

Action Plan for Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

BLUE – action complete (C)

PURPLE – action substantially complete (SC)

ORANGE – action to be area of focus in current year’s assessment (AoF)

Action	Link to external auditor recommendation	Link to MHCLG Direction	March 2026 – Update on progress
Financial governance – Lead Officer - Executive Director Corporate Resources (Chief Finance Officer)			
Demonstrable and collective compliance with CIPFA’s Financial Management Code.	May 2021 statutory recommendation Ensure finance team has skills and capacity to enable effective financial management and technical knowledge of CIPFA Code.	Improvement and recovery plan to include: c) A review of the Authority against the CIPFA Financial Management Code to demonstrate its compliance, with recommendations to Commissioners to improve this activity within the first six months and implementation of improvements thereafter.	The council has conducted a self assessment against compliance with CIPFA’s Financial Management Code and developed an action plan to work towards demonstrable and collective compliance alongside the Financial Improvement Programme to be completed during 2026/27. Satisfactory progress, however this will remain an area of focus in future AGS due to importance.
Workforce plan to respond to recruitment gaps within finance directorate and ensure specialist capability within directorate.	May 2021 statutory recommendation Ensure finance team has skills and capacity to enable effective financial management and technical knowledge of CIPFA Code.	Improvement and recovery plan to include: d) A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.	Experienced interim Executive Director and permanent directors onboarded. Still reliance on interims at tier 3 and for specialist capacity. Satisfactory progress, however this will remain an area of focus in future AGS due to importance.

<p>Review of systems within Council for recording financial transactions, picking up from Grant Thornton's findings from previous audits and work of Ernst Young in reviewing balance sheet.</p>	<p>May 2021 statutory recommendation Ensure finance team has skills and capacity to enable effective financial management and technical knowledge of CIPFA Code.</p>	<p>Improvement and recovery plan to include: c) A review of the Authority against the CIPFA Financial Management Code to demonstrate its compliance, with recommendations to Commissioners to improve this activity within the first six months and implementation of improvements thereafter.</p>	<p>Work continues on improving functionality and use of Unit 4 system. Timely budget information and reporting has improved during 2025/26. Migration to cloud based system is completed. Internal controls continue to be strengthened as part of the Financial Improvement Programme with activity continuing into 2026/27 before transitioning into BAU.</p> <p>Work substantially complete and can be continued as BAU.</p>
<p>Ensure financial management and governance are included in onboarding and manager development programmes, as well as being a feature in appraisals.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Finance and democratic governance are included in the corporate induction. The leadership and management programme is now embedded. Attendance is reviewed and recorded as part of annual appraisal processes.</p> <p>Action complete.</p>
<p>Ensure comprehensive accounts closing process, including review of reconciliation arrangements, to enable statements of accounts to be</p>	<p>May 2021 statutory recommendation Ensure sufficient resources and skills to support accounts production and skills and capacity to support production of technically sound financial statements. Introduce</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Accounts for 2024/25 now published, however this was delayed from previous timetable. These accounts have had a brief period of audit work in January 2026 and been signed off with a disclaimed opinion by the Council's auditors in line with the February 2026 backstop date. been audited by the backstop date and therefore will be disclaimed. The team is working on accounts for 2025/26 being produced and fully audited in a more timely manner, however due to previous years' accounts having not been</p>

<p>closed and audited within statutory timescales.</p>	<p>project management skills to oversee timely production of financial statements and working papers. May 2021 statutory recommendation Develop comprehensive project plan for preparation of accounts ensuring supported by working papers, robust quality assurance and clear ownership and accountability.</p>		<p>audited, there remains a likelihood of a disclaimed audit for 2025/26 due to lack of audit of opening balances.</p> <p>In the accounts report to committee in January, the commissioners noted: “In seeking to rebuild assurance over successive years, clearing all backstop-related disclaimers by the end of 2027/28 and resetting the system, the Council needs to go further and faster. To this effect the Government is considering what further measures may be necessary to support both auditors and local authorities in accelerating progress. It is essential that this work continues to be prioritised across the Council, with a clear plan appropriately resourced and work completed to a suitable quality and pace.”</p> <p>As part of planning the 2025/26 audit, the Director of Finance has requested a clear programme of audit work to be set out by the Council's auditors so it is clear what needs to happen and by when to move towards a clean audit opinion.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Review process for budget setting and medium-term financial strategy to increase opportunities for resident</p>	<p>May 2021 Statutory recommendation Urgent action to address low levels of unearmarked and earmarked reserves, develop MTFs, clear proposals to develop</p>	<p>Improvement and recovery plan to include: b) A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the</p>	<p>The Council's budget was published for full Council on 18th February 2026, having been considered by Cabinet on 16th February 2026. This included a 3-year MTFs with no Exceptional Financial Support planned for 2028/29. It included a new Capital Strategy and TMS as well as a three year-transformation plan.</p>

