

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Employment Committee
Date:	20 th January 2026
Subject:	Performance Policy – revision
Chief Officer:	Will Tuckley: CEO MD Commissioner Ian ODonnell: Executive Director of Corporate Resources
Contact Officer:	Tracy Walters (Head of HR Policy and Strategy)
Ward(s):	All
Exempt:	No
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Performance Management Policy Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1. The Workforce Strategy was published to all staff on May 14th, 2025, after extensive all staff consultation. The strategy covers a two-year trajectory and will be reviewed annually to ensure HR supports the business by focusing on and investing in, the right areas. One of priorities in the strategy is 'Getting the basics right' is ensuring our line managers have the tools to do the job. Key to this is to ensure managers support staff with their performance and implementing organisational change. To this end, HR has revised the performance management policy.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to note updates to policies and endorse change.

Reason: The Workforce Strategy is committed to strengthening our organisational culture, and a key part of this is ensuring employees are supported to perform at their best. Effective performance management provides clarity, consistency and fairness, enabling staff to thrive, adapt to change and access the right support when challenges arise. Aligning our policies with ACAS best practice is essential to achieving a transparent and supportive approach that promotes continuous improvement and high-quality performance across the organisation.

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

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1. The Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 sets out our purpose, our approach and our strategic priorities; to achieve any of these, we need a high performing workforce who have a culture that supports them to thrive. Updated policies aligned with best practice is key to achieving this.

Options considered

This paper does not require any options. Officers are keen for Employment Committee to note, discuss and then endorse the updated policies.

Background

The Performance Management policy was last updated in 2019. The key changes that have been made are as follows:

- Introduction of a 12-month review period, enabling managers to address recurring issues without restarting the process.
- Removal of formal warnings, replacing them with structured monitoring periods to reduce bureaucracy and focus on improvement.
- Simplification of Stage 3, moving from a formal panel to a hearing chaired by an independent manager with HR support.

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Financial implications

- 3.1.1 The financial impact of the revised performance management policy is anticipated to be positive over the longer term, with efficiency savings generated through more effective and proactive management of underperformance. By strengthening early intervention, clarifying expectations, and providing structured improvement support, the Council can reduce the costs associated with prolonged poor performance, including reduced productivity, increased supervisory time, and the need for temporary staffing or overtime to maintain service delivery. A consistent and transparent process also helps minimise the risk of formal disputes, grievances, or employment tribunals, thereby avoiding potentially significant legal and settlement costs. While there will be ongoing time investment required in management training and HR support to embed the revised policy, these costs are outweighed by the expected efficiency gains, improved workforce performance, and stronger value for money outcomes for the organisation.

3.2 Legal implications

- 3.2.1 The revised Performance Management Policy strengthens the Council's compliance with employment law by providing clearer, fairer, and more transparent processes for managing underperformance. Key legal enhancements include explicit consideration of reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities in line with the Equality Act 2010, clearer documentation requirements to evidence fair treatment, and structured decision-making frameworks that reduce the risk of inconsistency or bias. The policy also formalises investigation, hearing, and appeal

stages, ensuring adherence to ACAS guidance on performance management and minimising the likelihood of procedural flaws that could give rise to grievances or employment tribunal claims. By embedding these safeguards, the Council is better positioned to demonstrate that performance concerns are managed lawfully, objectively and proportionately, thereby reducing legal exposure and supporting defensible decision-making.

3.3 Risk management implications

3.3.1 The Corporate Risk Register highlights a strategic risk relating to the *Failure to Attract, Retain and Engage Our People*. An effective performance management framework is a key control in mitigating this risk, as it supports the development of a positive and high-performing organisational culture. The revised Performance Management Policy strengthens this position by providing clearer expectations, consistent processes, and transparent decision-making, all of which help build trust and confidence among employees. By ensuring underperformance is addressed fairly, proportionately, and with appropriate support, the policy promotes improved engagement, capability and retention. In addition, a well-structured procedure reduces the risk of unmanaged performance issues negatively impacting service delivery, employee morale, or organisational reputation. Collectively, these improvements reinforce the Council's capacity to manage workforce-related risks effectively and maintain a stable, motivated workforce.

3.4 Environmental implications

None

3.5 Equality implications

3.5.1 The revised Performance Management Policy represents a significant strengthening of the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The policy embeds fair and accountable processes that support equitable treatment for all employees, particularly those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Key equality enhancements include:

- **Fairer treatment for disabled employees**, with explicit requirements to consider reasonable adjustments at each stage of the process, ensuring that disability-related barriers are properly explored and addressed.
- **Greater consistency in decision-making**, reducing the risk of subjective judgement or unconscious bias and promoting a more equitable experience for staff across services.
- **Increased transparency**, providing clearer expectations, processes and outcomes so that all employees understand how decisions are made and what support is available.
- **Improved legal compliance**, aligning more closely with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant case law, thereby reducing the risk of discriminatory practices or legal challenge.

Overall, the policy strengthens the Council's approach to inclusive people management and supports a fair, supportive and legally robust performance framework for all employees.

3.6 *Workforce implications:*

3.6.1 The revised Performance Management Policy provides a more structured, transparent and supportive framework for addressing underperformance. This approach is expected to have a positive impact on overall workforce morale, engagement and retention by ensuring employees receive clear expectations, timely feedback and appropriate support to improve. The strengthened process also enhances managerial capability by giving managers the tools, guidance and confidence to handle performance concerns consistently and fairly across the organisation. Collectively, this contributes to a more accountable, high-performing workforce and supports the development of a positive organisational culture where employees feel valued, supported and treated equitably.

4. **Background Papers**

None