

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Quarterly Update on Urgent Key Decisions
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Wilson, Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nick Pontone, Principal Democratic Services Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Log of decisions taken under special urgency procedures where call-in waivers granted – January to March 2026  Appendix 2 – Log of Cabinet reports published after agenda publication  Appendix 3 – Late Report Tracker for Council, Cabinet and Committees April 2025 to March 2026

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report informs Members of Executive key decisions taken during the last quarter for which urgency provisions were utilised. There are various constitutional reporting requirements for such urgent decisions, including where proper constitutional procedures have not been adhered to and where special urgency procedures are relied upon.
- 1.2 This report covers the quarter between January to March 2026. During this period one decision was taken under the Leader's Action (Upton Hospital Development), and this decision also received a Call-In waiver and urgent key decision notice; and one further Call-in waiver was granted (Award of Insurance Contracts).
- 1.3 As part of the governance improvement programme the Council is seeking to minimise the number of reports to Cabinet and other meetings published late, i.e. after the statutory five clear days deadline. Appendix 2 includes a log of reports to Cabinet and other committees published late during the quarter. Such reports may not have utilised urgency provisions but are included for transparency and monitoring purposes.

## **Recommendations:**

Council is recommended to:

- (a) Note the use of special urgency provisions used for key decisions as set out in Appendix 1.
- (b) Note the log of late reports issued after agenda publication as at Appendices 2 and 3.

## **Reason:**

This quarterly update ensures compliance with the various constitutional provisions for the key decision processes. This report contains details key decision made under special urgency procedures, where the agreement of the Chair of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee has been sought to waive call-in. Whilst the constitutional and statutory requirements were followed for making these decisions, paragraph 17.3 of the Access to Information Rules state that a quarterly report should be taken to Council where decisions are taken in accordance with Rule 16. The Council will receive these updates quarterly as meetings in January, April, July and November each year. Even if no decisions utilising urgency procedures have been taken during the preceding quarter a report will be provided to duly notify Council.

## **Commissioner Review**

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

## **2. Report**

### **Introductory paragraph**

- 2.1 This report details the use of special urgency procedures to waive call-in for key decision made in accordance with the Special Urgency rules as set out in Paragraph 16 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. This report contains information of decisions made in the most recent quarter.

#### Background

- 2.2 Slough Borough Council operates the leader and cabinet model of governance. The Executive (Cabinet) is subject to various legal and constitutional provisions for decision-making. The main legal requirements are contained in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which have been incorporated into the Council's Constitution, primarily the Executive Procedure Rules and Access to Information Rules.
- 2.3 There are specific constitutional rules that apply to the taking of 'key decisions', the definition of which is:

*"A key decision is an Executive decision which:*

*(a) is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;*

*or*

*(b) is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of two or more wards of the Borough.*

*A decision is significant for these purposes if it involves expenditure or the making of savings/receipt of income of an amount in excess of £1 million for capital expenditure or £500,000 for revenue expenditure or, where expenditure or savings are less than the amounts specified above, they constitute more than 50% of the budget attributable to the service in question. Revenue expenditure or savings should be calculated by reference to an annual figure, unless the expenditure will bind the Council for multiple years. Capital expenditure and capital receipts should be calculated based on total figures for the duration of the project or contractual term.*

*A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive and Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution."*

- 2.4 The procedure rules require the Council to give 28-days public notice of the intention to take a key decision. To comply with this this requirement the Council publishes a Notification of Key Decisions each month which summarises the key decisions the Cabinet expects to take in the next three months.
- 2.5 Where it has not been possible to comply with this notification process, a key decision may still be taken under General Exception and Special Urgency provisions set out in sections 15 to 17 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.
- 2.6 The Overview & Scrutiny function is important in enabling non-executive Members to review and scrutinise decisions made by the Cabinet. This includes the power to 'call in' a decision of the Cabinet which has not yet been implemented. Every Cabinet decision which is subject to call-in cannot be implemented until the call-in period expires, which is 5 working days after the publication of the decision. If a decision needs to be implemented urgently the Chair of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee can agree to waive call-in to enable the decision to be implemented without waiting for the 5 working days to elapse. The Cabinet report and/or minutes will specify if a call-in waiver was granted.
- 2.7 Under Section 17 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee has the power to require the Cabinet to report to Council if it believes a key decision has not been taken in accordance with the relevant procedures. It is confirmed that the Committee has not reported any such non-compliance this quarter.

### Summary of use of special urgency provisions requiring call-in waivers

- 2.8 During the January to March 2026 quarter, there was one key decision under the Leader's Action procedure which also received a Call-In waiver agreed by the Chair of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee and an urgent key decision notice was published. One further Call-in waiver was granted. The overall use of urgency powers remains low and the constitutional provisions are being used appropriately. Decisions taken under the Leader's Action procedure are published and are now routinely reported to the next meeting of Cabinet.
- 2.9 To provide Members with further context, the table below sets out the use of wider urgency procedures, including those where it was not necessary to waive call-in.