<p>engagement and scrutiny involvement in reviewing financial savings and priorities in accordance with CfGS guidance on financial scrutiny.</p>	<p>savings requirements and ownership, monitoring and reporting process.</p> <p>July 2021 statutory recommendation Report progress against action plan in response to s.114 to full council at every meeting, support root and branch review of all aspects of council finances, invest significant extra resources in finance capacity, internal audit and risk management to ensure robust</p>	<p>new TOM and transformation plan and demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.</p> <p>i) Improving resident and public engagement. 2. To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough, focussing in the first six months on a review of the action plan for the scrutiny function ... to accelerate any improvements required in these areas.</p>	<p>The commissioners noted in that report: The Council has reached a critical financial juncture, driven by sustained demand for statutory services, escalating debt-servicing costs, persistent growth and inflationary pressures. While these challenges are significant, the Local Government Finance Settlement (2026/27–2028/29) provides a vital increase in core funding and the first multi-year funding arrangement in over a decade. This has provided a degree of stabilisation and the financial certainty required to develop a comprehensive 3-Year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as required by the Council's statutory directions.</p> <p>Despite the improved settlement, the MTFS identifies a critical structural deficit within the General Fund. To achieve a balanced budget, the Council requires Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) to address the £43m and £22m funding gaps in 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively and a further £20m to provide the transformation capital investment required.</p> <p>There has been a scrutiny task and finish group convened to scrutinise the budget however improvements in the opportunity for scrutiny are required in the 2027/28 budget process, in particular to allow a longer period for the consideration of budget proposals. There has been some limited opportunity for resident engagement, although some proposals have been subject to wider consultation, - specifically the council tax support scheme and other proposals have an opportunity for further engagement as part of future decision-making/implementation plans.</p>
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<p>Review of debt collection processes to ensure debt is collectively effectively and write off policies and procedures are appropriate</p>	<p>May 2024 The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses: Lack of understanding and cost comparisons with other similar local authorities</p>	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>The Council has set up a cross-council debt board. It also presents reports to Cabinet at least annually on write off to ensure that the Council’s accounts correctly reflect the level of debt that can be considered collectable. The Council is looking at opportunities for external support to increase the level of debt collection.</p> <p>Work substantially complete and can be continued as BAU.</p>
<p>Review of reserves position and treasury management arrangements to reduce risk of urgent debt</p>	<p>May 2021 Statutory recommendation Urgent action to address low levels of unearmarked and earmarked reserves, develop MTFs, clear proposals to develop</p>	<p>b) A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the new TOM and transformation plan and</p>	<p>The Council has set a new reserves strategy as part of its budget setting process to replenish General and non-restricted earmarked reserves up to £31.3m by 2031, based on an evaluation of financial risks. As reported in December 2025, the Council’s forecast level of reserves by 31 March 2026 is 12.2% of net revenue expenditure. Comparable authorities have reserves between 20.51% and</p>

<p>refinancing to preserve liquidity</p>	<p>savings requirements and ownership, monitoring and reporting process.</p> <p>July 2021 statutory recommendation Report progress against action plan in response to s.114 to full council at every meeting, support root and branch review of all aspects of council finances, invest significant extra resources in finance capacity, internal audit and risk management to ensure robust</p>	<p>demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.</p>	<p>87.48%, therefore the Council's position is not sustainable and reserves will need to be replenished and sustained to manage financial health and risk. This has been provided for in the MTFs.</p> <p>The Council has applied for further EFS for 2026/27 partly to mitigate the impact of the required depletion of General Reserve due to a significant overspend in 2025/26. Core funding assumptions for 2026/27 and 2027/28 include Capitalisation Directions of £42.899m and £22.433m respectively.</p> <p>The mid-year review of treasury management was presented to committee in January 2026. The projected outturn position for 2025/26 increased from February 2025 to September 2025 due to financial pressures on the general fund and dedicated schools grant.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Political leadership and democratic governance – Lead Officer Sukdave Ghuman – Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)</p>			
<p>Evidenced improvement in report clearance processes, with Executive Directors and DLTs taking responsibility for early engagement with legal and finance to improve</p>	<p>February 2023 – Statutory Recommendation Ensure that for important decisions, sufficient and adequate information is made available to members to support decision made, including a comprehensive business case.</p>	<p>g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>Quarterly reports to Full Council on urgent decisions now includes reporting on Cabinet reports not being published within statutory deadlines. The report in November 2025 indicates that 18% of reports to Cabinet were published after the statutory deadline. This compares to 20% in 2024, 12% in 2023 and 13% in 2022. This may be extended to cover all key committees and is a positive step to increase transparency of the issue. This presents data on compliance with publication deadlines, it does not report on</p>

<p>quality and timeliness of reports and improve forward planning.</p>	<p>May 2024 – key recommendation The council should improve governance arrangements for key decisions, ensuring follow decision-making procedures, by constituted committee, supported by adequate information and formally recorded and publicly available.</p> <p>May 2024 key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding and cost comparison with other similar local authorities • Inadequate procurement arrangements. 		<p>compliance with internal governance procedures or quality of reports.</p> <p>Further work is required to understand the barriers to getting good quality reports published, however CLT review the corporate schedule on a weekly basis and directorates are taking more responsibility for forward planning. Commissioners continue to raise significant issues on report quality.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Effective use of Lead Member and Directors’ meetings and other internal non-decision-making boards to</p>	<p>May 2024 key recommendation Officers and members should continue to work together to deliver financial sustainability in the medium</p>	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and</p>	<p>There has been a continued improvement on agenda planning at LM&Ds and other internal boards, however there remain issues with focus of discussions and ensuring that there is collective ownership at a member and officer level. This links to report clearance processes and ensuring that there has been effective member engagement in</p>

<p>focus on strategic planning and transformational change.</p>	<p>term, including increasing level of reserves, progressing sale of assets, delivering recurrent savings.</p>	<p>insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>advance and sufficient opportunities for lead members to discuss proposals with other cabinet members.</p> <p>There has been an increase in internal boards, covering areas such as risk, design authority, improvement and transformation boards. However there remains a need to ensure that meetings are purposeful and that CLT and other strategic level meetings are used accordingly.</p> <p>There is sometimes a lack of understanding of the purpose of a board, being a consultative forum rather than a decision-making forum. There is a need to understand and identify who the single officer making the decision is for accountability purposes and for that officer to take responsibility for authoring any required significant officer decision report (or author a report to Cabinet or Committee).</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Implement a refreshed member development programme reflecting the changes in political groups and committee membership</p>	<p>July 2021 The Council should develop a comprehensive project plan for the improvement in governance arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission/learn from any external governance review undertaken with reporting through the Audit Committee • Strengthen Scrutiny and Audit Committee arrangements with 	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough, focussing in the first six months on an effective internal audit function, with organisational independence, objectivity, separate administrative</p>	<p>A refreshed member development programme has been launched and sessions have started in 2025/26. This has been a mix of internally and externally delivered sessions and those run virtually and in-person. A report went to Standards Committee in October 2025 flagging issues with attendance and the need for an effective feedback mechanism. A better system is needed for capturing member feedback and considering what the strategic aims are and what value the training is seeking to add. There is also a need to consider alternative delivery methods to share information as attendance levels have been low at some training sessions indicating that written member briefings may have been a more effective method of communication.</p>

