

## Appendix A: Discussion Paper

<b>Subject</b>	To put forward a proposal for CISC Intervention in I&R Programme
<b>Date</b>	25/3/2025
<b>Lead</b>	Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement & Michael Edley, Scrutiny and Governance Officer

### Purpose

Clear governance, monitoring and assurance reporting arrangements need to be in place to ensure the Improvement and Recovery Plan is delivered and supports Slough to become a Best Value Council. Board functions are necessary to oversee Children's improvement, both in relation to Children's social care and SEND. The right structure of meetings therefore needs to be in place to allow Members, Commissioners and Officers to perform their function roles in the programme delivery and assurance roles needed.

With the Council's MHCLG intervention being extended to November 2026, the DFE intervention likely to be revised but also continue for a similar period and a new MDC (Managing Director Commissioner) model, this provides an opportunity to look at the existing governance structure surrounding the intervention and propose a streamlined approach that has the most impact.

Alongside this, the current refreshing of a two-year improvement and recovery plan can help connect governance much more tightly to the incremental steps that need to be taken to become a best value council and meet the directions.

### Enabling oversight, control and governance of key plans

A full two-year Improvement and Recovery Plan is under development, building on the progress update approved by Cabinet in November 2024 and the 6-month milestones approved by Cabinet in January 2025.

This work then informs a reset of the programme and the individual workstream plans. As well as reporting against this plan, a regular self-assessment against best value will also be undertaken. Progress has been seen in Children's social care and, more recently, in SEND. The Finance Improvement Programme has also been reset and is reflected, at a high level, in the Improvement and Recovery Plan. Oversight of the development and implementation of the operating model and sufficient focus needs to be given to this within governance arrangements. The proposed governance arrangements are focused on ensuring appropriate control and governance of these plans, to ensure that progress is made towards becoming a Best Value Council. With this revision to governance and action plan comes the opportunity for CISC to engage both formally and informally with the work of Improvement and recovery. This is set out below.

## New governance proposal & points of scrutiny interaction

Commissioner led					
A: Best Value & Children's Improvement Board					
Purpose and agenda items	Role in decision making	Frequency	Membership	Chair/Lead Officer	Publication? TBC
<p><b>Giving assurance to central government about the progress being made and the impact on residents' experience of Council and place.</b></p> <p>To cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement and Recovery Action Plan and all associated programmes in response to Directions and to becoming a best value council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance Improvement Plan</li> <li>Implementation of the Operating Model and Transformation Programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Children's Improvement –Children's Social Care and SEND</li> <li>Service Improvement plans</li> <li>Measures of success for improvement and recovery.</li> </ul> <p>The focus will be highlight reports on progress for each of the above, and deep dives into specific issues relating to any of the above, or crosscutting issues</p>	<p>Informs judgements made to central government</p>	<p>Every quarter (4 per year)</p>	<p>CLT, SROs, Leader and Dep Leader and Cabinet Nominees, Opposition Leader.</p> <p>MHCLG and DfE commissioner</p> <p><b>Scrutiny Chair</b> or rep will have standing item where CISC Chair can bring recommendations being made by CISC to Cabinet for BV Board to note</p>	<p>Lead Commissioner (Gavin/Paul)</p> <p>MDC /DCS</p>	

