

## Slough Borough Council

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| <b>Report To:</b>                   | <b>Cabinet</b>   |
| <b>Date:</b>                        | 21 July 2025   |
| <b>Subject:</b>                     | 2024-25 Q4 Corporate Performance Report                            |
| <b>Lead Member:</b>                 | Cllr Mabu Shaik - Lead Member for Performance                      |
| <b>Chief Officer:</b>               | Will Tuckley - Chief Executive                                     |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>             | Sonia Khan - Director of Strategy, Change, and Resident Engagement |
| <b>Ward(s):</b>                     | All  |
| <b>Key Decision:</b>                | No   |
| <b>Exempt:</b>                      | No   |
| <b>Decision Subject to Call In:</b> | No   |
| <b>Appendices:</b>                  | A - Corporate Performance Report 2024-25 Q4                        |

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

This corporate performance reporting cycle is a core element of the council's performance management framework. It supports the administration in identifying and addressing underperformance in areas with the greatest impact on residents. The need to strengthen this approach has been highlighted by external auditors, the Annual Governance Statement, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, along with MHCLG Commissioners. This framework has now been in place since the start of the 2024/25 financial year.

#### Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note and comment on the council's current performance and mitigating actions as measured by the key performance indicators within the corporate management information report and scorecard.

#### Commissioner Review

This report is outside the scope for pre-publication commissioner review; please check the [Commissioners' instruction 5 to CLT to sign off papers](#) for further details.

### 2. Report

- The most recent quarterly report available to Cabinet is the 2024/25 Q4 report, included as Appendix A. This is the fourth Cabinet report on key performance indicators from the

2024/25 corporate management information scorecard, aligned with the strategic priorities of the [Corporate Plan 2023-2027](#). It complements risk, finance, and audit reports within the corporate assurance model, which is reported to the council's corporate leadership.

- The council's performance framework incorporates benchmarking as a key element of assurance and informed decision-making. Each performance report includes available benchmarks for key performance indicators. The framework also draws on insights from the [Local Authority Data Explorer](#) maintained by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as well as benchmarkable regulatory and statutory data releases from government departments, including those published during Q4 2024/25.
  - [MHCLG Planning speed of decisions tables](#)
  - [DEFRA Household waste management annual results](#)
  - [Cabinet Office Civil Service sickness absence 2024 report](#)
- In May 2025, the Department of Education (DfE) released a significant update to the Children's Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Tool (CSSNBT). This revision incorporated the latest 2021 Census data and a refined set of 23 socio-economic and demographic variables to improve the accuracy of identifying local authorities with similar characteristics. The updated model enhances the relevance and fairness of benchmarking across children's services by ensuring comparisons are made with more appropriate statistical neighbours. As a result, Slough's benchmark group has changed which may influence how its performance is assessed and interpreted going forward.

**Revised children's statistical neighbours for Slough (2025)**

| LA Name        | Proximity      | Region          |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Hounslow       | Very close     | London          |
| Hillingdon     | Close          | London          |
| Luton          | Close          | East of England |
| Ealing         | Close          | London          |
| Redbridge      | Close          | London          |
| Harrow         | Somewhat close | London          |
| Brent          | Somewhat close | London          |
| Peterborough   | Somewhat close | East of England |
| Waltham Forest | Somewhat close | London          |
| Leicester      | Somewhat close | East Midlands   |

These revised neighbours better reflect Slough's urban, diverse, and socio-economically mixed profile enabling more meaningful comparisons in key areas such as:

- Children looked after
- Child protection
- Special educational needs (SEN)
- Educational attainment

This updated benchmarking group will support strategic planning, funding decisions, and service improvements for children and families in Slough.

