

Slough Borough Council Annual Report 2025-26

Our Corporate Plan

The council's Corporate Plan 2023-27 is a key strategic document that sets our high-level vision for what we hope to achieve. It is not intended to cover everything the council does but sets out the council's aspirations and goals that will be delivered alongside our day-to-day activities.

Our approach

The Corporate Plan introduced a new approach for the council setting out how we will improve services and ways of working for all residents, reflected in the following five principles:

1. **Resident focussed** – serving the people of Slough first and foremost, responding to concerns, ensuring views are heard, and delivering on the issues that matter most to them
2. **Providing financial sustainability** – living within our means, balancing our budget, and being honest and open about the difficult decisions that we need to make
3. **Enabling residents and communities** – to live well independently, building community capacity and resilience, and enabling our community to shape Slough's future
4. **Strengthening partnerships** – strengthening relationships with partners, the community and young people through collaboration and co-operation
5. **Building trust** – to restore trust and confidence in the council, ensuring that we are reliable, responsive and open, as we continue to recover and improve.

Our priorities

The Corporate Plan has a key focus on improving healthy life expectancy and on children and young people – with three core priorities:

1. **A borough for children and young people to thrive**
2. **A town where residents can live healthier, safer, and more independent lives**
3. **A cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous Slough**

This update lays out the work the council has been undertaking over the 2025/26 to embed the council approach and deliver on these key strategic priorities. Slough Children First produces a separate Annual Report, as part of the council's annual review and contract-monitoring arrangements.

Financial Stability and Leadership

Slough Borough Council's Transformation and Recovery programme is central to securing the council's long-term financial sustainability. Over the past year, the council has made progress across key areas, including launching a three-year transformation programme and shifting the council's operating model towards a more resident centred approach. Progress is monitored monthly by Commissioners through the Improvement and Recovery Board and reported quarterly to Full Council.

The council has invested in strengthening leadership capability through a structured development offer, including a management leadership programme. A new Workforce Strategy has clarified expectations and strengthened performance management, while governance has continued to improve through enhanced scrutiny, targeted member development, and closer collaboration between Members, Commissioners, and senior officers to improve alignment and forward planning.

Like all local authorities, the council continues to face significant financial pressures from rising demand and costs, particularly in adult social care, SEND and temporary accommodation. In response, the council has strengthened its Medium-Term Financial Strategy, improved demand modelling and forecasting, and implemented a robust three-year savings programme to support long-term budget recovery and reduce reliance on one off measures. This includes better identification of emerging pressures through data analysis, clearer planning of reserves and contingencies, service cost benchmarking, and a rolling approach to savings delivery.

While the council remains reliant on Exceptional Financial Support, it has set out a clear plan to eliminate this dependency by 2028/29 through stronger financial management, operational improvements, and continued delivery of its transformation programme, including the move to an Enabling Council operating model. The new Transformation Delivery Model was approved in February 2026 and is a multi-year cross Council Transformation Programme and investment. Plans were also set out in the Council budget and MTFS report in March and will generate over £30m of savings over the three-year period.

The Transformation Programme also adopted the new Target Operating Model (TOM). This sets a clear future direction for Slough as an "Enabling Council" — one that empowers residents, strengthens partnerships, simplifies access to services, and delivers high-quality, sustainable outcomes. Where possible, residents will be supported to live meaningful lives independently. As a result, the TOM places greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

The Operating Model diagnostic identified the key shifts to transform the corporate and enabling support required to deliver sustainable change covering- strategic planning and governance, workplace culture, commissioning and procurement, data and digital and a streamlined corporate estate. Without these shifts, it will be difficult to sustain the changes needed to improve services and move to a transformed Council.

<i>Spotlight: Target Operating Model</i>

A new Target Operating Model (TOM) – *Slough as an Enabling Council* – was approved, defining how the council will improve access to services through harnessing data and digital tools, and building on collaborative approaches with its communities. The three year Transformation Plan, adopted in February 2026, is underpinned by strengthened governance, including a Transformation Board and a Design Authority to ensure a consistent approach to change management, and the procurement of a transformation partner to provide access to expertise.

The plan brings together detailed discovery work across priority services and clear financial and operational goals aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to ensure transformation directly supports financial sustainability.

