

Slough Borough Council

Report To: Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee

Date: 29 April 2025

Subject: Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25

Chief Officer: Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer

Contact Officers: Colin Sweeney, Head of Governance and Scrutiny and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Michael Edley, Scrutiny and Governance Officer

Ward(s): All

Exempt: NO

Appendices: A: Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to comment on and endorse the Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25 (appended) which will be submitted to Council..

Recommendations:

- 1.2** Committee is recommended to:

- a.** Endorse the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25, and
- b.** Recommend to Council:
 - That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 be noted and
 - The improvement made by the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee be commended.

Reason: It is a requirement of the constitution that a Scrutiny Annual Report be presented to Council. The Annual Report is important evidence for Members, the public and Commissioners of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function during 2024/25. It is critical that councillors understand the function and value that scrutiny is intended to have during the council's current financial and governance crisis, and that all members take an active role in its continued improvement.

MHCLG Commissioner Review:

2. Report

- 2.1** Overview and Scrutiny is an important part of the Council's governance arrangements. It is a requirement of the constitution that an annual report about scrutiny's business be presented to Council. The Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25 is appended to this covering report. It is self-contained and self-explanatory.
- 2.2** As covered in Section 2 of the appended Annual Report 2024/25, Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State monitor, as part of a suite of Directions made to the council, the Council's progress on achieving "improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the scrutiny function". The Annual Report is important evidence for Members, officers, the public and Commissioners of the work of the Scrutiny function during 2023/24, and how the council intends to sustain its improvement trajectory.
- 2.3** The annual report sets out a number of sources of information that describe and evaluate scrutiny activity over the last year, members views of scrutiny and CISC members reflections on the past year and further areas of improvement to include in the refreshed action plan for 2025-26.

3. Implications of the Report and recommendations to council

Financial implications

- 3.1** None

Legal implications

- 3.2** The Council has a duty to provide Best Value and the government has published [draft Best Value guidance](#) against which the council expects to be measured. This mentions the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements. The Council must also be mindful of the [Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities](#) published by what was then the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in May 2019, and the legislation on which this stands, when considering the design and effectiveness of its scrutiny function.

Risk management implications

- 3.3** The risk of either not endorsing an annual report or of endorsing a substandard or incorrect annual report is primarily of reputational damage to the council.
- 3.4** Furthermore the risk to the council of having a substandard scrutiny function is substantial even without it being the subject of one of the [specific improvement directions made by the Secretary of State in December 2021](#).

Environmental implications

- 3.5** None

Equality implications

- 3.6** None

4. Appendices

- A: Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25