- As part of the council's Improvement and Recovery Plan, a dedicated vision and evidence-based decision making workstream has been established to assess the broader business environment and ensure a coordinated approach to strengthening evidence-based decision-making. This includes:

- Designing and embedding a new corporate and service performance framework
  - Enhancing corporate delivery and service planning
  - Expanding the council's shared evidence base, building on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Slough Insights Pack
- As part of the annual performance cycle, the council has refreshed its corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2025/26 to ensure they are concise, aligned, meaningful and focused on driving performance. The updated metrics reflect the council's strategic priorities, support service improvement and recovery efforts and capture outcomes that matter most to our communities. They are informed by survey-based insights including feedback from residents, Members, tenants and staff as well data from complaints. Reporting on the revised KPIs is scheduled to begin in Q1 of 2025/26 financial year.

### Corporate Performance Scorecard for 2025/26

| Outcome   | Corporate Key Performance Indicators  | 2025/26 target                    | CLT Lead  |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Priority 1<br>A borough for children and young people to thrive                           | Percentage of new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks including exceptions   | >=national average                | ED for Children's Services                      |
|   | Percentage of eligible 2-year-old children benefitting from funded early education  | >=60%                             | ED for Children's Services                      |
|   | Child development: percentage of children achieving a good level of development in all five domains at 2 to 2.5 years old | >= national average               | Director of Public Health and Public Protection |
|   | Proportion of children obese including severely obese at Year 6   | <= national average               | Director of Public Health and Public Protection |
|   | Percentage of 16–17-year-olds not in education, employment, and training (NEET) or whose activity is not known            | <=national average                | ED for Children's Services                      |
|   | Percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training   | >=52%                             | ED for Children's Services                      |
|   | Rate per 10,000 of Children Looked After (CLA)  | Metric in place to monitor trends | ED for Children's Services                      |
| Priority 2<br>A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives | The percentage of carers who receive self-directed support [ASCOF 3D1b]   | >=national average                | ED for Adults Services                          |
|   | Percentage of clients accessing long term support in the community at the end of the year [LTS001B)                       | >=national average                | ED for Adults Services                          |
|   | Percentage of total eligible population aged 40-74 received an NHS Health Check in the quarter                            | >=national average                | Director of Public Health and Public Protection |
|   | Percentage of eligible adults managing their care via a direct payment [ASCOF 3D2a]                                       | >=national average                | ED for Adults Services                          |
|   | Percentage of safeguarding referrals that meet section 42   | >=national average                | ED for Adults Services                          |
|   | Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) - self reported smokers in the Annual Population Survey (APS)                          | <=national average                | Director of Public Health and Public Protection |
| Priority 3<br>A cleaner, healthier and  | Average re-let time in days for HRA standard voids [BVPI 212]   | <=35 days                         | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment    |

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| more prosperous Slough | Number of homeless cases prevented   | >=12  | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment       |
|                        | Tenant satisfaction survey: Percentage of tenants who responded satisfied with the overall service provided by Slough Borough Council Housing [TPO1] | >= national average                             | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment       |
|                        | Percentage of SBC emergency housing repairs completed within agreed timescale  | >=99%   | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment       |
|                        | Percentage of decisions made on major planning applications within 13 weeks or timescale agreed with applicant                                       | >=65%   | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment       |
|                        | Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting   | >=40%   | ED for Regeneration, Housing and Environment       |
| Corporate Health       | Council tax arrears  | End of year 12% (£1.325m) reduction to £9.645m  | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Business rates arrears   | End of year 12% (£3.011m) reduction to £22.080m | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Measurement of financial resilience  | tbc   | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Percentage of suppliers paid within 30 days  | tbc   | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Interim staffing costs (£)   | Metric in place to monitor trends               | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Percentage of staff equalities data recorded on Agresso  | Metric in place to monitor trends               | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Staff turnover rate  | Metric in place to monitor trends               | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Number of working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE employee   | Metric in place to monitor trends               | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Staff survey: I would recommend Slough Borough Council as a great place to work  | >=65%   | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Staff survey: I am proud to work for Slough Borough Council  | >=75%   | ED for Corporate Resources                         |
|                        | Percentage of customer service calls answered  | >=80%   | Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement |
|                        | Percentage of customer facing enquiry box emails responded to within 5 working days  | 100%  | Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement |
|                        | Percentage of complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2   | Metric in place to monitor trends               | Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement |
|                        | Resident survey: I am very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live  | >=55%   | Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement |
|                        | Resident survey: I trust Slough Borough Council a great deal or a fair amount.   | >=30%   | Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement |

