

COUNCIL – 29TH JANUARY 2026

MEMBER QUESTIONS

1. Councillor Muvvala to Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport

There are many parts of Slough where road markings are faded. Many learner drivers are struggling to learn and pass their driving tests, as the test routes also have many faded white lines. Many “Keep Clear” markings are also faded. Can you please suggest an action plan to resolve the faded road markings?

Reply

We recognise that faded road markings can impact both road safety and driver confidence, including for learner drivers using local test routes. It also matters from an aesthetic and best-value perspective: residents rightly expect their council to take care of the essential basics that keep the town attractive, well-maintained, and functioning as it should.

As part of our highway asset management approach, the Council maintains a schedule of locations where lining requires attention, and these sites are regularly assessed and prioritised.

We are currently in the process of awarding a new relining contract. Once in place, we expect priority locations across the borough to begin being refreshed early in the new year. This will allow us to tackle the most urgent faded markings, including “Keep Clear” markings and the areas most heavily used by driving instructors and test candidates.

Road marking renewal forms part of our wider highway maintenance programme. This programme is supported by the Department for Transport’s Highways Maintenance Block and Integrated Transport Block grants. Together, these funds enable us to deliver essential maintenance across the network.

For 2025/26, the Council has funding as follows:

- Integrated Transport Block: £1,360,000
- Highways Maintenance Block: £1,888,000
- Roll-forward from previous year: £650,000

Giving a total of £3.898m available for road maintenance and improvements.

Within this overall programme, we will ensure that the relining contract enables us to address the highest-priority faded markings as early as possible and continue improving the condition and safety of our road network

2. **Councillor Muvvala to Lead Member for Finance, Children & Lifelong Learning**

Can you please explain action plan based on feedback that is produced out of recent consultation on Langley/Cippenham libraries future, and the progress of the actions points towards improving library services.

Reply

Following the public consultation on the future of library services in Langley and Cippenham, the results and proposed actions were presented to and agreed by Cabinet in May 2025. Cabinet resolved that both Cippenham and Langley libraries should remain open, and the Council has since been progressing an action plan informed by consultation feedback.

All four Council libraries remain open, with existing opening hours maintained and no reductions implemented. Two full-time Library Assistant posts have been successfully recruited and are now in post, strengthening frontline capacity. Further staffing proposals, including a 30-hour Library Assistant post and a 6-hour Saturday Library Assistant post, are currently subject to approval through the ECP business case process. Agreement has also been reached to recruit to the Library Service Manager post, which will provide additional strategic and operational leadership.

A strengthened outreach and engagement programme is being delivered across Cippenham and Langley. This has included a January Health Week programme, taster reading group sessions, and participation in the national Year of Reading programme running throughout the year from April. Joint library and children's centre membership initiatives have been introduced, and a programme of school visits is commencing from April to encourage early engagement with library services.

Libraries are also actively contributing to wider place-based work. They form part of the Britwell Hub development project, and best practice emerging from this work will be reviewed to identify opportunities that could be rolled out across Cippenham and Langley. Digital drop-in sessions are planned to be introduced at both libraries from April to support residents with digital access and skills. In addition, library services are represented at Cippenham and Langley Safer Neighbourhood partnership meetings to ensure closer alignment with community safety and local priorities.

Notwithstanding this progress, a number of challenges remain. Capacity within supervisory and management teams continues to be constrained while recruitment processes are completed. There are also ongoing building issues at Cippenham Library which require significant capital investment.

The Council will continue to monitor progress against the agreed action plan and address outstanding challenges as part of its wider programme to improve and sustain library services for residents.

3. Councillor Mohammad to the Leader of the Council

Thanks to the Labour Government's 47% increase in funding for Slough, can the Leader advise which of his manifesto commitments he will use the funding to finally deliver?

Reply

The Government's Fair Funding proposals for Slough Borough Council are welcome and helpful. They recognise that Slough has pockets of significant deprivation.

However, it is important to be clear about what Fair Funding is — and what it is not.

Fair Funding was never intended to deliver manifesto commitments, and this Administration will not use it for that purpose. The additional funding forms part of a three-year settlement, with annual budgets still requiring significant savings and Exceptional Financial Support to balance.

Turning to manifesto commitments: during the 2023 local elections, the Slough Conservatives set out six clear pledges. Five of those have already been delivered in full or in substantial part, and work continues on the remaining one.