Key to Slough’s future transformation is its ‘enabling council’ model – which takes a strength-based approach to empowering residents and partners to co-design and co-deliver services that holistically meet resident need. This ‘hub and spoke’ model will provide residents with access to information, support and advice in an integrated way (through face-to-face community hub support alongside digital self-help tools), while supporting Slough’s most vulnerable residents through a targeted approach focused on early intervention and prevention.

Embedding this TOM will be a key priority for the council in 2026/27, alongside building in-house transformation capability - marking a shift from short-term stabilisation to strategic, whole council transformation to improve resident outcomes.

Enabling residents, strengthening partnerships and rebuilding trust

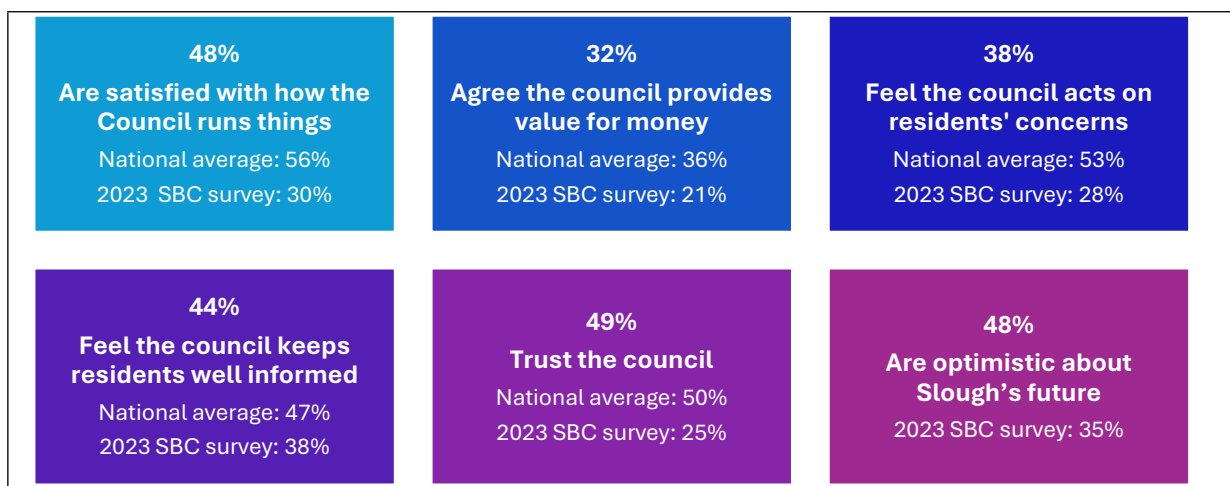
Ensuring all our work is resident centred is key to delivering our Council Plan, and restoring trust and confidence is at the heart of that.

During 2025 the council redesigned its [Resident Engagement Framework](#) to improve how it listens to and involves communities. This refreshed approach will enable more inclusive participation, remove barriers to engagement and offer more ways for residents to get more involved, alongside clearer communication of decisions and outcomes.

Spotlight: Residents Survey

In July and August 2025, a stratified random sample of 502 residents were asked to answer questions about how they perceive their Council. Resident feedback showed a marked improvement in perceptions compared with 2023 results, indicating a recovery in confidence and trust. Overall satisfaction rose from 30% to 48%, alongside stronger views on value for money, which increased from 21% to 32%, narrowing the gap with national averages. More residents now feel the Council acts on their concerns (up from 28% to 38%) and keeps them informed (from 38% to 44%), although a majority still do not feel fully listened to - highlighting the ongoing importance of clearly demonstrating responsiveness and communicating delivery against local priorities. Trust in the Council has almost doubled, rising from 25% to 49%, representing one of the most significant gains in the survey. Optimism about Slough’s future has also grown notably, increasing from 35% to 48%, driven primarily by regeneration and development across the borough.

Although more work still needs to be undertaken to improve engagement with residents, and rebuild levels of trust and satisfaction, these results indicate that the relationship between residents and the council has improved significantly.



Alongside the council's face-to-face survey, over 20 additional online surveys and consultations have been conducted through the council's engagement platform, receiving over 900 responses. This engagement has helped shape our budget, council tax support, our approach to community safety and our updated Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The focus will now be on ensuring greater reach, particularly with residents who do not usually engage with the council, at an earlier stage of policy/service design and closing the feedback loop, for example through 'You Said We Did' reporting.