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| Members survey: I have confidence in Slough Borough Council senior officers                              | >=50% | Director of Law and Governance<br>Monitoring Officer |
| Members survey: There is a healthy culture and good ways of working overall between Members and officers | >50%  | Director of Law and Governance<br>Monitoring Officer |

- A council-wide data strategy is in development within the improving the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) workstream alongside the creation of a technical framework and platform to support data warehousing and analytics.
- There has also been notable progress in improving the integrity of service-level data within business systems. This has enhanced the quality of statutory data submissions, including the Adult Social Care client-level dataset and SEN2 person-level returns. Additionally, Power BI dashboards are in development for early intervention, SEND operations, and Housing, integrating multiple data sources into their design.

### Latest insights on corporate performance

- Overall, at the end of Mar-25 the strategic performance picture remains variable with 23% (11) of the 47 key performance indicators (KPIs) performing either at or better than target, 9% (4) indicators are performing marginally worse than target, and 34% (16) indicators are performing below the red KPI threshold, and 32% (15) indicators are monitored for trends. A further 2% (1) metric in development.
  - Priority 2: Percentage of refuse bins collected on time.
- Compared to the previous month or similar period from last year, performance has improved for 32% (15) of the 47 KPIs, remained the same for 17% (8) and declined for 38% (18). A further 11% (5) are metrics with no previous trends and the remaining 2% (1) metric is in development.
- Appendix A to this report summarises progress against the Council's priorities as presented in December 2024. The report includes:
  - Summary progress against the strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan.
  - Areas for recognition, where the council can learn from promising practice - trends that indicate the council is on track for delivering its objectives.
  - Areas of improvement – trends that indicate the council is improving although performance currently below agreed target.
  - Areas that require a continued focus on improvement - trends that indicate the council is not on track for delivering its strategic objectives.
- In Appendix A, pages 2 to 11 outline the performance scorecard trends against the 47 strategic KPIs, and the mitigating actions and action owners. Each action has an assigned Executive Director owner, who is accountable for the performance level, and who will assign responsibility for delivery to officers. Further, pages 17 to 25 include charts showing trends over time for each metric along with progress against target agreed.

## Areas of improvements

- **Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans**  
During March 2025, 65 new EHC plans were issued with an additional 51 plans in draft, marking the highest monthly total since the introduction of the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and exceeding target of 35 or more. 29.0% of EHC plans due for completion during March (9 out of 31) were issued within the 20-week statutory timescale, marking an improvement of 5.5% from the previous month.

When considering all EHC plans completed in March including those issued beyond the 20-week deadline, 13.8% (9 out of 65) met the statutory timeframe, an improvement from 8.6% in February (3 out of 35). Completion rates are expected to continue improving steadily as the team works through the backlog of outstanding assessments. In addition, the team has also been focused on managing the time-intensive statutory post-16 phase transfers which were due by 31 March 2025.

