

Slough Borough Council

Report To: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee (CISC)

Date: 29 April 2025

Subject: Report of the Budget Task and Finish Group

Chief Officer: Sukdave Ghuman Monitoring Officer

Contact Officers: Michael Edley Scrutiny and Governance officer.

Ward(s): All

Exempt: No

Appendices and Annexes: **ANNEX A:**

1. Summary and Recommendations

Summary

- 1.1 The report (Annex A) provides an account of the work of the Budget Task and Finish Group between its launch in July 2024 and the end of March 2025.
- 1.2 It also summarises members' and officers' reflections on the effectiveness of the approach taken and discusses the impact of budget scrutiny over this period.
- 1.3 There was broad agreement that scrutiny of the budget was a significant improvement on the previous year, but that there needed to be further action by the Scrutiny Officer (working with the Finance team) in response to suggestions that would improve on the adopted approach and address a couple of concerns that had arisen over the course of the year.
- 1.4 The report therefore makes five recommendations for action by the Scrutiny Officer.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- a. **Note the findings in the report;**
- b. **Resolves to re-launch the task and finish group at its meeting in June; and**
- c. **Direct the Scrutiny Officer to initiate implementation of the 5 recommendations in the report, ideally before the June meeting of CISC so that they can take effect when the new task group convenes in July.**

Commissioner Review

2. Report

2.1 The body of this report can be found in Annex A

3. Implications of the Recommendations

Financial implications

3.1 This is not a decision-making report so there are no direct financial implications.

3.2 Where further work is required to respond to the issues identified, any recommendations from CISC will be made to the Cabinet

Legal implications

3.3 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

3.4 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

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

4. Appendices and Annexes

Annex A: Report of the Budget Task and Finish Group: Budget in-year management, Budget planning 2025-26 and the MTFS