survey	N/A	69.25%	Above 70%				Y
		I would recommend Slough Borough Council as a great place to work	Staff Survey		59.57%					Y
		Overall engagement score	Staff Survey		64.60%		83.46% (survey benchmark)			N
		I trust Slough Borough Council a great deal or a fair amount (resident)	Resident survey	25%			59% (LGA national benchmark)			Y
		This is a Council that understands and is connected to its community.	To scope - new measure Also LGA Peer Review							
Use of resources		Staff turnover rate	Workforce data	18.50%	15.60%					N
		Appraisal take up	Workforce data	64%	79%	Above 70%				N
	Culture and Workforce	Council tax in year collection	Corporate performance reports	94.60%			95.9% 96.2%	National Unitary		Y

Category	Programme area	Measure	Source							LGA benchmark	Measures of success
Financial Improvement Risk Maturity Digital Data and Technology		I strongly agree or tend to agree that the Slough Borough Council provides value for money (residents)	Residents survey	21%				30%	46%		N
Governance	Governance	There is a healthy culture and good ways of working overall between members and officers (members)	Members Survey Also LGA Peer Review	38%	40%						N
Partnership and Community Engagement	Community and Resident Engagement	The public are able to have their say and influence decisions made by Councillors	Members Survey	40%	43%						N
	Target Operating Model Governance	Slough Borough Council acts on their concerns to a great deal or a fair amount (residents)	Residents survey	28%				35%	52%		N
		The Council leadership (Members and senior officers) are confident engaging with the community.	To scope - new measure Also LGA Peer Review								N
		I am confident to invest in Slough as a business	To scope - new measure								
		Slough Borough Council keeps me very or fairly well informed about the services and benefits they provide (residents)	Residents survey	38%					67%		N (to review)
Service delivery	Crosscutting Community and Resident Engagement	Percentage of new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks including exceptions	Corporate performance reports	20.2% 39					49.1% 45.3% 59.5%	National South East CIPFA NN	Y

Target Operating Model							
Child development: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 to 2.5 years old	Corporate performance reports	76.6% 1375			89.4% 79.8%	National South East	Y
This is a Council that is taking action to promote health and wellbeing.	To scope - new measure						
Proportion of children obese including severely obese at Year 6	Corporate performance reports	25.70%			22.1% 19.2%	National South East	Y
Rate per 10,000 of Children Looked After (CLA)	Corporate performance reports	45			70 56 56.3	National South East Statistical Neighbour	Y
The percentage of carers who receive self directed support	Corporate performance reports	100%			89.3% 98.9%	National South East	Y
Quality of life metric - adult social care user survey.	Annual return	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC		N (to review)
Number of homeless cases prevented	Corporate performance reports	119					Y
Percentage of tenants who responded satisfied with the overall service provided by Slough Borough Council Housing	Corporate performance reports (annual tenants survey)	45.90%			70%		Y

Category	Measure	Source	Baseline		80%	41.7% 41.7% 45.4%	Benchmark	Measures of success
	Percentage of SBC emergency housing repairs completed within agreed timescale	Corporate performance reports	100%					Y
	Confidence from businesses in Council commercial services	To scope - new measure						
	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	Corporate performance reports	25.10%			41.7% 41.7% 45.4%	National South East CIPFA NN	Y
Customer Access — Target operating Model Community and Resident Engagement	Develop new metric about access from Target Operating Work				80%			N (to review)
	Percentage of customer service calls answered	Corporate performance reports	67.90%					Y

This page is intentionally left blank

Workstream:	Risk Maturity
Directions	**November 2024:** A review of the Authority's progress to risk maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives. **Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of internal audit, which addresses outstanding management actions and includes the commissioning of an independent review of the internal audit contract and a fully costed plan for establishing an internal audit function that reflects best practice.
Peer Reviews	
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Consider internal audit of officer decision-making, update risk management strategg, external review of corporate anti-fraud policies, procedures and practices conduct a review against the LGA's Improvement and Assurance framework to map current processes of assurance and put in place a more comprehensive management assurance process. Internal audit - stabilise internal audit team, ensure annual audit plan informed by risk, ensure effective escalation procedures, commission independent external quality assurance review Ensure commitment to risk at corporate governance committee
External Reviews	**Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024:** Track internal audit actions