	<b>Urgent Key Decisions</b> (all decisions not included on 28 day notice of key decisions)	<b>Leader's Urgent Action</b>	<b>Chief Executive's Urgent Action</b> (Executive functions)	<b>Call-in waivers granted</b>
<b>Q1 2022</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q2 2022</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q3 2022</b>	2	1	0	1
<b>Q4 2022</b>	2	0	0	2
<b>Q1 2023</b>	2	2	0	1
<b>Q2 2023</b>	2	0	1	2
<b>Q3 2023</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q4 2023</b>	1	1	0	1
<b>Q1 2024</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>Q2 2024</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Q3 2024</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q4 2024</b>	1	0	0	3
<b>Q1 2025</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q2 2025</b>	1	1	0	0
<b>Q3 2025</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Q4 2025</b>	1	1	0	1
<b>Q1 2026</b>	1	1	0	2
<b>Total 2022</b>	4	1	0	3
<b>Total 2023</b>	5	3	1	4
<b>Total 2024</b>	2	0	0	5
<b>Total 2025</b>	2	2	0	1
<b>Total 2026</b>	1	1	0	2

NB: some decisions were subject to more than one of the above provisions.

### Late publication of reports

- 2.10 In accordance with statutory requirements and the Access to Information Procedure Rules, reports to Cabinet should be published at least five clear working days before a meeting. In circumstances where this is not possible a report must be published as soon as it is available before the meeting.

- 2.11 To improve transparency and to provide a benchmark for improvement, this report includes data on the late publication of reports to Cabinet. In the first quarter of 2026 a total of 4 reports were published late. Full details are provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.12 To provide some context, the number of Cabinet reports published late since 2022 is as follows:

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Number of Cabinet meetings</b>	13	12	14	12	4
<b>Total number of reports</b>	86	93	79	92	24
<b>Number of late reports</b>	11	11	16	17	4
<b>% of late reports</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>

- 2.13 To provide further transparency Appendix 3 shows the number of reports published late for Council and other committees. A full year's data from April 2025 to March 2026 is now shown. Analysis of the reasons for lateness will be included in future reports.

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

#### *3.1 Financial implications*

- 3.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### *3.2 Legal implications*

- 3.2.1 The key legal provisions are summarised in the report. The primary legal requirements are contained in The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which have been incorporated into the Council's Constitution.
- 3.2.2 The Centre for Governance & Scrutiny has produced guidance on the use of call in to assist local authorities in drafting their constitutional rules. In relation to exceptions which should apply to call-in procedures, it recommends that these should be used where for reasons that it would be prejudicial to the interests of the Council, for safety reasons or because it is in the wider public interest. The Council has followed this guidance by incorporating rules for general and special urgency and emergency arrangements for decisions of different degrees of immediacy with different processes affecting call-in and member oversight. The guidance states that this may appear potentially complicated but does mean that the right to call a decision in is wholly absent only in the most extreme of circumstances. The guidance refers to decisions to remove call-in and the reasons for this being reported to Full Council either on a decision by decision basis or via an annual report.
- 3.2.3 The draft best value guidance refers to an indicator of potential failure being scrutiny functions being undermined and a lack of pre-decision scrutiny, plus a culture of secrecy and overuse of urgency arrangements, confidential or delegated action reports and a failure for such reports to be reported in a form which allows scrutiny.

### 3.3 *Risk management implications*

3.3.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report.

### 3.4 *Environmental implications*

3.4.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

### 3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report. Decisions taken by the Cabinet are subject to equality impact assessments where appropriate.

## **4. Background Papers**

None.

**Appendix 1: Log of decisions taken under special urgency procedures where call-in waivers granted in accordance with Rule 16 of the Access to Information Rules – January to March 2026**

	<b>Decision taker</b>	<b>Report Title</b>	<b>'Urgent' key decision</b>	<b>Call-in waived</b>	<b>Reason for urgency and other comments</b>
			<i>Decision taken under General Exception (para 15 of Access to Information Rules) i.e. less than 28 days' notice of key decision given.</i>	<i>Call-in waiver request granted by the chair of scrutiny.</i>	
<b>Quarter 1 2026</b> Jan to Mar 2026	<b>Cabinet</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Award of Insurance Contracts following Competitive Tender Process	No, notice of the key decision had been included in the notice covering this period.	Yes	A Call-In waiver request was agreed by the Chair of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny due to need to issue a standstill notice and award contract by 1 April 2026 to enable the Council to have adequate insurance arrangements in place.
	<b>Leader's Action</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Upton Hospital Development	Yes, an urgent decision notice was published in accordance with the regulations as the item had not been fully included in the statutory 28-day pre-decision notice.	Yes	The Council was seeking to enter into an agreement with NHS England and Frimley ICB to develop a new Neighbourhood Health Centre/Integrated Care Hub on the Upton Hospital Site. The facility will be fully funded by NHSE. An urgent decision was required to enable the agreement to be finalised by 31st March 2026.