	<p>external support to members</p> <p>October 2024 The Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee considers how it has complied with the mission statement and improves the level of reporting in the annual self-assessment of its effectiveness using the CIPFA (2022) guidance on audit committees. • Develop an appropriate training programme for audit committee members to be delivered in a timely and meaningful manner • Ensure that the audit committee remains apolitical and does not overlap with the roles of other committees eg. scrutiny 	<p>reporting and a strong functional reporting relationship to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, and a review of the action plan for the scrutiny function and Audit and Corporate Governance Committee to accelerate any improvements required in these areas.</p>	<p>Specific training programmes are in place for specialist committees. For example the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee does have an identified training programme informed by a member self-assessment and several sessions have been delivered to support members in their role.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Implement a refreshed officer governance programme, taking</p>	<p>February 2023 Ensure that for important (in financial or strategic terms) decisions, sufficient and</p>	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including</p>	<p>A refreshed officer governance programme has been devised however delivery had been hindered by turnover in democratic services.</p>

<p>account of staff turnover and the need to embed a system of good governance</p>	<p>adequate information is made available to members within the formal governance processes to support the decisions made, including a comprehensive business case</p> <p>May 2024 – key recommendation The council should improve governance arrangements for key decisions, ensuring follow decision-making procedures, by constituted committee, supported by adequate information and formally recorded and publicly available.</p>	<p>enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Ensure the Standards Committee meetings are convened through the municipal year and reporting on member complaints, survey results, member development and ethical framework</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>The Standards Committee met in October 2025 receiving reports on code of conduct complaints, member development and an update on the Government proposals to strengthen the standards regime.</p> <p>The report noted two complaints that remain open from 2024/25 municipal year, with officer workload contributing to delay in progressing one. Members requested a review of procedures to identify whether that was contributing to delay, including concern that the subject member was delaying in responding.</p>

<p>reporting is presented.</p>			<p>Reports on whistleblowing, gifts and hospitalities and interests are due to be reported in March 2026.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to produce an annual report assessing its work programme against its terms of reference and report this to Full Council in a similar manner to other committees such as Audit and Corporate Governance Committee and Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Review the effectiveness of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee and publicly report on such a review.</p>	<p>July 2021 The Council should develop a comprehensive project plan for the improvement in governance arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission/learn from any external governance review undertaken • Strengthen Scrutiny arrangements with external support to members 	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough, focussing in the first six months on a review of the action plan for the scrutiny function to accelerate any improvements required in these areas.</p>	<p>CISC has met seven times in the municipal year 2025/26 up to December 2025. It has training and informal briefings outside of these, as well as task and finish group meetings. Dedicated officer support is available for scrutiny activity. There are some concerns about members' availability for task and finish group meetings and informal briefings and on occasions the committee is reverting to discussion on ward level or individual case issues, which was an issue raised in the previous CfGS report.</p> <p>The committee has made formal recommendations to Cabinet twice so far in 2025/26, once on waste services and once on NEETs. The NEET task and finish group report is a good example of scrutiny focusing on a key topic and looking at this in depth, including comparing to statistical neighbours. The task and finish group on the budget has been in place and reported to Cabinet to inform the budget setting process.</p> <p>Members have indicated a desire to move to a more thematic committee structure, moving away from the model</p>

			<p>implemented in 2023 as a result of the review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). CfGS have been commissioned to undertake a further review and make any recommendations as required.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Conduct a review or audit of significant officer decision-making to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with written schemes of delegation and significant officer decision reports are submitted to democratic services and published.</p>	<p>May 2024 The Council should improve its governance arrangements for key decisions, made by members or made under the Council's scheme of delegation, to ensure that decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Council's decision-making procedures • Are made either by a formally constituted committee, or a Director who has delegated authority • Are supported by adequate information, which includes the full cost and risks in relation to the decision, such as a comprehensive business case 	<p>A review of the Authority's progress to risk maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives. Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>Included on Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26. This audit is currently in progress. It is recommended this action remains until the audit has completed and recommendations been agreed. Depending on the result will inform whether the issue of officer reports should remain an action.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are formally recorded and publicly available to promote openness and transparency. <p>For investment decisions, the Council should assess that those making a decision have appropriate information to make the decision but also have the capacity and skills to make the decision.</p>		
<p>Ensure a system is in place for approval of policies in the Policy Framework and for other statutory plans, policies and strategies</p>	<p>February 2023 Ensure that for important (in financial or strategic terms) decisions, sufficient and adequate information is made available to members within the formal governance processes to support the decisions made, including a comprehensive business case</p> <p>May 2024 The Council should improve its governance arrangements for key decisions, made by members or made under the Council's scheme of</p>	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>The Community Safety Plan and Youth Justice Plan were both submitted and approved by Full Council in 2025. In addition the budget and policy framework rules were amended to reflect the statutory requirements in relation to approval of the Policy Framework.</p> <p>As part of reporting on housing improvement, a list of required policies and strategies has been included and resources recruited to support on delivery, however this flags statutory policies that are out of date, raising issues about the corporate system in place to address this and programme in review and updating in advance.</p> <p>A system needs to be in place and approved annually to update members on the key strategies and policy that form the Policy Framework and/or are statutory requirements. It would be common for this to be reported to Annual Council.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