Case Study: State of the Borough Debate

In July 2025, Slough Borough Council held its first State of the Borough Debate, a public event designed to strengthen engagement with residents and partners and to inform future priorities and decision-making. Held at Slough & Langley College and attended by more than 100 residents, the debate brought together councillors from all political groups alongside community, faith, voluntary-sector and youth representatives. The debate focused on three key themes: opportunities, activities and education for young people; the council's role in the borough, particularly in the context of financial recovery; and the future of Slough town centre.

The debate provided a valuable platform for open discussion, resident challenge and cross-sector dialogue, reflecting the council's commitment to transparency, collaboration and co-production. Key issues raised included the need for improved pathways for young people into employment and education, inclusive and affordable town-centre regeneration, and sustained engagement with communities as the council continues its recovery and improvement programme. Feedback and questions from the event are being used to inform ongoing engagement activity, with particular focus on community safety, anti-social behaviour and housing.

Over the last year the council has supported this work with a new communications strategy and forward plan to broaden the channels it uses in collaboration with partners to reach a more diverse range of residents, including launching a new email newsletter containing community updates, council initiatives, local events, and service information.

For the year ahead, the focus will be on embedding this refreshed approach to communications and engagement, and identifying opportunities to strengthen collaboration with partners. The council is reviewing its current partnership structures to ensure the right relationships and ways of working are in place.

Case Study: Britwell Hub

Enabling and empowering residents and communities is key to our approach to resident communication and engagement. This year the Council is trialling an integrated service delivery model that will make it easier for residents to access the information and advice they need.

The community drop-in service at The Britwell Centre offers residents the ability to access a range of services in one place – from access to housing advice, health, customer services, benefits and debt advice, alongside access to community groups, library and learning spaces. This model will shortly be reviewed with the intention of replicating the model, in collaboration with partners, across other communities in Slough.

Strengthening place leadership will be a key priority for the year ahead, as the council works with residents and partners to design a shared future and underpinning plan that will leverage the diversity, creativity and innovation that is intrinsic to Slough.

Over the coming year the council will collaborate with communities and partners to codesign and co-deliver a refreshed #OneSlough 2040 vision, as well as an underpinning delivery plan that will give residents the support they need to harness the unique strengths of Slough and collectively address local challenges.

Slough has been awarded up to £40m over 10 years for two neighbourhoods (Britwell and Langley Foxborough), with funding used to improve local places, strengthen communities and redesign services around the needs and priorities of residents. The Pride in Place programme is a long-term, government-funded initiative focused on supporting community-led regeneration in areas experiencing entrenched disadvantage.

A core feature of the programme is the establishment of locally-led Neighbourhood Boards, ensuring that investment is shaped through co-production with communities, with a strong emphasis on building local capacity, voice and ownership over decisions.

The programme directly supports Slough's Corporate Plan priorities by embedding a place-based, preventative and resident-led approach to addressing inequalities. It aligns with ambitions to create stronger, more cohesive communities, deliver inclusive economic and social growth, and improve health and wellbeing outcomes by tackling wider determinants such as housing, environment and employment. Importantly, Pride in Place also strengthens the Council's operating model by driving system-wide collaboration, integrating services around local need, and shifting towards long-term, sustainable change rather than short-term interventions.

The areas were chosen by central government based on an assessment of need, disadvantage and community belonging. The intention is to use the funding to develop place based and engagement tools and approaches that can benefit the wider community.

Spotlight: Equality Plan

Over the past year, the council has strengthened its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion following the 2024 LGA Peer Challenge, which highlighted challenges around data, governance, workforce diversity and community engagement. In response, the council published its Equality Plan 2025–27, to embed equalities across the council's ways of working.

The Council has made progress in engaging, understanding and enabling our diverse workforce, for example:

- We have improved how we collect, use and manage our [diversity data](#) to ensure we are attracting and retaining diverse talent
- We have increased staff engagement, awareness and understanding of equalities through investment in training and a Communications Plan that celebrates our diverse staff and residents (recently including: Black History Month, International Day of the Disabled Person, International Women's Day, and our own council Diversity Day)
- Staff now feel more supported with staff networks in place promoting diversity and inclusion across race, gender (women), LGBTQ+, disability, and neurodiversity in addition to a Carers Café and a Menopause Café.