**Appendix 2: Log of late reports to Cabinet in past 12 months**

<b>Quarter 2 – April to June 2025</b>					
<b>Date of Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Number of late reports</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Agenda published</b>	<b>Report published</b>	<b>Comments</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	<b>5</b>	Quarterly Corporate Performance Report	Fri 4 Apr	Thu 10 Apr	-
		Equality Plan 2025-2027	Fri 4 Apr	Thu 10 Apr	-
		Safer Slough Partnership Community Safety Plan 2025/28	Fri 4 Apr	Thu 10 Apr	-
		Procurement Forward Plan for goods, works and services 2025/26	Fri 4 Apr	Thu 10 Apr	-
		Long Term Lease of Homes for Use as Temporary Accommodation	Fri 4 Apr	Thu 10 Apr	-
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	<b>1</b>	Library Services	Fri 9 May	Thu 15 May	-
		-	Fri 9 May	-	Cabinet Committee reports published 8/5/25
16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	<b>1</b>	Asset Disposal – Land at Norway Drive	Fri 6 Jun	Thu 12 Jun	-

<b>Quarter 3 – July to September 2025</b>					
<b>Date of Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Number of late reports</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Agenda published</b>	<b>Report published</b>	<b>Comments</b>
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	<b>2</b>	2023/24 Restatement and 2024/25 Provisional Outturn	Fri 11 July	Wed 16 July	-
		HRA Acquisitions Policy	Fri 11 July	Wed 16 July	-
15 <sup>th</sup> September 2025	<b>1</b>	Budget Management Report Q1 2025/26	Fri 5 Sept	Thu 11 Sept	-

**Quarter 4 – October to December 2025**

<b>Date of Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Number of late reports</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Agenda published</b>	<b>Report published</b>	<b>Comments</b>
10 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	<b>1</b>	Home to School Transport Assistance	Fri 10 Oct	Thu 16 Oct	-
17 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	<b>3</b>	Operating Model and Transformation Plan	Fri 7 Nov	Thu 13 Nov	-
		Schools Capital Investment Strategy	Fri 7 Nov	Thu 13 Nov	-
		Health Visiting and School Nursing 0-19 Service – NHS Pay Award	Fri 7 Nov	Thu 13 Nov	-
15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025	<b>1</b>	Thames Valley Devolution EOI	Fri 5 Dec	Mon 8 Dec	-

**Quarter 1 – January to March 2026**

<b>Date of Cabinet Meeting</b>	<b>Number of late reports</b>	<b>Report title</b>	<b>Agenda published</b>	<b>Report published</b>	<b>Comments</b>
19 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	<b>2</b>	Liquid Logic Contract Award	Fri 9 Jan	Fri 16 Jan	-
		Recommendations from CISC (NEETs Task and Finish Group)	Fri 9 Jan	Mon 12 Jan	-
16 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	<b>1</b>	Transformation Plan Update	Fri 6 Feb	Thu 12 Feb	-
4 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	<b>0</b>	-	Tues 3 Mar	-	-
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	<b>1</b>	GRE5 Business Plan	Fri 6 Mar	Thu 12 Mar	-

## Cabinet totals – 2022-26

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>
<b>Number of meetings</b>	13	12	14	12	4
<b>Total number of reports</b>	86	93	79	92	24
<b>Number of late reports</b>	11	11	16	17	4
<b>% of late reports</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>

### Notes:

- Late is defined as a main/cover report issued with less than five clear working days notice i.e. after main agenda publication.
- Excludes recommendations from the Cabinet Committee (which meets the Thursday before Cabinet) if the report to Cabinet Committee was published more than five clear working days before Cabinet.

**Appendix 3 – Late Report Tracker for Council, Cabinet and Committees between 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

	<b>Council</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Cabinet Committee</b>	<b>Audit &amp; Corporate Governance Committee</b>	<b>Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Employment Committee</b>	<b>Standards Committee</b>	<b>Trustee Committee</b>	<b>TOTAL 15 April to 31 Dec</b>
Reports published on time	21 (81%)	64 (75%)	1 (8%)	32 (59%)	17 (74%)	7 (70%)	6 (100%)	1 (50%)	<b>103 (66%)</b>
Reports published late but considered at the meeting (i.e. marked to follow)	5 (19%)	14 (16%)	9 (75%)	22 (41%)	6 (26%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	<b>46 (29%)</b>
Reports listed on published agenda but deferred to a later meeting	0 (0%)	7 (8%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	<b>7 (4%)</b>