Key Member and Officer Led Boards- driving improvement and recovery					
B: Corporate and Service Improvement Board					
Purpose and agenda items	Role in decision making	Frequency	Membership	Chair /Lead Officer	Publication? TBC
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <p><b>To ensure coordinated focus on improvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure coordinated focus on improvement – with oversight, control and synergy between corporate and cross cutting actions and service improvement</li> </ul> <p><b>Corporate improvement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight and direction of improvement and recovery</li> <li>Decision making about changes to programme, mitigation and resource allocation</li> </ul> <p><b>Service improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review corporate performance framework and identify new issues that require responses and improvement support</li> <li>To review impact of investment in service improvement</li> <li>To review service improvement plans including inspection responses</li> </ul> <p><b>Operating Model and Transformation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>implementation of the Operating Model and Transformation to ensure that the Council gets to a sustainable future operating model for council with a balanced MTFS.</li> <li>Define and direct roles for strategic partner/s</li> <li>Oversee wider workstreams that need to be proactively aligned to the operating model – workforce, digital, commissioning and prevention</li> <li>Decision making about changes to programme, mitigation and resource allocation</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Commissioner slot:</b> to offer critical challenge and feedback</li> <li><b>Scrutiny Slot</b> to discuss/request scrutiny topics for further informal investigation based upon above discussions</li> </ul>	Yes- as CLT Members	<p>8 per year</p> <p>Alternating between Corporate Improvement and Service Improvement</p>	<p>CLT, Corporate and Service Improvement leads, Operating Model workstream leads Leader and Dep Leader Lead Commissioner for Transformation Cabinet nominees</p> <p><b>Scrutiny Officer to receive papers and attend board to explore potential scrutiny deep dives with board members.</b></p> <p><b>Task and finish group will decide topics for deep dives in workshop approx. 2 weeks after each board meeting (pre-diarised)</b></p>	Leader / Deputy Leader Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement	

Key Member and Officer Led Boards- driving improvement and recovery					
C: Financial Improvement Board					
Purpose and agenda items	Role in decision making	Frequency	Membership	Chair /Lead Officer	Publication? TBC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversight and direction of Financial Improvement Programme</li> <li>Consider Council's approach to Debt, reserves and Exceptional Financial support</li> <li>Assessing progress on associated programmes including procurement, contract management, internal audit and risk</li> </ul> <p>Decision making about changes to programme, mitigation and resource allocation</p> <p>Commissioner slot: to offer critical challenge and feedback</p>	Yes- as CLT Members	8 per year	CLT, SROs, Leader and Dep Leader Lead Commissioner for Finance	Lead Member for Finance ED Finance and Corporate Resources	

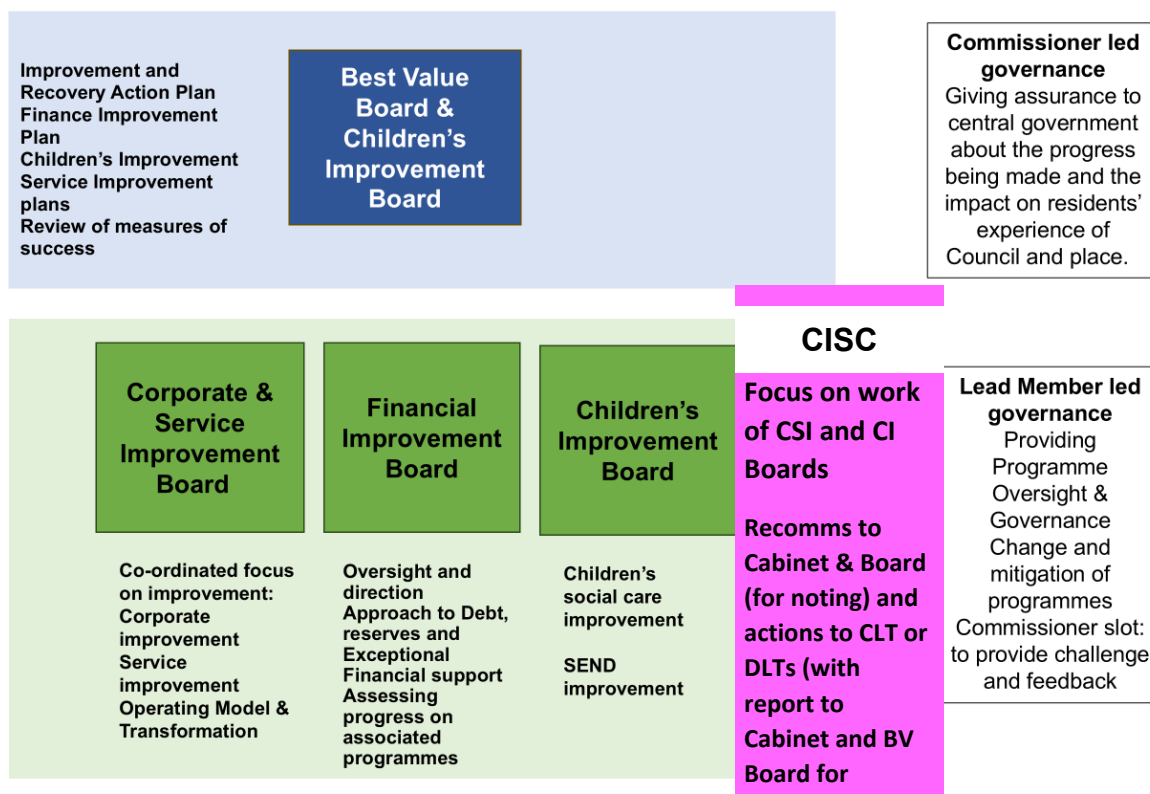
Key Member and Officer Led Boards- driving improvement and recovery					
D: Children's Services and Youth Justice Improvement Board TBC <sup>1</sup>					
Purpose and agenda items	Role in decision making	Frequency	Membership	Chair /Lead Officer	
<p>(To confirm)</p> <p>Providing Programme Oversight &amp; Governance</p> <p>Change and mitigation of programmes</p> <p>Commissioner slot: to provide challenge and feedback</p> <p>Oversight of Children's Improvement Plans</p> <p>Social Care</p> <p>SEND</p>		TBC	CLT, SROs, Lead Member DfE Commissioner /improvement advisor, SCF Board reps	Lead Member	