- Council Tax: We honoured our commitment not to proceed with Labour's planned 10% increase in 2024, securing a reduced increase instead. Subsequent budgets have reduced this further to the national cap of 4.9%, which remains the planned level for the remainder of this Administration.
- Missing millions: The Council has now cleared a multi-year backlog of unaudited accounts, revealing a historic breakdown in financial control. External auditors have been clear in their findings, and this has gone a long way towards fulfilling our commitment to transparency and accountability.
- Better value for money: We have reduced Council debt, cut debt-servicing costs and approved an Improvement and Recovery Action Plan with the ambition of becoming a Best Value Council by the end of 2026.
- Protecting key assets: This Administration has removed Slough Cemetery and Crematorium from the disposals list, alongside protecting and supporting over strategic assets including The Curve, Britwell Hub and Observatory House.
- University campus: My administration remain fully committed to bringing a university presence back to Slough. Engagement with several higher education providers is ongoing, and this remains a live priority for skills, opportunity and town-centre regeneration.
- Bus lanes: A comprehensive review has removed unused lanes, standardised operating hours, and improved safety. Tangentially, work is progressing on a replacement bus interchange following the fire and subsequent insurance settlement.

In summary, Fair Funding is welcome, but it is not a rescue package, nor is it funding new manifesto initiatives. It is a necessary component of stabilising a council recovering from financial failure, enabling transformation, and putting Slough on a sustainable footing for the future.

4. Councillor Gahir to the Lead Member for Public Health, Wellbeing & Equalities

A recent article referencing Government data showed that Slough ranks in the bottom quarter nationally for life expectancy, with pockets of self-reported poor health particularly in Chalvey, Elliman, Wexham Court and Baylis & Salt Hill. It also highlighted high levels of physical inactivity among residents. Can the Lead member advise when the updated play strategy will finally be published, details the planned improvements to outdoor facilities, and how the Council plans to promote physical activity across the borough?

Reply

The Council recognises that life expectancy and, in particular, healthy life expectancy in Slough are below the England average, which is a matter of serious concern. Healthy life expectancy reflects the number of years residents are likely to live in good health, and the data shows that too many residents in Slough spend a significant proportion of their lives in poor health. Improving healthy life expectancy is therefore a core priority within the Council's Corporate Plan.

One of the most effective interventions to improve healthy life expectancy is increasing levels of physical activity. In Slough, around one in three residents are currently classified as physically inactive, which contributes directly to poorer health outcomes and higher levels of long-term illness.

To address this, the Council published its Strategic Framework for Physical Activity at the end of 2025. This framework sets out a whole-system approach, structured around seven key levers for action:

- Improving safe spaces, including perceptions of safety in parks and outdoor environments
- Creating healthy environments, ensuring the built environment supports active lifestyles
- Promoting active travel, with walking and cycling encouraged as the first choice for shorter journeys
- Reviewing sport and leisure services to increase participation and accessibility
- Working with communities to understand and address barriers to being more active
- Collaborating with schools and early years settings to promote physical activity and motor skill development from an early age
- Working with healthcare organisations to embed the promotion of physical activity within prevention and treatment pathways

Detailed delivery plans for these seven levers are currently being developed with partners across the system.

Concerning the play strategy, the development of the strategy will take a minimum of 12 months, given that it must include a full assessment of both summer and winter sports provision across Slough. On this basis, the strategy is expected to be completed in 2027.

5. **Councillor Matloob to the Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport**

With £2.3 million of Government funding allocated for bus services over the next three years to improve accessibility for residents, can the Leader advise whether the Council will consider restoring bus routes that were previously withdrawn due to the lack of funding?

Reply

The Council welcomes the allocation of £2.3 million in Government funding to support bus services over the next three years and recognises the importance of accessible, reliable public transport for residents.

Slough Borough Council, working in partnership with local bus operators and key stakeholders, has developed a Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) which sets out how Department for Transport funding will be prioritised and allocated. The 2025/26 spend plan focuses on a range of measures aimed at improving bus journey times and reliability, including targeted improvements to the highway network, alongside work on ticketing arrangements and pricing to help make bus travel more attractive and affordable.

These interventions are intended to support increased patronage and the long-term sustainability of bus services across the borough. As part of ongoing engagement with bus operators in 2026/27 and beyond, the Council will continue discussions on how the network can be further improved, including consideration of new or amended routes that better meet residents' needs.

Any decisions on restoring or introducing routes will need to be informed by demand, value for money, and the ability to ensure services are sustainable in the longer term, but the Council remains committed to working with operators to maximise the benefits of the funding available and improve bus accessibility across Slough.

6. **Councillor Gill to the Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport**

The Labour Government has ensured that Slough is no longer an ignored town. Given the significant increase in funding, will the Leader now be more receptive to residents' views and reconsider plans for borough-wide parking permits, instead using this funding to improve road conditions and safety, particularly at key junctions?

