

Slough Borough Council

Report To: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

Date: 29 April 2025

Subject: Launching a Task and Finish Group to scrutinise the Improvement and Recovery Programme

Chief Officer: **Sonia Khan,** Director of Strategy .

Contact Officers: **Michael Edley** Scrutiny and Governance officer.

Ward(s): All

Exempt: No

Appendices: **Appendix A: Governance of I&R Programme including scrutiny**
Appendix B: Scope of Task group

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report recommends launching the committee's next Task and Finish Group to be convened in June 2025 and included in the committee's forward plan for 2025-26..
- 1.2 The task group will focus on the Improvement and Recovery programme and will operate throughout the year. Appendix A sets out the governance of the I&R Programme, with additional text and Table E describing the mechanisms by which Scrutiny will engage with the governance boards to identify focused topics for the work of the task group.
- 1.3 Appendix B sets out the scope of the task group in CISCs usual format
- 1.4 Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a. Approves the scope of the task group and the mechanisms by which it will engage with, prioritise, scrutinise and make recommendations, as set out in Appendices A and B; and**
- b. Resolves to formally convene the task group at its June meeting following a request to Group leaders to nominate a member of the committee to be join the task group.**

Commissioner Review

2. Report

- 2.1 In accordance with this committee's terms of reference, a key element of its work should focus on work being undertaken in relation to the Improvement and recovery work programme. Following the Commissioners' 5th report in April 2020⁴, this aspect of scrutiny has stalled whilst the organisation took stock, developed a new action plan and more recently reviewed and refreshed its governance arrangements. This paper proposes to launch a 'Task and Finish Group to focus on the Improvement and recovery programme.
- 2.2 Appendix A sets out the Improvement and Recovery Programme's Governance arrangements with additional information setting out how Scrutiny will engage with its work and identify topics for scrutiny.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the Scrutiny Officer shall attend the Corporate and Service Improvement Board(CSIB) in order to discuss possible scrutiny topics with relevant directors and senior managers. These will be considered by the task group as well as themselves identifying possible areas for scrutiny. The task group will then short-list and prioritise topics. It may be that this will develop into a programme of topics through the year, or topics may be determined shortly after each CSIB.

3. Implications of the Recommendations

Financial implications

- 3.1 This is not a decision-making report so there are no direct financial implications. Where further work is required to respond to the issues identified, any recommendations from CISC will be made to the Cabinet

Legal implications

- 3.2 The Local Government Act 2000 introduced a new political management system for local councils in England and Wales, requiring them to have a separate 'executive' in the form of a leader, or elected mayor, and cabinet. To provide a counterweight for this, the Act also introduced the concept of 'overview and scrutiny' – sometimes referred to simply as 'scrutiny' – whereby every council with an executive management structure is required to have an overview and scrutiny committee. This enables the rest of the council to scrutinise the executive by investigating their decisions and policies, and issuing reports and recommendations where any shortcomings are identified.

Risk management implications

- 3.3 Overview and Scrutiny, commonly referred to as Scrutiny, is a statutory function and is currently subject to government direction in Slough. It is important that topics selected by the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee clearly contribute to the overall improvement drivers for the council, in order to demonstrate that the conditions of the government intervention are being met.

Equality implications

3.4 There are no specific equalities implications arising at this stage,

4. Appendices

Appendix A: Governance of I&R Programme including scrutiny

Appendix B: Draft Scope for the proposed task and finish group