Over this last year significant progress has also been made to enable more responsive service delivery, for example through:

- Improvements to [data collection](#), incorporating national and local data sets, to improve understanding of the diversity of our residents and local inequality challenges (examples include the [Slough Insights](#) pack, [Poverty Pack](#), [Residents Survey](#) and the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#))
- Staff are being supported to draw on the latest data to conduct [Equalities Impact Assessments](#) and ensure equalities considerations are comprehensively reviewed, with challenge and support provided and training currently being rolled out
- Governance has been strengthened with the creation of an Equalities Board, chaired by the Chief Executive, to oversee delivery and a more transparent approach to reporting
- We are improving how we work with our residents and partners, for example we will be launching a series of community conversations in the coming year, and a Faith Leaders Forum to codesign a 'Faith Compact' - signalling a new way of working with our diverse faith communities
- We are rolling out member training to ensure we are fully leveraging the role for members in understanding and responding to the diverse needs of all our residents, sharing and responding to that information.

In terms of next steps we will be focusing on developing and delivering a Data Strategy that will set out our approach to investing in the underpinning data systems we need to improve the collection and analysis of data across services.

Bringing this data together, and working more closely with residents and partners, will give us a deeper understanding of how we are serving our communities and help us to meet our equality objectives through more responsive, integrated service provision.

Recovery plan: priorities for further improvement

Despite the key foundations referenced above, sustained focus will be required to implement planned savings, maintain firm spending controls and manage ongoing pressures relating to

demand, income, reserves and capital financing. Ensuring these plans translate into long-term financial resilience remains a critical priority.

Greater collegiate working between the Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet is required to provide clear and effective direction. This is particularly important in the context of a no-overall-control administration, where building consensus has proven challenging. At this critical stage, the absence of fully unified political and corporate leadership risks undermining the progress made to date, with commissioners noting that the Council's improvement trajectory has begun to plateau.

Service performance remains inconsistent and, in key areas, below the standard required. Progress in Children's Services and Housing has been insufficient, with evidence of deterioration in children's services over the past year and housing services still at an early stage of stabilisation. While Adult Social Care has achieved a positive inspection outcome, this is not yet reflective of overall service performance. Residents' experience of Council services often remains poor, with concerns about accessibility, responsiveness and the ability to resolve issues at the first point of contact. Dissatisfaction with service quality and the public realm continues to be reflected in complaints and inspection feedback.

While there have been improvements in the Council's workforce planning, communication and engagement, these have not yet translated into the high-performance culture required. Greater emphasis is needed on robust performance management, alongside embedding a continuous improvement and learning culture. Although staff survey results indicate improving perceptions of leadership, these gains are not yet consistently reflected in service delivery or organisational behaviours.

There are also significant gaps in the Council's approach to service improvement. Existing improvement plans are at varying stages of development and lack consistency across priority service areas. In many cases, plans have been developed in response to regulatory requirements rather than as part of a coherent, organisation-wide approach. There remains a lack of clearly defined milestones, deliverables and shared understanding of what good looks like. As a result, there is no strong "golden thread" linking service-level improvements to a wider, cross-Council narrative of transformation.

Inspection findings highlight a number of recurring corporate issues that continue to hinder progress, including weaknesses in data integrity, the strategic use of data and effective resident engagement. While steps have been taken to strengthen governance, member development and forward planning, impact remains uneven. Leadership behaviours, governance maturity and relationships between members and officers are not yet consistently embedded, and further work is needed to build trust, clarify roles and improve collaboration.

Although there are early signs of improvement in areas such as resident engagement and satisfaction, this is from a low base and has yet to translate into consistently improved outcomes. Ultimately, addressing these challenges will require stronger financial stability, more aligned leadership and the delivery of a unified, organisation-wide improvement framework capable of driving sustained change across all services.

Performance scorecard summary 2025/26

The council's annual performance scorecard is attached to this report as an appendix. The performance measures included are aligned to the priority outcomes within the Corporate Plan.

Over the past year, the Council has strengthened its approach to performance management, with greater clarity, accountability and use of data to inform decision-making and drive service improvement. This forms an important part of the Council's wider recovery and improvement journey and is helping to build stronger foundations for delivery.