	<p>delegation, to ensure that decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Council's decision-making procedures • Are made either by a formally constituted committee, or a Director who has delegated authority • Are supported by adequate information, which includes the full cost and risks in relation to the decision, such as a comprehensive business case • Are formally recorded and publicly available to promote openness and transparency. 		
<p>Transformation and organisational design governance – Lead officer Will Tuckley – Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)</p>			
<p>Ensure effective member oversight of the Council's transformation programme at formal, constituted and public member meetings, including:</p>	<p>October 2024 key recommendation The Council must devise a transformation programme which is supported by adequate and defined funding which has the ultimate goal of the Council exiting intervention and</p>	<p>Prepare, agree and implement an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, with resource allocated accordingly. This may include or draw upon improvement or action plans</p>	<p>An improvement and recovery programme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2025, a progress report was approved by Cabinet in September 2025 and a report on the direction of travel for the transformation programme was presented to Cabinet in February 2026.</p> <p>Alongside this:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective monitoring and oversight of any externally commissioned resource • Monitoring and management of financial budgets 	<p>securing its best value duty. The programme must include how the Council is addressing the recommendations raised from previous reviews or these must be tracked centrally to ensure resolution.</p>	<p>prepared before the date of these Directions. The plan is to set out measures to be undertaken, together with milestones and delivery targets against which to measure performance, in order to deliver rapid and sustainable improvements in governance, finance and commercial functions, thereby securing compliance with the best value duty. There must be a focus on deliverable milestones within six months and the Plan should include at a minimum:</p> <p>a) A new Target Operating Model (TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities.</p>	<p>A full transformation team established in July 2025 to lead on work to identify and deliver opportunities to transform the front door and services.</p> <p>An external partner, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was commissioned in June 2025 to develop how the Council should operate in a new operating model, building on the design principles adopted in November 2024.</p> <p>This work informed a Transformation Plan approved at Cabinet on 17th November 2025. As was stated in that report, more work was needed to identify the full range of opportunities to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>Governance was launched, including the CLT Transformation Board, Design Authority, Central PMO and Transformation Member Oversight Board.</p> <p>Ernst & Young (EY) were appointed in October 2025 to further develop opportunities to support the MTFs process and identify potential further transformation opportunities to add to our plan as well as testing and validating business cases, with a particular focus on proposals contributing to 2026/27 savings.</p> <p>This work has progressed alongside active delivery of a number of in-flight transformation projects across Adults, Housing, Customer Experience and Children’s Services, underpinned by digital transformation.</p> <p>A report was adopted in February 2026 that sets out the full three-year programme, that is now deeper and broader and</p>
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			<p>delivers a significant level of financial benefits over a three-year period. The report sets out the proposed transformation delivery model including the commissioning of an external transformation partner and resources required and the governance and assurance framework. This is aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Target Operating Model.</p> <p>The proposed approach has been informed by ongoing engagement with Commissioners and is aligned with expectations around capacity, assurance and delivery discipline.</p> <p>There is work to do to ensure that the transformation programme and other improvement activity is properly supporting and aligned to the budget and MTFS. This is set out in the Transformation Delivery Model that went to Cabinet in February 2026.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Embed a culture of continuous improvement</p>	<p>May 2024 The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough.</p>	<p>The Council has developed a workforce strategy and management information and progress is being reported to the Employment Committee. The last progress update was January 2026. On culture the report noted the introduction of speak up ambassadors and mediators. The report presented data on mandatory training, with general improvement, although there was a specific issue in the Chief Executive's department. Updates on a new performance management framework and a response to</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding and cost comparisons with other similar local authorities • Inadequate arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships • Inadequate procurement arrangements 		<p>sickness absence actions following an audit were also reported. The appraisal system is now more embedded, with corporate reporting on compliance.</p> <p>The AGS action plan now links to the Best Value themes and there are plans in place to ensure the assessment is more forward looking in the future. This will be assisted by more effective service plans for directorates. Savings and growth proposals are now more likely to be supported by comparative data and external consultants have been utilised to test proposals.</p> <p>CLT and Cabinet continue to meet informally to embed a good working relationship and there is an established programme of staff events to ensure effective engagement in transformation and improvement activities.</p> <p>Work substantially complete and can be continued as BAU.</p>
<p>Ensure there is an effective and consistent system of service planning in directorates, informed by a programme of external review and challenge</p>	<p>May 2024 The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding and cost comparisons with other similar local authorities 	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough.</p>	<p>The Council implemented a system of service planning commencing with story boards. The corporate performance framework has been reviewed. However there is a lack of detailed service plans and alignment to the corporate plan and transformation and recovery plans. This should be a priority moving into 2026/27.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships • Inadequate procurement arrangements 		
<p>Training and development programme to support with business case development</p>	<p>May 2024 key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding and cost comparisons with other similar local authorities • Inadequate arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships • Inadequate procurement arrangements <p>May 2024 key recommendation</p>	<p>g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>Business cases to support change are not yet consistent or evidence based and do not provide assurance on deliverability risks. Work has been commissioned from EY to support business cases on savings proposals, however the Council needs to do more to embed a business case mentality into transformation and improvement activities. the budget has been set with savings proposals based on high level business cases, therefore a test of effectiveness will be delivery of these proposals, alongside delivery of more transformational change in service directorates.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

	<p>The Council should improve its governance arrangements for key decisions, made by members or made under the Council's scheme of delegation, to ensure that decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are supported by adequate information, which includes the full cost and risks in relation to the decision, such as a comprehensive business case 		
<p>Property assets governance – Lead officers Pat Hayes – Executive Director RHE, Peter Hopkins – Director of Property</p>			
<p>Review of asset disposal programme to ensure it is based on robust, appropriate and reasonable assumptions and publicly report on the review to Cabinet Committee</p>	<p>October 2024 – key recommendation The Council must review the basis of the Asset Disposal Programme to ensure that it is based on robust, appropriate and reasonable assumptions. This review must include collaborative working between the finance function and the asset disposal/property expertise to ensure that financial implications are considered in the final programme.</p>	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>The September Cabinet Committee received an update on asset disposals, which is a positive direction of travel. In addition reports are taken to Cabinet Committee for formal decisions to declare sites surplus and to make decisions on disposal for higher value sites.</p> <p>There is still risk that forecast receipts from asset disposals are overly ambitious. There have also been issues with wider member and public engagement to inform decision-making on asset disposal, resulting in Council petitions. Whilst this does not mean decisions were not justified, there is an opportunity to work with ward councillors in a more considered way and to engage with communities to inform individual decisions.</p>