Workstream:	Culture and Workforce
Directions	**November 2024:** A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.
Peer Reviews	**September 2024 Equality Peer Review:** Confirm the permanence of the leadership team to provide stability for the organisation. Build into the proposed operating model some clear commitments on inclusive recruitment approach to staff progression including work shadowing, coaching, and mentoring Set out an approach to staff progression including work shadowing, coaching mentoring that will enable more staff from diverse backgrounds to progress. Consider the feasibility of reverse mentoring for senior staff. Set out an Provide accessibility passports to help disabled staff move more easily between roles and directorates.
Annual Governance	Strategic workforce plan at corporate and directorate level, focused on skills and knowledge gaps, performance management, including appraisal
External Reviews	**Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024:** maintain the permanence of the senior leadership team.

Workstream:	Governance
Directions	**Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of democratic services **Earlier direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny function Implement a programme of cultural change to rebuild trust between officers and members
Peer Reviews	The committee must be disciplined about its work programme and apply strict prioritisation to select what it will scrutinise and leave out. This requires clear rationale and self-discipline to avoid being overwhelmed by issues that claim to be essential to recovery. To be more effective in budget scrutiny, this requires early engagement, planning and resources to be meaningful and effective. The relevant Cabinet member should attend every CISC meeting and be the focal point of scrutiny questioning and accountability. Clarity around the Cabinet member and officer role would be useful to ensure the meeting focus is clear. Members need to ensure they build their own understanding of the issues in front of them, do some independent research and spend time preparing for the meeting itself. The committee need to be wary of being swayed by issues which are arising as areas of concern amongst councillors, even if they are affecting multiple wards. In the short term, the focus must be on recovery and transformation even if this is to be exclusion of other issues. Allocation of 40% financial recovery, 40% transformation and 20% wider issues is suggested. Appointments and performance are a matter for Group leaders, however it is suggested that appointments are made after careful consideration of suitability and capacity. The newly formed corporate officer team needs to ask how scrutiny will play a full and active part in the development of the corporate and financial recovery plan and the next phase of transformation. The scrutiny function should be more integral and given higher corporate priority. Reports and information should not be overburdening or too technical. To be effective scrutiny members need the appropriate tools. The committee needs to strengthen its recommendations and feedback to Cabinet and its tracker system needs to be more closely monitored to ensure that there is follow-through and accountability for the recommendations. There is a need for clarity around the statutory duties regarding health, crime and disorder and education scrutiny.
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Develop democratic governance: Build cross council ownership Improve report clearance Develop Make better use of Lead Members and Directors meetings possible internal audit of officer decison making Use scrutiny and audit and corporate governance committee LGA tools to support member development
External Reviews	

Workstream:	Digital, data and technology
Directions	**November 2024:** An appropriately resourced digital strategy that supports effective business operations and links to the Authority's future operating model. **Earlier** **direction:** An action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority's IT.
Peer Reviews	**March 2024- Digital 360** The Council has made some progress in improving its core infrastructure and technology, leading to it being more resilient and some progress in developing core IT processes. Members see ICT as a key element of the transformation journey and are keen to align business and ICT transformation. With only a fraction of the ICT modernisation budget left, there needs to be serious consideration as to how improvements are funded beyond 2024/25. The focus on foundational ICT projects have been necessary to create stability, however there is limited evidence of truly transformative digital activity that changes outward-facing outcomes. The Recovery and Transformation Board provides some centralised governance function, but individual services are responsible for their own transformation journeys which has led to a disjointed approach. There is an absence of a corporate focus on customer experience and data or a realisation of the wider digitalisation outcomes such as participation, data, connectivity, partnerships, or digital inclusion. Volatile reorganisations have led to a loss of knowledge and skills. For success, there needs to be a greater clarity of purpose, demonstrable commitment from senior leaders, learning and development support to build knowledge and skills to change ways of working and technology must not be considered in isolation of people skills and process changes
Annual Governance Statement 2023/24	Adopt a Data Strategy, approved at a member level, and ensure that data is used appropriately, consistently and effectively and retained in accordance with legal requirements. Ensure digital technology is embedded into future operating model. Ensure appropriate governance structure to ensure ICT is embedded into transformation programme and service improvements and that there is an effective prioritisation process to ensure prioritisation on those projects with the biggest impact on staff, residents and to support financial recovery. FOI - devise timescale for conducting self-assessment utilising ICO FOI toolkit and report findings to A&CG Committee. FOI self-assessment toolkit | ICO Review of use of any Artificial Intelligence software, ensuring appropriate policies and systems in place to manage legal and ethical considerations. Conduct a review of information published against the Government's Transparency Code.
External Reviews	