Overall, performance shows a mixed but gradually improving picture. A greater proportion of measures are now meeting or approaching target compared to the previous year, with fewer indicators performing below expectations. This reflects year-on-year improvement, with more services demonstrating progress and fewer areas of significant underperformance, although performance has been more variable in recent months.

There has been particularly strong progress in a number of areas. Outcomes for children's early development remain above national averages, supporting a strong start in life, while public health performance continues to outperform key benchmarks, including on NHS Health Checks. Adult social care is delivering positive outcomes, with more residents able to manage their own care, and homelessness prevention has improved significantly, reflecting a stronger focus on early intervention. Planning performance remains consistently strong, and improvements in financial management have led to reductions in council tax and business rate arrears, alongside better supplier payment performance. These areas demonstrate where a clear focus on outcomes, prevention and performance management is delivering tangible results.

However, challenges persist in other areas including the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), recycling rates, adult safeguarding performance remaining below national benchmarks, reflecting variation in referral thresholds and case mix. Challenges also remain within housing services – particularly repairs, re-let times and tenant satisfaction. Customer service responsiveness is also under pressure due to rising demand and capacity constraints. These issues reflect ongoing system pressures and highlight the need for greater consistency in delivery across all priorities.

Looking ahead, the Council enters 2026/27 with stronger performance foundations, clearer accountability and evidence of progress in key areas. The focus for the year ahead will be on driving greater consistency across services, closing gaps with national and regional benchmarks, and maintaining a clear focus on improving outcomes for residents.

A refreshed set of corporate performance measures has been introduced to strengthen alignment with Corporate Plan priorities and the emerging Local Outcomes Framework, supporting more effective performance oversight and continued improvement.

Priority 1: A borough for children and young people to thrive

Starting well is a critical indicator of performing well in later years. With one of the youngest populations in the country (one third of the population are under 18), it is even more important we ensure our children and young people thrive. A key focus has been improving health and wellbeing, and providing more integrated services. When children and young people feel healthy and supported, they're better able to learn and succeed in later years.

Case study: Healthy Schools Award

This year the council launched the Slough Healthy Schools Award at Langley Academy Primary School. The Slough Healthy Schools Award recognises schools that demonstrate a whole-school commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff focussing on prevention, early intervention, and targeted support.

Slough Healthy Schools Award process provides schools with an online self-evaluation framework with developmental next steps which enables schools to secure good and outstanding practice with regards to the 4 core health themes of Healthy Schools namely **PSHE, School Food, Healthy Lifestyles, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health.**

The Award provides a collaborative approach to boosting health and wellbeing for children and young people—supporting schools while connecting with services and partners. It helps schools identify resources, build effective partnerships, and improve outcomes, ensuring every child has the support they need to thrive.

All schools in Slough can use the national School Health Check framework to celebrate their strengths, identify areas in need of development and gain the Healthy Schools Status.

In October 2024, the Public Health team commissioned HCRG to deliver the Child and Family Wellbeing Service for children aged 0–19, and up to 25 for those with SEND. The service delivers the Healthy Child Programme through health visiting and school nursing, supporting a healthy start to life, early identification of need, prevention of ill-health and readiness for learning.

During the year, focused improvement work has increased access to the 2–2.5 year developmental review. More sessions were introduced, including appointments outside standard working hours and in accessible community settings, alongside the introduction of text reminders to families following invitation letters. HCRG works in close partnership with Early Years services and Best Start Family Hubs to maximise uptake. A new 3.5 year developmental check has also been embedded for children not meeting all five developmental domains at their earlier review. This has helped identify emerging needs, particularly in speech, language and social skills, enabling earlier support and improving school readiness through closer joint working.

The Council also continues to support vulnerable young people through the Hospital Navigator scheme, jointly funded by Public Health and the Better Care Fund since July 2025. Delivered by Together as One at Wexham Park Hospital's Emergency Department, the service supports children and young people presenting with issues linked to violence, mental health or substance use. Navigators provide immediate engagement and connect young people to appropriate community services. In the first two quarters of the new contract, 79 young people were supported, including those facing complex challenges such as temporary

accommodation. The service is overseen by a multi-agency steering group, ensuring strong partnership working and alignment with wider safeguarding and prevention priorities.