<sup>1</sup> Details still being finalised

## CISC Members and Officer Task and finish group.

### E: Scrutiny I&R Task and Finish Group

Purpose	Role in decision making	Frequency	Membership	Chair /Lead Officer	Publication of reports?
<p>Meeting informally 2 weeks after each C&amp;SIB or Children's IB meeting. The scrutiny officer will attend boards B and D, where progress of the various workstreams in the I&amp;R Action plan (See B above for more detail) is discussed leading to identification of potential topics for deep dives which may be requested by the board or subsequently proposed by Task and finish group members on basis of feedback by scrutiny officer.</p> <p>Task group members will then decide on deep-dive topic/s for each workshop. Guidance on the criteria members might apply to shortlist and/or prioritise topics will be provided.</p> <p>Deep dives will be through informal workshop style exploration at C/DLT level to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasons for and impact of project over-run/spend; and/or</li> <li>• Possible mitigation and/or</li> <li>• other issues of concern.</li> </ul> <p>Based on these scrutiny deep dives and reports the task group may propose to CISC, in a formal report, that it make recommendations to Cabinet and for noting by BV Board.</p> <p>It may also suggest actions to CLT or director with report to Cabinet &amp; BV Board for noting. In both cases it will use cabinet style reporting template <b>Via</b> formal precursor report to CISC</p>	None directly	<p>Normally 2 weeks after each C&amp;SIB but as required, i.e. Approx 8/year</p> <p>Each workshop will require contribution from relevant Directors/Senior Managers</p>	Membership limited to 4 CISC members for rapid response (agile etc) to respond informally to specific issues raised at C&SIB or Children's board	<p>No Chair as informal, not decision making – can only make recommendations by consensus via CISC to Cabinet and for noting by BV Board or propose actions directly to C or D LTs but flagging to BV Board for them to note</p>	<p>Reports to CISC will be published as will subsequent recommendations to Cabinet</p> <p>This is important, not least to measure the impact of scrutiny CISC. Impact will be measured initially by cabinet response and then through updates following implementation if appropriate.</p>



### Agenda setting – each Board

Chair(s), relevant Commissioner and Lead officer to meet regularly and formally to review minutes and matters arising and agree agendas and forward plan.

### Briefing Members

Alongside this the following is proposed to develop Member oversight on Improvement and Recovery:

- regular briefings are arranged to update Lead Members on Improvement and Recovery
- quarterly briefings are held for all members, following each Best Value and Children's Improvement Board
- strengthening the link between this governance and regular meetings between Directors and Lead Members
- develop regular workshops and away days with Lead Members and CLT

### Report sign-off for Cabinet and other decision making bodies

This will now be done by Executive Directors/CLT/CMD, rather than involving other Commissioners directly. Commissioners will dip sample the quality of reports.