			<p>The action is substantially complete, however due to its importance it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Complete and publicly report on an asset stock review to provide assurance that assets are held at the correct value and accurately accounted for.</p>	<p>May 2024 key recommendation The Council should improve its governance arrangements for key decisions, made by members or made under the Council's scheme of delegation, to ensure that decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are supported by adequate information, which includes the full cost and risks in relation to the decision, such as a comprehensive business case 	<p>Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.</p>	<p>Whilst considerable work has been undertaken on assets to ensure compliance with health and safety and public reporting on disposals, there has not been a public report on asset stock to provide assurance on value and condition.</p> <p>There is good evidence of effective stock management for housing stock, with the RSH noting that data on stock condition is good and a procurement completed to appoint a new contractor to conduct condition surveys in 2026/27.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Approve a strategic asset strategy for use of the Council's operational assets, ensuring this is aligned with the Council's new operating model and MTFS.</p>	<p>October 2024 key recommendation Review basis of asset disposal programme to ensure based on robust, appropriate and reasonable assumptions.</p>	<p>a) A new Target Operating Model (TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities. b) A refreshed rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy, and Treasury Management Strategy, aligned with the new TOM and</p>	<p>The Council has approved a Community Asset Transfer Strategy, however progress on a Strategic Asset Strategy has been delayed as the Council worked on its Target Operating Model and service delivery model to identify the extent to which property assets are required and fit for purpose to adapt for future use.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

transformation plan and demonstrating the Authority's financial sustainability and resilience, over the period of the strategies.

Company governance – Lead officer SCF Sarah Wilson Assistant Director Legal and Governance, other companies - Executive Director Corporate Resources (chief finance officer) and Pat Hayes Executive Director RHE

Publicly report on effective management of Slough Children First, evidencing quality of service and value for money

May 2024 – key recommendation
 The Council should ensure it effectively manages Slough Children First Ltd (SCF), the wholly owned company which from April 2021 delivers its children's social care services, so that the Council is able to demonstrate that the services provide both quality and value for money services to families and children in Slough.

October 2024 – key recommendation
 The Council should make all the necessary steps to continue to work with the Department for Education to improve performance in

a) A new Target Operating Model (TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities.

To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough

Report on Annual Report and external review by Mutual Ventures was reported to Cabinet in September. Annual governance report was reported to this committee in September. The external review explicitly covered value for money, business improvement planning, financial sustainability and governance.

The business plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2025 and KPI performance was included in the reporting.

There needs to be a continued focus on service delivery, particularly bearing in mind the service remains under statutory intervention, however the governance update evidenced the moved to a more streamlined board governance with the agreement of the Department for Education.

The new DfE commissioner is now a member of the Council's Best Value Board and chairs the children's services improvement board.

Action complete.

	children's services and SEND.		
<p>For each Council company, review and report to Cabinet Committee on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contractual and governance documentation decision-making, risk and performance reporting arrangements, including financial performance, statutory compliance, including filings of annual reports and accounts and board director performance, annual business plans 	<p>May 2021 Statutory recommendation The Council should review and implement effective financial governance and monitoring arrangements for group relationships to mitigate exposure to additional financial risk. As a commercial entity subject to separate legal, tax and accounting considerations, there should be clear separation financial transactions of Slough Council and James Elliman Homes, in a separate financial ledger, with clear and distinct financial controls and monitoring in place for both the Council and the company. The Council should review its overall approach to using council officers on the boards of its group companies and other similar organisations. This should</p>	<p>Re-examining the review by the Authority of their companies that considered the roles and case for continuing with each subsidiary company of the Authority (except Slough Children First), to make proposals in relation to financial viability and improving company governance.</p>	<p>The Council approved a new Part 5.9 Company / Connected Entities' Protocol in May 2025 setting out the expected reporting cycle for Council companies.</p> <p>SCF the business plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2025 and a governance review update was given to this committee in September 2025. The service delivery contract has been extended, following consultation with the Department for Education. The cabinet report provided an update on financial performance and contractual performance. The accounts have been filed in accordance with statutory requirements.</p> <p>For GRE5 an updated business plan is due to be approved in March 2026. New directors have been appointed and this has led to improved governance with both the director and the shareholder representative reporting to the shareholder panel. An extension has been obtained for filing of accounts.</p> <p>For JEH, an interim business plan was presented and approved in March 2025. An options appraisal has been commissioned and will be reported to Cabinet in April 2026, alongside an update on the business plan. Significant work has been undertaken to restate accounts and protect the Council's exposure to risk in terms of recovery of its loan. An extension has been sought to file accounts and previous</p>

be informed by a full understanding of the role of and legal requirements for company board members. When allocating roles on Council-owned organisations to individual officers, the Council should ensure that the scope for conflicts of interest is minimised, with a clear divide between those in such roles and those responsible for holding them to account or overseeing them.

The Council should ensure it is actively and routinely monitoring the financial performance of its group entities to consider and protect any unintended financial exposure on the Council's financial position.

May 2024 – key recommendation

The Council should ensure it effectively manages all its subsidiaries and winds up those subsidiaries which are

accounts were audited on the basis of going concern with material uncertainty.

This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.

	not delivering value to the Council.		
Internal controls - Lead Officer – Ian Kirby – Interim Head of Internal Audit (functioning of IA service), Will Tuckley – Chief Executive / Executive Director Corporate Resources (management response and engagement)			
Internal Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stabilise internal audit team, • ensure annual audit plan informed by risk, • ensure effective escalation procedures including reporting on key risks at member level, • Commission independent external quality assurance review in accordance with requirements of GIAS to evaluate effectiveness of internal audit function. 	<p>October 2024 improvement recommendation Include follow up of internal audit actions and recommendations at every DLT as well as CLT.</p> <p>July 2021 statutory recommendation Report progress against action plan in response to s.114 to full council at every meeting, support root and branch review of all aspects of council finances, invest significant extra resources in finance capacity, internal audit and risk management to ensure robust processes brought into place.</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough, focussing in the first six months on an effective internal audit function, with organisational independence, objectivity, separate administrative reporting and a strong functional reporting relationship to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>	<p>The Internal Audit team is headed by an experienced Interim Head of Internal Audit, commissioned from CIPFA. An options appraisal has been carried out to inform future service delivery and an in-house model identified as the preferred model, although risks of successful implementation have been highlighted.</p> <p>An IA Audit Plan has been presented and approved and is informed by the Council's risk reports and engagement with directors. Progress updates have been presented to committee, evidencing the number of audits completed, compliance with recommendations and appending full audits when there is only minimal or partial assurance.</p> <p>A self-assessment has been carried out against the GIAS standards and there are plans in place to commission an external review later in the FY 2025/26 or early in FY 2026/27.</p> <p>The action is substantially complete, however due to its importance it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
A review of the Council's risk management strategy, risk	<p>July 2021 statutory recommendation Report progress against action plan in response to</p>	<p>Improvement and recover plan to include: e) A review of the Authority's progress to risk</p>	<p>The Council has improved its risk reporting both to CLT and to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, however it does not have a refreshed risk management strategy or reported review on risk maturity. It is unclear how risks are</p>