- **Housing repairs**  
100% (604) of Slough Borough Council's emergency housing repairs were completed within the agreed timescales during March 2025. Responsive repairs to complete rose to 1,356, up from 1,256 the previous month, but remain at a manageable level. On-time completion for all housing repairs reached 90%, the highest rate in the past 12 months bringing performance closer to the 95% target. Repairs completed in a single visit stood at 88%, consistently exceeding the target and reflecting Cardo's reliability in resolving straightforward issues efficiently.  
Year 4 of the planned maintenance programme concluded in March 2025, with Year 5 scheduled to commence in April. The Wave 2.2 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) carbon reduction programme is progressing well and remains on track. Additionally, a successful bid for Wave 3.0 has secured £6.3m in funding over the next three years.
- **Customer service**  
All 880 customer-facing enquiry box emails were responded to within five working days in March 2025, maintaining 100% compliance. However, compared to similar period last year, there was a rise in call volumes (from 5.9k to 7.1k), a drop in the percentage of calls answered (from 91.1% to 75.2%), and an increase in average wait times (from 3 minutes 18 seconds to 11 minutes 21 seconds). These changes were impacted by the distribution of annual rent increase letters, 1.5 days of department-wide training, and staff time allocated for end-of-year review preparations.
- **Children's services repeat referrals**  
In February 2025, 16.6% (44 children) had a repeat referral within 12 months, rate better than the target tolerance of less than or equal to 22%. This included two large sibling groups (4+ children) and eight sibling groups of three children each, returning within a year of their previous referral.  
Each repeat referral is reviewed by the Head of Service, Team Manager, and Allocated Worker to assess whether it could have been avoided and to share learning across the service.

## Areas of improvement although performance below agreed target

- **Void re-let times**

There has been an improvement in the average re-let time for standard voids, decreasing from 193 days in December 2024 to 52 days in March 2025 for 10 HRA standard voids. This progress is largely due to the team's focus on addressing long-term voids, including one case that had been vacant for 406 days. Continued improvement is expected. However, the number of standard voids increased during March to 50 (20 ready to let), compared to 38 (8 ready to let) at the end of February 2025.
- **Staff turnover**

Staff turnover has slightly improved, reducing from 10.5% (rolling year to December 2024) to 10.0% (rolling year to March 2025). This includes:

  - 8.1% voluntary resignations (employee-initiated)
  - 1.9% involuntary turnover (employer-initiated)

The current rate aligns with the 10% benchmark for a healthy turnover rate. New joiners are now offered a survey to capture their onboarding experience. Additionally, the recruitment site is under review to enhance its appeal, and exit interviews are being actively encouraged and facilitated by HR. Learning & Development is also working on career pathways across SBC.
- **Staff equalities**

A small improvement was seen in the recording of staff equalities data on Agresso, rising from 55.6% in December 2024 to 58.5% in March 2025. The declaration methodology has been updated to align with best practice, excluding staff without access to work laptops. The importance of data declaration is now emphasized in both the corporate induction and the Line Managers Essentials Training Programme (LMEP), launched in January 2025.
- **Sickness absence**

The average number of working days lost due to sickness per FTE improved from 10.8 (rolling year to December 2024) to 9.6 (rolling year to March 2025). The reporting methodology has been revised in line with best practice. HR Business Partners are working closely with services to ensure effective sickness management. A revised sickness absence policy is also in development to streamline processes and reduce administrative burden.

## Areas that require a continued focus on improvement

- **Business rates collection**

Despite taking appropriate recovery actions, Slough's business rates collection rate of 97.43% for March 2025, falls short of the 99.00% year-end target and below 98.93% achieved in the same period last year. However, our rate remains above the national average of 97.2%. Notably, three other Berkshire unitary councils also reported lower year-end collection rates compared to the previous year. In 2024/25, the total business rates due to collect increased by £14.585m, with £12.641m more collected in cash terms than in 2023/24. Prepayments received during the year were £1.662m significantly lower than the £2.619m received the previous year. Encouragingly, 2025/26 has started positively with £5.027m in prepayments already received.

- Council tax collection**

The council tax collection rate for March 2025 of 94.21%, slightly below both the 94.61% recorded for the same period last year and the 95.00% year-end target. This trend is consistent across all Berkshire unitary councils.

The ongoing cost-of-living pressures continue to affect residents' ability to pay, and while support is provided to those needing extended payment periods, the target was not met despite recovery efforts.