Workstream:	Evidence based decision making
Directions	**November 2024:** Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking. **Earlier direction:** take steps to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions to enable better evidence-based decision making
Peer reviews	
Annual Governance Statement 2023/24	The Council needs to keep its performance indicators under review and ensure that it is benchmarking performance against national indicators and statistical neighbours. It also needs to ensure that performance is focused on outcomes and there is effective analysis of performance and that this is feeding into risk management and used as an assurance tool
External reviews	**Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024:** Track and report KPIs aligned to Council Plan. Develop approach to benchmarking.

Workstream	Crosscutting
Directions	Prepare, agree and implement an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, with resource allocated accordingly. This may include or draw upon improvement or action plans prepared before the date of these Directions. The plan is to set out measures to be undertaken, together with milestones and delivery targets against which to measure performance, in order to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, finance and commercial functions, thereby securing compliance with the best value duty. There must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months. Earlier direction: To report to the Commissioners on the delivery of the Improvement Plan at six monthly intervals, or at such intervals as the Commissioners may direct, and adopt any recommendations of the Commissioners with respect to the Improvement Plan and its implementation.
Peer Reviews	
Annual Governance Statement	**September 2024 Equality Peer Review:** Establish a corporate equalities board chaired by either the Chief Executive or the Leader to oversee
External reviews	Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024: devise a transformation programme to set out how the Council will exit intervention and become a best value council.

Workstream	Crosscutting
Workstream:	
	Community and resident engagement
Directions	**November 2024 direction:** Improve resident and public engagement.
Peer Reviews	**April 2024 LGA Peer Review Communications** Develop the communications strategy to ensure that it supports the organisation's key priorities. The communications strategy needs to be updated once the corporate plan has been updated with a clear set of priorities. Going forward, communications should be driven by organisational priorities rather than those of individual departments.
	The communications team should identify a set of interim communications priorities for the next six months. These should be agreed with the Chief Executive and should enable the communications team to focus their work on priority areas and to manage demand on the service.
	Produce a weekly forward planning news Grid. This should be included as a standing agenda item for CLT each week and should be shared with the Leader and lead members.
	Continue to improve internal communications. Agree a set of strategic priorities for internal communications content and review the format for the programme of staff roadshows.
	Update the corporate narrative - once the corporate plan has been updated with a clear set of priorities. The council's approach to communications is being hindered by the lack of a single story for the organisation.
	Work with partners to co-create a Slough place narrative. There is a desire from partners for the council to do more in the place leadership space.
	Set a timetable to undertake a follow-up residents' survey. Data from the initial residents' survey should be used as a baseline to measure future improvements in resident perceptions.
	Pause the decision to delete the Senior Digital Content Officer post from the communications team. Deleting this post would have a detrimental impact on the team's ability to produce digital content in the future.
	Carry out a formal communications skills audit and implement a training and development plan to support new ways of working in the communications team.
	Introduce a digital communications platform. The council should introduce a digital approach to communicating with its residents. This can include segmented newsletters, consultations, and further development of social media. This will provide innovative ways to grow audiences along with the constant measurement of data to see which content and channels are most effective for different audiences. This should be funded by reprioritising existing communications budgets.
	2024 Equality Peer Review:
	Ensure all communications are in plain English (and then add appropriate translation tools)
	Ensure that there are varied engagement platforms for different communities.
	Establish a clear vision for community engagement through the target operating model where members have a clear leadership role as

Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Resident engagement – Lead Officer – Will Tuckley ➢ Adopt Resident Engagement Strategy, setting out expectations on participation, resident experience and digital inclusion. ➢ Build programme to rebuilt trust with communities, including transparent, public reporting to members on resident survey results with action plan on improving satisfaction levels. ➢ Ensure prompt responses to recommendations by LGSCO, including any learning in annual report to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. ➢ Conduct self-assessment of complaints processes against LGSCO new Complaints Code and include findings in annual report to A&CG Committee in Autumn 2024 September 2024: Equality Peer Review: Establish a strategic partnership/compact with the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) and other partners to enable more honest conversations to happen.
External Reviews	

Workstream:	Community and resident engagement: Partnerships
Directions	
Peer Reviews	
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Ensure that each statutory partnership has clear terms of reference, approved strategies and appropriate action plans in place to meet strategic aims, represent best practice and meet its statutory requirements.
	Ensure there is public reporting to members on effectiveness of partnerships.
	Review approach to transparency for partnerships, with an expectation as a minimum that each partnership produces a public annual report and
	considers whether to publish reports and minutes for meetings.
	Consider commissioning external reviews of statutory partnership on a rolling programme as an appropriate way to provide further assurance
External Reviews	Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024:Develop its role within significant partnerships

Workstream:	**Evidence based decision making**
Directions	**November 2024:** Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data
Peer Reviews	
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	The Council also needs a comprehensive Data Strategy to ensure that data is driving decision-making and the organisation has effective resources in place to collect, store and manage its data.
External Reviews	
Workstream:	**Target Operating Model**
Directions	A new Target Operating Model November 2024 Direction:(TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities.

Earlier directions: undertake an assessment of the functional capability of all service areas identifying the gaps in capacity and capability, |
| **Annual Governance Statement 2023/14** | **Conduct self-assessment of complaints processes against LGSCO new Complaints Code and include findings in annual report to A&CG Committee in Autumn 2024** |
| **External Reviews** | **July 2024 LGSCO letter: Recommends closer oversight of the remedy process** |

Workstream	Financial improvement
Directions	A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the new TOM and transformation plan and demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.
Peer Reviews	
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Demonstrable and collective compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code. ➢ Workforce plan to response to recruitment gaps within finance directorate and ensure specialist capability within directorate. ➢ Review of systems within Council for recording financial transactions, picking up from Grant Thornton's findings from previous audits and work of Ernst Young in reviewing balance sheet. ➢ Ensure financial management and governance are included in onboarding and manager development programmes. ➢ Costed programme for closing off historic statements of accounts, agreed with DLUHC commissioners and external auditors. ➢ Review process for budget setting and medium-term financial strategy increase opportunities for resident engagement and scrutiny involvement in reviewing financial savings and priorities in accordance with CfGS guidance on financial scrutiny. ➢ Ensure effective systems in place for holding and managing finances for separate companies and partnership Asset disposal and use of physical resources ➢ Approve an estates strategy for use of the Council's operational assets, ensuring this is aligned with the Council's new operating model and MTFS. ➢ Increase public reporting on assets disposed of, including those where decisions made under officer delegation. ➢ Review systems in place for record keeping, ensuring compliance with Government Transparency Code and safe retention of property records to inform future decision-making.
External reviews	Interim Auditor's Annual Report September 2024: Review asset disposal programme.

Workstream	Financial improvement: Companies
Direction	**November 2024:** Re-examining the review by the Authority of their companies that considered the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First), to make proposals in relation to financial viability and improving company governance. **Earlier direction:** Following the review by the Authority of their companies within six months consider the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First)
Annual Governance Statement 2023/14	Company governance – Lead Officer – Sarah Wilson (SCF), Pat Hayes (other companies), Sukdave Ghuman (trusts) ➤ For SCF, closer working between Board, including NEDs, and CLT / Cabinet to ensure better coordination and increased understanding of distinct roles. ➤ For SCF, updates on progress against governance review to be agenda'ed at quarterly strategic commissioning group meetings and any retrograde steps in progress to be reported to A&CG Committee. ➤ For other Council companies, review and report to Asset Disposal Cabinet Committee on: o contractual and governance documentation, o decision-making, o risk and performance reporting arrangements, including financial performance, statutory compliance, including filings of annual reports and accounts and board director performance, o annual business plans for each company. ➤ For trusts where the Council is corporate trustee, review and action plan to ensure effective management and compliance with legal duties, including statutory filings with Charity Commission and management of conflicts of interest.