Reply

Due to Slough's unique location to the west of London and in close proximity to Heathrow Airport, the borough continues to experience significant congestion and disruption caused by commuter and airport-related parking. This is compounded by high levels of parking non-compliance across residential areas, which slows traffic movement, obstructs emergency service access, and causes persistent frustration for residents.

The only viable and consistent way to address these issues at scale is through the systematic introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) across the borough. The Council will therefore continue to roll out new CPZs throughout 2026. As each scheme is developed, the Council will consult with ward councillors and local residents to ensure that, as far as possible, restrictions are appropriate to the character and needs

of each area and are designed to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and support improved air quality.

It is also important to note that parking management and highway condition improvements are not inconsistent with each other. Effective control of commuter, airport and antisocial parking enables investment in road maintenance and junction safety to have a greater and more lasting impact. Without proper parking management, congestion and obstruction would continue to undermine the benefits of any additional highway investment.

The Council remains committed to listening to residents' views, targeting investment where it will have the greatest impact, and taking the necessary decisions to improve safety, traffic movement and the overall quality of life for communities across Slough.

7. **Councillor Parmar to the Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport**

As of January 2026, Slough is one of 13 councils nationally to receive a "Red" rating from the Department for Transport for failing to meet minimum standards in road maintenance or best practice. Can the Leader outline the Council's improvement and recovery plan to move from a "Red" rating to "Amber" or "Green" by the end of 2026?

Reply

The Department for Transport's "traffic light" ratings represent a new methodology for assessing local authority performance in highway maintenance. The overall rating is derived from scores across three separate areas: levels of spend on road maintenance, the condition of the road network, and adherence to recognised best practice.

In Slough's case, the overall "Red" rating requires careful context. The Council received a "Green" rating for best practice, reflecting strong governance, asset management and compliance with national highways standards, and an "Amber" rating for road condition, indicating that the underlying condition of the network is not materially worse than many comparable authorities.

The factor driving the overall "Red" rating is the spend metric. Due to the Council's exceptional financial circumstances, Slough currently relies heavily on Government grant funding to maintain its road network and has not been able to supplement this with additional General Fund investment. This resulted in a "Red" rating for spend, which has had a disproportionate impact on the overall assessment.

The Council's improvement and recovery plan therefore focuses on both delivery and financial sustainability. Using existing Department for Transport grant funding, the Council is about to recommence its resurfacing programme, which will deliver tangible and visible improvements to road quality across the borough during 2026. This work will support further improvement in the road condition metric.

As the Council's financial position stabilises and improves through its wider recovery programme, consideration will be given to the extent to which General Fund resources can be used to supplement grant funding and increase overall investment in road maintenance. This would directly address the spend metric that currently constrains the Council's overall rating.

By maintaining strong best practice, delivering improvements to road condition through resurfacing, and increasing investment as financial capacity allows, the Council is confident that it can improve its rating.

8. Councillor Mann to the Leader of the Council

Can the Leader please confirm and commit to ensuring that the potential sale of the bus station site includes a commitment for a replacement facility?

Reply

At the Cabinet Committee meeting on 15 January, Members agreed to declare the current bus station site as surplus to operational requirements.

Since being severely damaged by fire in October 2022, the site has been unsafe, unusable, and closed to the public. It has been a long process with the insurers, during which time we've had to bear ongoing costs to keep the site secure.

I have been clear that declaring the site as technically surplus does not signal any retreat from public transport provision in Slough, and the Council remains firmly committed to delivering a modern, high-quality bus interchange as a core component of town centre regeneration.

To that end, the Council is commissioning a review of town centre bus provision to develop options for a redeveloped bus interchange that better meets the needs of passengers and bus operators, improves journey reliability, and overcomes the operational shortcomings of the previous facility. This work will inform future decisions on both the disposal of the existing site and the delivery of improved interchange provision, which will be progressed through the appropriate democratic and planning processes.

9. Councillor Akram to the Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport

The Department for Transport has published a new 'rating system' measuring how well each local highway authority is maintaining its local roads and allows local people to see how well their council is maintaining roads in their area. The ratings range from green (highest) through amber to red (lowest), and are based on three areas:

- *The current condition of local roads*
- *How much each local highway authority is spending on maintaining its local roads*
- *How effectively each local highway authority follows best practice in highways maintenance*

The 'overall rating' for Slough Borough Council is scored red, the 'condition scorecard' is amber and the 'spend scorecard' is red. Would the Lead Member for Highways confirm what new measures in the upcoming council budget will be taken to improve our 'red' ratings and when we can expect the re-introduction of customer satisfaction surveys as promised in the Annual Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report signed off by the Council Leader on 30 October 2025?

Reply

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With regard to satisfaction surveys, these are scheduled to be introduced later in 2026.