Case study: Oral Health

Slough Borough Council commissioned Community Dental Services to deliver oral health promotion services for children, young people, and adults living in care homes across the borough. The service includes both universal programmes, such as train the trainer programme, Healthy Smiles accreditation and targeted supervised toothbrushing.

To support the development of positive oral health habits, 1,900 toothbrush and toothpaste packs containing educational materials were distributed to children and young people. This initiative aims to reduce oral health inequalities and ensure equitable access to oral health education.

Community Dental Services hosted a visit from Cllr Ishrat Shah, Lead Member for Public Health, Wellbeing and Equalities at Slough Borough Council, to showcase the supervised toothbrushing programme at Baylis Court Nursery. During the visit, Cllr Shah observed how the programme is supporting good oral health from an early age and contributing to the long-term reduction of tooth decay in Slough. Over 650 children are now participating in daily supervised toothbrushing programmes in Slough schools.

Providing quality services for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Slough's SEND Local Area Partnership – bringing together the Council, NHS, education providers and wider partners – welcomed the findings of the joint Ofsted and CQC inspection conducted in July 2025 and published in November 2025. The report identified systemic weaknesses across the SEND system, including delays in key processes, inconsistency in the quality and timeliness of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, weak communication pathways, and insufficient coordination across education, health and social care.

Demand for SEND support continues to grow. In 2025, approximately 2,800 children and young people were supported through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), including around 1,870 in mainstream settings and 930 in specialist or alternative provision. Of those in specialist provision, around 400 were placed out of borough. This represents a sustained increase of 51% since 2019, including a 19% rise between 2024 and 2025, partly driven by progress in addressing historic assessment backlogs.

Performance in timeliness has improved, with overdue EHCP assessments reduced from 116 cases in April 2025 to around 40, with full clearance expected by early 2026/27. However, demand remains consistently high, with an average of 43 new requests received each month, exceeding previous forecasts.

Local specialist provision is approaching capacity, contributing to continued reliance on higher-cost out-of-borough placements. In response, the Council is expanding in-borough capacity, including additional places at Arbour Vale School, new provision at Haybrook College, and a satellite base due to open in 2026. Recent capital developments at Arbour Vale have delivered four additional classrooms, creating 32 new places, while a Department for Education-approved satellite centre is expected to provide up to 80 early years and primary places.

Despite these developments, demand for specialist provision is projected to increase by a further 16% (approximately 450 children) over the next five years.

Rising demand continues to place significant pressure on the High Needs system and the Council's Safety Valve agreement, with a forecast cumulative deficit of £33.4 million by 2026/27.

Decisive action therefore needs to be taken to transform the quality and consistency of SEND services as well as, to deliver the transformation needed to meet rising demand. The Council approved a Priority Action Improvement Plan in early 2026, focused on strengthening data quality, improving partnership working, and increasing the effectiveness of SEND services.

Improving outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people

A person's early years are of fundamental importance in shaping their future education, employment and income outcomes, which collectively determine 30% of their health and wellbeing.

This year Early Help services have been strengthened, to ensure more families receive support at an earlier stage and to reduce the need for statutory interventions. Foster care provision remained rated Good, providing stability and high-quality placements for children in care. SBC also launched its first Corporate Parenting Strategy, which has already improved the way looked-after children access enriching activities, education, and employment opportunities, with young people themselves helping to shape progress one year on.

Slough, alongside Newham, has the joint smallest gap nationally between disadvantaged pupils in the early years and their peers. The Education Policy Institute's (EPI) latest annual report shows that, while the national disadvantage gap at the end of reception was 4.7 months in 2024, disadvantaged pupils in Slough were only 1.9 months behind.

Funding Futures worked with us and another six local authorities to conduct some field work, researching into why some local authorities had smaller gaps compared to others.

Through this work it was identified that the council has:

- Strong and diverse Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision with skilled staff who actively support and engage parents
- A long-term, consistent, widely embedded speech communication and language approach
- Active organised and organic community-led peer support for parents, reinforcing positive home learning norms.

Ofsted reports show how strong Slough schools are and only 3 out of 51 do not currently carry Good or better grades for all judgements. At age 16, Slough young people have the 11th best average attainment in the country, significantly higher than the national and regional averages. At age 19 the percentage of young people with a Level 2 qualification including English and mathematics is the 13th best in the country.