<p>maturity and how this links to decision-making to achieve strategic objectives, such review to the presented to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee</p>	<p>s.114 to full council at every meeting, support root and branch review of all aspects of council finances, invest significant extra resources in finance capacity, internal audit and risk management to ensure robust processes brought into place.</p>	<p>maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives.</p>	<p>used to inform decision-making. In addition improvements are reliant on a single, interim officer, which increases the risk as that officer could leave at short-notice.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Senior officers to prioritise engagement with, responses to internal audit on current audits and completion of outstanding audit actions and to present updates to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on a directorate basis.</p>	<p>October 2024 improvement recommendation Include follow up of internal audit actions and recommendations at every DLT as well as CLT.</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough, focussing in the first six months on an effective internal audit function, with organisational independence, objectivity, separate administrative reporting and a strong functional reporting relationship to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>	<p>Reports are presented to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on compliance with historic audit recommendations. In addition key directorates have presented reports on progress against internal audits.</p> <p>There has been increased transparency on reporting of Internal Audits, including taking full audits to committee where there have been limited assurance.</p> <p>This does not mean there are no issues with completion of actions, however the system appears more embedded and can move to BAU.</p> <p>This action is complete.</p>
<p>Put in place corporate system to</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>There has been increased reporting to CLT on emergency planning and business continuity.</p>

<p>test business continuity and emergency plans</p>			<p>The Council has successfully managed emergencies and has experienced staff in place to support with this, however responses are still reliant on a relatively small group of officers.</p> <p>Emergency planning has been prioritised over business continuity testing due to low level of resources.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>External review of corporate anti-fraud policies, procedures and practices by another local authority or sector body to review extent to which current practice is preventative based and proactively managing risks.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Improvement and recover plan to include: e) A review of the Authority's progress to risk maturity and how well its functions and processes enable risk-aware decisions that support the achievement of strategic objectives.</p>	<p>The CAFT annual report has been presented to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. However there are risks in certain directorates and the Council had to self-refer itself to the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to risks of serious housing fraud, resulting in appointment of specialise forensic auditors.</p> <p>The CIPFA Code of Practice on managing the risk of fraud and corruption emphasises five key principles to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledge the responsibility of the governing body for countering fraud and corruption • identify the fraud and corruption risks • develop an appropriate counter fraud and corruption strategy provide resources to implement the strategy • take action in response to fraud and corruption. <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Suggested additional recommendation:</p>			<p>The Council had cause to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to the issue and risks of social housing fraud. Whilst internal teams have been working on managing this risk, the capacity and capability of the teams means it is necessary to bring in external forensic auditing</p>

<p>To commission an external audit of risk of fraud in housing directorate, including considering effectiveness of internal controls.</p>			<p>capacity to identify the extent of issues and make recommendations on how to manage this in the future.</p> <p>The Committee was given a separate update at its September meeting.</p> <p>Action complete, however recommendations should be recorded in update reports on housing improvement plans.</p>
<p>Workforce governance – Lead officer Bal Toor – Director of HR</p>			
<p>Develop and stabilise the top three tiers of leadership, providing an effective management and leadership development programme</p>	<p>October 2024 – key recommendation The Council should aim to maintain the permanence of senior leadership team so far as is reasonably practicable. This should include second tier posts.</p>	<p>d) A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.</p>	<p>There is more stability in the top three tiers, as new directors have progressed their restructures. This inevitably leads to some instability where existing staff are not matched to roles and their existing roles are redundant. There has also been changes due to resignations and this has included bringing in experienced interim resource.</p> <p>A new management and leadership development programme has been rolled out and reporting presented to Employment Committee.</p> <p>Action complete and can move to BAU activity.</p>
<p>Put in place effective workforce development plans for services that are overly reliant on interim staff or with identified skills and capability gaps</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>d) A high-performance culture programme to rebuild trust between staff and the Authority, to include the development of a comprehensive workforce strategy focused on development, retention, and permanent recruitment.</p>	<p>Specific directorates are pursuing restructures and there are some high-level design principles. There have been issues raised about the Council’s pay structure which is impacting some restructures. Previously restructures have appeared focused on delivering target savings, as opposed to aligned to service delivery needs, succession planning or addressing capability and skills gaps.</p> <p>The Design Authority has added a layer of governance to ensure that restructures meet organisational design</p>

			<p>principles and that opportunities to cross council efficiencies or impact are considered.</p> <p>The action is substantially complete, however due to its importance it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
Improve completion of mandatory training	None	None	<p>Mandatory training data is presented to directorates for discussion at DLTs and to CLT. There is increased reporting to the Employment Committee, with the last update in January 2026.</p> <p>Action complete and can move to BAU.</p>
Develop a “permission culture” whereby officers are empowered to take decisions within approved schemes of delegation and governance systems	None	None	<p>More work is required on embedding internal scheme of delegation and supporting staff to take decisions. This needs to be a key aspect of any new target operating model.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
Information governance – Lead officer Martin Chalmers – Director of Data, Digital and Technology			
Adopt and implement a Data Strategy, approved at a member level, and ensure that	None	h) An appropriately resourced digital strategy that supports effective business operations and	<p>Work is under-way to develop a data strategy, digital principles and improve technology performance, however the current approach remains silo’ed with some services still reliant on manual processes. The Council has assessed itself against the Local Government Data Maturity</p>

