

## **COUNCIL – 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025**

### **MEMBER QUESTIONS**

#### **1. Councillor Mohammad to Councillor E Ahmed**

Slough has some of the lowest levels of social connection in England in a report highlighting risks one year on from the 2024 riots. Can you advise what constructive work you have done to address or plan to do?

##### **Reply**

As the member references, reports from UCL Policy Lab, Citizens UK and More in Common do identify that residents in Slough are less likely than average to feel socially connected. That is concerning, because the evidence shows that communities with weaker social connection are at greater risk of unrest.

While Slough thankfully did not experience unrest in 2024 or in recent weeks, we take this issue seriously. Earlier this year, the Council created a more coordinated system to identify early signs of community tension and track the risks to cohesion. This has already shaped our communications and the way we engage with residents. Over the summer, we brought community partners together to strengthen this work. They were clear that the biggest risk to cohesion in Slough is economic inequality — and that is shaping our forward plans.

Alongside this, we are investing in community activities that bring people together, from the “Community Connectors” programme to the Wellbeing for Slough directory, the Co-Production Network, and the One Slough Community Fund, which this year is supporting projects as diverse as cultural enrichment, eco-therapy and community art. In Adult Social Care, residents themselves now co-chair steering groups, giving people a direct voice in shaping services.

So while the report is a reminder not to be complacent, I can assure Council that we are already acting — through stronger partnership working, new resident engagement channels like the borough newsletter, and targeted investment in community connection. These measures will come together in the cohesion approach going to Cabinet in October.

#### **2. Councillor Matloob to Councillor Manku**

With a recent report detailing how Slough is the only place in the UK with the fastest-growing pollution rise due in part to surging data centres, (with already over 30 massive data centres) are you able to advise what your plan is in regard to commercial emissions?

##### **Reply**

Slough is home to more than 30 data centres, which play a critical role in the national economy. It is important to be clear about the limits of local authority powers: data centres are designated by Government as Critical National Infrastructure, so councils cannot control whether or not they are built here. What we can do is apply planning conditions around matters such as generator testing to minimise local pollution.

The wider picture is that, although data centres are energy-intensive, emissions from this sector in Slough have been falling since their peak in 2012. Government data published this July shows total borough emissions are down nearly 33% since 2012. Commercial emissions have fallen significantly too, with 2020, 2021 and 2023 recording the lowest levels to date.

The direction of travel nationally is towards cleaner energy, more efficient cooling technologies, and new regulations such as the Heat Network Regulations 2025, which will encourage waste heat from data centres to be reused in homes and offices.

Slough's Climate Change Strategy commits us to net zero by 2040, and while the largest levers sit with Government, we are using our influence locally: through planning policy, through sustainability conditions in the new Local Plan, and through collaboration with industry. Slough's data centre capacity powers the national digital economy, but emissions here are reducing, and they will continue to fall as the grid decarbonises.

### **3. Councillor Gahir to Councillor E Ahmed**

While thanks to the Labour Party motion fly tipping will likely be tackled in a more constructive way, are you able to advise what action you have taken in regards to fly tipping in privately-owned areas, in specifically have you met up with managing agents or housing associations & what's the plan to tackle?

#### **Reply**

Tackling fly-tipping is one of the public's biggest priorities, and since June we have established a dedicated team funded through the Extended Producer Responsibility grant. In just three months this has delivered £60,000 worth of fines, backed up by education campaigns, hotspot enforcement and three new mobile ANPR cameras.

The law is clear that landowners are responsible for clearing fly-tipping on private land. That said, we do not simply walk away. We work directly with housing associations and managing agents where problems occur, and support them with advice and enforcement where appropriate.

Looking forward, we intend to go further. As part of the review of HMO licensing, we will look at strengthening conditions on landlords to ensure proper waste management arrangements are in place. That will help reduce the chance of repeat problems on private land.

So while our enforcement focus has to be on public land where we have clear powers, we are engaging managing agents and landlords, and building new requirements into licensing to address the problem at its source.

### **4. Councillor Gill to Councillor Stedmond**

In June an internal review of the council temporary accommodation service revealed council hasn't been carrying out Fit and proper person checks on private landlords it rents properties from, are you able to advise your plan to remedy this?

### Reply

Ensuring that landlords providing accommodation on behalf of the Council meet the highest standards is essential, both to safeguard vulnerable residents and to maintain public confidence in the way temporary accommodation is managed.

Whilst we already carry out a range of checks as part of the landlord on-boarding process, from this month all landlords supplying temporary accommodation to the Council will also be required to complete a Fit and Proper Person Declaration Form. Each form will be reviewed and retained for compliance purposes, strengthening accountability.

To uphold the integrity of this process, we are introducing targeted spot checks. These will verify the accuracy of submitted declarations and provide ongoing assurance that landlords remain suitable throughout their engagement with the Council. Where any concerns are identified, they will be addressed swiftly and appropriately.

In addition to these new requirements, our wider due diligence framework continues to apply. This includes rigorous checks on property standards, health and safety compliance, and safeguarding arrangements — all of which are central to protecting residents and maintaining quality in accommodation provision.

Taken together, these measures provide a robust and comprehensive assurance framework. They demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding vulnerable residents, ensuring that only suitable landlords are engaged, while also delivering value for money for the Council and the wider community.

### **5. Councillor Instone to Councillor Chahal**

Does SBC maintain statistics on the number of unauthorised flags removed from SBC property since the start of 2025? Is it possible to have a breakdown of removals on a monthly basis?

### Reply

Since the start of 2025, the Council has removed approximately 115 unauthorised flags from Council property. This includes around 90 Palestinian flags and 25 others. These removals have been carried out consistently across the year where flags have been erected without permission.

### **6. Councillor Mann to the Leader of the Council**

In the last report that Commissioners made to the Minister, it was highlighted that the council has struggled to recruit and retain senior staff. Within the last 2 years we have seen at least 3 changes in the section 151 officer, with a further Interim s.151 appointed for the foreseeable. How can the Leader provide confidence that there is the stability, capability and rigour required to ensure financial recovery given these ever-changing roles and is the change in s.151 officers linked to the commissioner-imposed recruitment freeze on non-essential or non-income generating roles?

### Reply

The Section 151 Officer is one of the three statutory corporate posts required to lead the Council. Following the departure of the previous Executive Director of Corporate Resources/Section 151 Officer, we have appointed an interim to ensure this statutory role is fulfilled. This provides the Council with stability and continuity while allowing time to review the remit of the post before progressing to a permanent recruitment process in early 2026. Given the statutory nature of the position, it is exempt from the current temporary pause on recruitment.

## **7. Councillor Parmar to Councillor Kelly**

Please can you confirm the number of vehicles which have been removed from the streets of Slough since the introduction of the council's new vehicle removals policy for drivers who do not pay their parking tickets.

### Reply

Following Cabinet approval, the Council began implementing its new vehicle removal policy on 29 July. This allows us to remove vehicles from the streets of Slough where drivers have failed to pay Penalty Charge Notices.

Between July and September, 72 vehicles have been removed: 8 in July, 47 in August, and 17 so far in September. This shows the policy is already having an impact. It reinforces the message that non-payment will not be tolerated and ensures fairness for the majority of residents who do pay their fines.