Children and young people shaping the future of Slough

<i>Case Study: Youth Parliament</i>
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Slough's Youth Parliament ran Young People's Question Time on 1st July, where young people from across the borough asked the questions that matter most to them directly to the people who make the decisions.

The session generated a lot of thoughtful questions that led to meaningful discussions about what more can be done to improve the lives of young people in the area.

The panel included Young Health Champion, Gozan and Gunveen from Slough Youth Parliament, as well as representatives from SEGRO and SBC councillors, and responded to topics across education and SEND support, youth clubs and activities, parks and green spaces, sustainability and transport, social care, community safety, mental health and wellbeing.

Involving young people in decisions that affect their lives is a key priority for Slough Borough Council and a central commitment within the council's corporate plan. Increasing youth participation helps ensure that local services are relevant, inclusive and responsive to the borough's diverse and growing population, while also supporting positive outcomes by empowering young residents, strengthening community cohesion, and building the skills and confidence needed for future education, employment and civic life.

Throughout 2025/26, the council has brought together children and young people, schools and partners to enable young residents to help shape future provision. This included the Eco Conference 2025 at Slough and Eton Secondary School, attended by more than 80 pupils, faith leaders and community organisations, where participants shared ideas on reconnecting communities with the planet. In July 2025, Story Tent Slough, organised by Slough Faith Partnership and partners, also brought together Key Stage 2 pupils from schools across the borough to hear sacred stories from different traditions and explore shared values such as friendship and mutual understanding.

Collaboration with Slough Children First

In order to deliver the first priority of the corporate plan the council aligns its work closely with Slough Children First. SCF produces a separate Annual Report, as part of the council's annual review and contract-monitoring arrangements.

The Youth Justice Service was inspected in September 2024 and received an Inadequate judgement. An improvement plan was implemented in January 2025 and is overseen by the Youth Justice Board through regular monthly and quarterly reviews to ensure progress and strengthen service performance.

Recent audit and inspection activity in Children's Social Care has also identified inconsistencies in practice, oversight and understanding of the experiences of children and families, limiting the organisation's ability to respond quickly to areas of weakness. In response, strengthened interim leadership has been appointed and has begun implementing measures to address risks and drive improvement.

An Ofsted focused visit in November 2025 found that support for care leavers aged 18–25 was inconsistent, with some young people lacking an allocated Personal Adviser or regular contact, reducing access to services and support. Inspectors also identified positive practice, including

the impact of the Virtual School, improved participation arrangements and specialist support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

Ofsted issued an Area for Priority Action relating to support for care leavers over 18, alongside required improvements in management oversight, workforce capacity, planning and quality assurance. While committed practitioners and examples of strengths-based practice were recognised, the findings highlighted the need for continued improvement to ensure a consistently effective service for all young people.

Over the next year, Improvement will focus on embedding the Family Help model across partner agencies, strengthening governance through the Corporate Parenting Board, enhancing workforce development, and maintaining effective engagement with care leavers to meet statutory responsibilities. Further priorities include improving the quality of social work practice through targeted training, quality assurance and service review activity, while strengthening the voice of children in care and care leavers through participation forums and ambassador programmes, and building on existing strengths in short breaks and foster care provision.

Priority One: Performance against KPIs

Early years development outcomes remain a clear area of strength. Indicators relating to early education take-up and child development show strong performance, with a high proportion of children achieving expected developmental milestones and increasing take-up of funded early education places. These results reflect sustained investment in early intervention, strong partnership working with health and early years providers, and targeted engagement with families.

While outcomes for care leavers in education, employment or training have improved and are approaching target, the proportion of 16–17-year-olds who are NEET remains above national benchmarks. This reflects ongoing challenges linked to service capacity and the difficulty of sustaining engagement with vulnerable cohorts; targeted face-to-face information, advice and guidance sessions continue to be delivered across community venues, prioritising in-person engagement to support young people into education, employment or training and proactive contact is maintained with all 16–17-year-olds to confirm participation status with tailored interventions in place for those without confirmed education, employment or training destinations.