<p>data is used appropriately, consistently and effectively and retained in accordance with legal requirements</p>		<p>links to the Authority's future operating model.</p>	<p>Assessment and that has informed a direction of travel and identification of a need for data infrastructure to enable data from different sources to be combined and analysed. Pilot work is being undertaken with Slough Children First and in Adult Social Care and Housing and there has been good progress on producing a suite of dashboards to inform decision-making. Data is also one of the Priority Actions following the SEND Local Area Inspection.</p> <p>The action is substantially complete, however due to its importance it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Conduct a review of information published against the Government's Transparency Code.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Improvement and recovery plan to include: g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking</p>	<p>A review has been conducted and an action plan produced. Responsibility for driving implementation of that action plan has been placed with the Information Records Manager.</p> <p>This action is substantially complete and can move to BAU</p>
<p>Monitor and report on compliance with FOI and SAR requests to CLT at least quarterly and publicly to members at least annually</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Improvement and recovery plan to include: g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking</p>	<p>This has been reported to CLT, but is not yet a regular feature of reporting to inform decision-making. There is not yet a plan to report formally to members. The volume increase is a feature in particular directorates, replicating what is being seen in other authorities and possibly partly due to the increased use of AI. Additional resources have been agreed to clear backlogs in some directorates.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>

<p>Complete and report on review of website and other publicly accessible sites to ensure compliant</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Improvement and recovery plan to include: g) Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking</p>	<p>The Council has an officer in its digital team specifically focused on accessibility. Council sites and portals have been prioritised into 5 levels. The audit of priority 1 websites will be completed in FY 25/26. This covers 7 websites including the SBC main site. The review of priority 2 and 3 sites will take place in FY 26/27. The audit of remaining sites will begin (most likely that year) once those have completed.</p> <p>An indicator of success is that the Silktide Accessibility Index, which tests sites against the relevant standard, places Slough as the 28th highest of UK Local Authorities.</p> <p>Action complete.</p>
<p>Children’s Services Governance – Lead Officer Sue Butcher, Executive Director of Children’s Services</p>			
<p>Continue to report regularly to Cabinet on SEND improvements.</p>	<p>October 2024 – key recommendation The Council should make all the necessary steps to continue to work with the Department for Education to improve performance in children’s services and SEND.</p>	<p>a) A new Target Operating Model (TOM) that enables both financial stability and the delivery of core services and priorities.</p> <p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority’s functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>The Council has recently had a SEND inspection, with the outcome now published. The Council has been reported quarterly on the improvement plans to Cabinet and there is an established Improvement Board. The DfE has appointed a new SEND Commissioner who is keen to support collective ownership of SEND across the Council and wider partnership and has plans to convene summits to support this.</p> <p>There are improvements needed to data collection and analysis and the outcome of the inspection must be taken into account to inform future improvement plans.</p>

			The action is substantially complete, however due to service continuing to be under intervention it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.
Continue to work with the Schools Forum to ensure full delivery of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan in order to stop the increase in the DSG deficit, including approving a public and up to date Schools Sufficiency Strategy to reduce the risk of high needs block overspends	May 2024 – Key recommendation Officers and members should work together to deliver financial sustainability by continuing to work with the Schools Forum and partners to ensure full delivery of the agreed DSG management plan in order to stop the increase in the DSG deficit.	To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority’s functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough	Reporting on the DSG and safety valve programme is contained in budget monitor and budget update reports to Cabinet in November and December 2025. The overspend in the DSG is increasing the debt provision required for the Council. However the Government announcement on the new High Needs Stability Grant is welcomed, although further detail is awaited on the final impact. The Council has approved an up to date Schools Sufficiency Strategy and a schools capital programme, however overspends on key projects indicate concern about contingency planning. All strategies will need to be reviewed in light of the Local Area Inspection report. There is a more positive relationship seen in Schools Forum, with members commenting on the level of detail and transparency in reporting and an experienced interim finance officer is in role to support this work. This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.
Resident engagement governance – lead officer Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement			
Improve compliance and reporting on LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman complaints,	None	To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority’s functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in	CLT has re-established reporting on complaints data, however the level of detail and analysis needs to be considered to ensure the right discussion and actions. The annual report to A&CG Committee was taken in September 2025.

<p>including regular (at least quarterly) reporting to CLT and annual report to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, together with complaints analysis included in service improvement reporting to Cabinet.</p>		<p>services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>Complaints handling is a workstream under the improvement and recovery plan. There is a focus on improving complaint handling and achieving consistency across the Council, including achieving compliance with ombudsman codes and developing a learning culture that identifies opportunities to improve services and customer experience. This work has been progressed and updates were provided in the report to the A &CG committee and to Cabinet on improvement and recovery in September 2025. The work will continue as a priority in 2026/27.</p> <p>There is also a need to have separate reporting on Housing Ombudsman complaints to ensure compliance with separate Code and requirements.</p> <p>This is substantially complete and can be moved to BAU.</p>
<p>Adopt Resident Engagement Strategy, setting out expectations on participation, resident experience and digital inclusion.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Prepare and implement an improvement and recovery plan including as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Improving resident and public engagement 	<p>A Resident Engagement Framework was approved by Cabinet in October and this is underpinning the development of a systematic approach to engagement across the Council that is now established and agreed with CLT.</p> <p>The resident newsletter is now embedded with a growing number of subscribers.</p> <p>The Council has conducted annual surveys and reported the results in public.</p> <p>Housing Services have an adopted Resident Involvement Strategy in 2024-2027. The Regulator of Social Housing</p>