In 2024/25, an additional £8.064m in council tax was due to collect, with £7.246m more collected than the previous year. Prepayments totalled £1.242m, down from £1.767m in 2023/24. The new financial year has begun with a £0.167m increase in prepayments. However, it's important to note that households previously receiving 100% council tax support are now required to contribute 20%, unless granted a hardship payment.
- Audit actions**

The percentage of overdue audit actions rose to 13.1% (82 actions) at the end of March 2025, up from 11.9% (75 actions) in February 2025. While two recommendations closed, nine new actions became overdue during the month.

Overdue actions are regularly shared with each Directorate, Audit & Governance Committee Members, and the Assurance CLT. The Internal Audit Team continues to verify and quality-assure evidence of completed actions.
- NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) rate**

There was a slight improvement in the percentage of 16–17-year-olds in Slough who are NEET or whose activity is unknown, decreasing from 9.3% in January 2025 to 7.7% in February 2025. However, this remains significantly above the national average of 5.1%, placing Slough in the bottom quartile nationally.

The proportion of 'not knowns' remains high at 4.1%, compared to 1.6% nationally. This increase is linked to a gap in data and tracking staff between October 2024 and mid-December 2024. Since then, an interim part-time staff member and two data and tracking advisors have been appointed. However, the number of calls to unknowns remains lower than this time last year. A business case is under review to expand Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) sessions to more locations to better support this cohort.
- Recycling rate**

The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, or composting dropped to 18.7% in March 2025, down from 20.4% this period last year. This remains well below the 40% target and significantly below compared to the 2023/24 national average (42.3%), South-East regional average (46.2%), and CIPFA nearest neighbours' average (36.7%).

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### *Financial implications*

- The strategic performance indicators are directly aligned with the priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan. This plan reinforces the Council's commitment to financial prudence and delivering Best Value for residents. Any additional funding required to improve performance must be sourced from within the existing council revenue budgets.

- A separate quarterly finance report is presented to Cabinet, detailing Slough Borough Council's financial performance and complementing the insights provided in this report. Maintaining strong financial discipline is essential to delivering the Corporate Plan and ensuring the Council achieves and sustains a stable financial position.
- The Q4 corporate performance report highlights several areas with both direct and indirect financial implications for the Council, underscoring the importance of aligning performance improvements with sound financial management.

#### *Legal implications*

- Whilst there is no statutory requirement to report performance to Cabinet regularly, the Council, as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999, has a legal duty to secure continuous improvement in how its functions are exercised, with regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Regular performance reporting supports the Council in demonstrating Best Value. The national Best Value Framework, now finalised following consultation, is used by the Council to guide further improvement actions.
- The Government's Best Value guidance encourages local authorities to be open to challenge and support. It promotes the use of performance indicators, benchmarking, and transparency. Key themes include:
  - Service Delivery: Using data to assess service efficiency and benchmarking against comparable authorities.
  - Continuous Improvement: Regular monitoring, performance reporting, and updating of improvement plans.
  - Governance: Ensuring performance data measures outcomes effectively and is used to address underperformance.

#### *Risk management implications*

- Mitigating actions are in place for strategic performance indicators where trends indicate the need for intervention. These actions are proposed by the responsible manager and monitored through monthly updates at the Assurance CLT forum, led by the relevant Executive Director (or delegate).
- The Assurance CLT forum provides a comprehensive view of the organisation's health by reviewing finance, risk, and performance together, supporting informed decision-making and improvement planning.

#### *Environmental implications*

- Strategic performance indicators aligned to priority 3 of the corporate plan retains and expands upon environmental commitments under the following strategic objective '*reducing Slough's carbon footprint, promoting active travel and sustainable forms of transport, and taking action to prevent or minimise the impact of climate change*'.

### *Equality implications*

- Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people with and without protected characteristics.
- The Council is required to consider how to reduce disadvantage, meet the needs of protected groups, and encourage their participation in public life. Performance data plays a key role in identifying service gaps and informing actions to address inequalities.

### **4. Background Papers**

None