			<p>inspected the Council and identified that resident engagement and resident information was poor and required improvement and contributed to the C3 judgement.</p> <p>There are areas of good practice across the Council, in particular in Adult Social Care, which has an embedded resident engagement approach, including examples of co-production.</p> <p>The action is substantially complete, however due to its critical importance and RSH inspection findings it is likely that this will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
Devise an effective system for capturing data and evidence of local need and ensure this is utilised to inform decision-making	None	<p>Prepare and implement an improvement and recovery plan including as a minimum:</p> <p>g) improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking</p> <p>i) Improving resident and public engagement</p>	<p>This is a key strand of the target operating model. There are some early signs of improvement in core products being published and dashboards in key services such as children's and housing. However, the Council needs to do more to improve data ownership, data quality and use of data, underpinned by work to address system integrity.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
Build programme to rebuilt trust with communities, including	None	<p>Prepare and implement an improvement and recovery plan including as a minimum:</p>	<p>The Council has undertaken resident surveys and in addition commissioned a provider to advise on its target operating model and transformation plans. This provider undertook its own resident survey. The results of this were</p>

<p>transparent, public reporting to members on resident survey results with action plan on improving satisfaction levels.</p>		<p>Improving resident and public engagement</p>	<p>presented to members in public. This feedback has informed the actions outlined above in relation to developing a resident engagement framework.</p> <p>The immediate action is complete, with improvements embedded into BAU work.</p>
<p>Procurement and contract management governance – Lead Officer - Executive Director of Resources</p>			
<p>Prepare and publish a new procurement strategy to meet the new requirements of the Procurement Act and ensure value for money commissioning activity.</p>	<p>May 2024 – Key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate procurement arrangements <p>October 2024 – improvement recommendation The Council should create a Procurement Strategy to set the strategic direction of the procurement function in relation to its organisational support role</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority’s functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>The Council has not yet adopted a Procurement Strategy, although an internal board has been set up to look at strategic commissioning activities.</p> <p>There is inconsistency in approach and specialist skills across the Council, with strong commissioning and market management in Adult Social Care, but a lack of cross council strategies and consistent framework.</p> <p>An internal audit highlighted the issues in procurement and contract management.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Ensure effective systems in place to</p>	<p>May 2024 – Key recommendation</p>	<p>Prepare and implement an improvement and recovery</p>	<p>A new Capital Board has been set up, however there are still issues with procurement of capital projects, including a</p>

<p>commission and manage capital projects, including considering options to optimise social, economic and environmental wellbeing.</p>	<p>The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate procurement arrangements <p>October 2024 – improvement recommendation The Council should create a Procurement Strategy to set the strategic direction of the procurement function in relation to its organisational support role</p>	<p>plan including as a minimum: b) a refreshed capital strategy and treasury management strategy.</p>	<p>need to call off from frameworks following failed procurement activity.</p> <p>In its Annual Report, Audit and Corporate Governance Committee members highlighted the need for increased reporting on assurance of effective management of capital projects.</p> <p>A schools capital budget was approved, however overspends reported within it demonstrates an issue with contingency planning and evidence of value for money when pricing works.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.</p>
<p>Improve systems in place to ensure corporate oversight of contract management, picking up on recommendations from internal audit on contract management in 2025.</p>	<p>May 2024 – Key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and address the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate procurement arrangements 	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority’s functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>Strategic commissioning is a key workstream under the Council’s improvement and recovery plans and seen as a key enabler under a future operating model. Work has started on a single homelessness commissioning project focused on those with complex needs. This will be used to develop a whole council model.</p> <p>Contract management expertise and capacity remains a concern, although there are areas of good practice across the Council. Having a corporate contracts register is a key starting point, followed by procurement forward plans.</p>

This will remain an area of focus in future AGS.

Partnership governance – Lead Officer Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public Health / Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement

<p>Ensure that each statutory partnership has clear terms of reference, approved strategies and appropriate action plans in place to meet strategic aims, represent best practice and meet its statutory requirements.</p>	<p>May 2024 Key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and addresses current weaknesses in inadequate partnership arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>CLT review updates from statutory boards under a partnerships item on a monthly basis to help strengthen assurance and accountability.</p> <p>Safeguarding Adult Board – a paper was brought to CLT for review and endorsement, included data and a review of the partnership board is seeing a separation of adults and children's to bring great focus</p> <p>Annual Report produced for Health & Wellbeing Board, PNA, JLHWS and JSNA duties met.</p> <p>Positive external review of Prevent Board.</p> <p>Community Safety Strategy and statutory strategies produced. Annual needs assessment on track</p> <p>There is currently a lack of assurance data that each statutory partnership is fully meeting its statutory aims and contributing to the Council's corporate priorities. This is despite improvements in governance in terms of ensuring that strategies that form part of the Policy Framework are approved at the right member body.</p> <p>Resource has been mobilised to develop the Council's place leadership and enabling role and its approach to partnership working so that priorities can be progressed</p>
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			<p>more effectively with residents and across the system. Proposals have been agreed with CLT.</p> <p>A review of the current partnership structure has been mobilised.</p> <p>A group that convenes statutory partner chairs will be established to support more systematic oversight.</p> <p>This action has been substantially met and activity will move to BAU.</p>
<p>Ensure there is public reporting to members on effectiveness of partnerships.</p>	<p>May 2024 Key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and addresses current weaknesses in inadequate partnership arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>Community Safety Plan 2025-28 reported and approved by Full Council.</p> <p>Youth Justice Plan reported and approved by Full Council.</p> <p>Partnerships are not yet in a cycle of annual review and reporting on effectiveness and compliance with statutory functions.</p> <p>The Council is developing its corporate oversight role as outlined above.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS although actions on partnerships can be combined.</p>
<p>Review approach to transparency for partnerships, with an expectation as a</p>	<p>May 2024 Key recommendation The Council should develop its corporate oversight to</p>	<p>To secure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with</p>	<p>At present there is not a system of annual reporting to member bodies on statutory partnership, although there may be annual reports published.</p>

<p>minimum that each partnership produces a public annual report and considers whether to publish reports and minutes for meetings.</p>	<p>ensure it delivers improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness and addresses current weaknesses in inadequate partnership arrangements to ensure the Council effectively delivers its role within significant partnerships</p>	<p>the best value duty thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the people of Slough</p>	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Board does have formal public reports and an annual report.</p> <p>Partnerships are not yet in a cycle of annual review and reporting on effectiveness and compliance with statutory functions.</p> <p>This will remain an area of focus in future AGS although the actions on partnerships can be combined.</p>
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