The rate of children looked after has risen slightly, although it remains below statistical neighbour average. The service is strengthening its edge of care approach especially for young people aged 13–17 who represent a significant proportion of new care entrants. Activity continues to ensure children can safely remain with their families wherever possible supported by targeted intervention and earlier help. However, timeliness of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans continues to perform below national averages, reflecting capacity constraints and rising demand within SEND services.

Health and wellbeing for children and young people remains an area of concern in specific cohorts, particularly childhood obesity, which continues to sit above national levels with limited improvement. This reinforces the need for continued whole-system preventative approaches, such as those referenced above.

Priority 2: A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives

Working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing

The corporate plan has a key focus on tackling Slough's low healthy life expectancy and high rates of preventable ill-health, as well as inequalities in health between different areas of the borough and different population groups.

A cross-Council delivery plan is being developed to implement the four recommendations of the 2025 Annual Public Health Report - *Living Longer, Better in Slough*:

- Targeting high impact interventions where they are most needed to close the health gap between communities
- Preventing conditions that cause early deaths in Slough, particularly where Slough is an outlier such as CVD and Diabetes
- Enabling residents to manage their long term physical and mental health conditions to minimise harm and maximise quality of life
- Addressing the drivers of self-reported poor health

Slough has also been selected as one of six areas in the South-East to pioneer the new Neighbourhood Health Scheme, which aims to transform how community healthcare is delivered. Backed by Government funding, the programme will bring together a wide range of health professionals as neighbourhood teams, making it easier for residents, particularly those with long-term conditions and living in areas of highest deprivation, to access the right care close to home.

Case study – Integrated Health Service

Solutions 4 Health has been recommissioned to continue delivering Slough's Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service, now rebranded as Healthier Slough. The service provides a high-quality, accessible and innovative offer for residents across the borough, responding directly to local need and addressing health inequalities. It offers free or low-cost support to help people maintain and improve their physical and mental wellbeing, including community-based NHS Health Checks, smoking cessation services, adult weight management, falls prevention programmes and enhanced brief interventions for alcohol.

The recommissioned service has been further strengthened through an expanded prevention offer. This includes the introduction of targeted cardiovascular (CV) health checks for residents aged 30–39 who are identified as being at increased risk, enabling earlier identification and management of risk factors to help prevent future ill health. A new Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Prevention element has also been introduced, delivering targeted health education, outreach and community engagement focused on cardiovascular disease prevention, alongside the development of clear referral pathways and close collaboration with partners to improve engagement with underserved communities.

Together, these developments support a more proactive and preventative approach to health improvement in Slough, empowering residents of all ages to make informed choices, remain active and independent for longer, and improve their overall wellbeing.

To further support the prevention agenda and address factors contributing to early deaths in Slough, the Public Health team worked with partners across the borough to develop a Strategic Framework for Improving Physical Activity, approved by Cabinet in October 2025. The framework sets out a whole-system approach to help residents be more active in everyday life. A cross-system Physical Activity Steering Group now provides strategic leadership and coordinates delivery across seven key levers, working collectively to reduce inactivity, tackle inequalities and embed physical activity as a shared priority.

Slough continues to perform strongly in cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention, with NHS Health Check uptake among eligible residents remaining above both national and regional averages and consistently exceeding the quarterly target of 5 per cent. National monitoring shows coverage of 61.2 per cent of the eligible population over the past five years. In addition, the enhanced prevention programme delivered 404 targeted cardiovascular checks for residents aged 30–39 identified as at increased risk of CVD up to Quarter 3, supporting earlier detection and prevention.

These programmes align with Slough’s new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026–2036, which sets out a ten-year vision to make the town a healthier, safer place for all. Developed with residents and partners, the strategy focuses on reducing long-standing health inequalities, strengthening prevention across the life course and delivering culturally responsive services. It is underpinned by three core pillars: putting people first, prioritising prevention and building a stronger, more connected health and wellbeing system for Slough.

Case Study: Stop Smoking Service

Smoking prevalence in Slough has continued to show a consistent downward trend and remains significantly lower than the England average. The latest data ([APS 2024](#)) shows adult smoking prevalence at 6.8%. Smoking, however, still remains disproportionately concentrated within priority groups, with higher prevalence among people with long-term mental health conditions and routine and manual workers, and smoking during pregnancy continuing to require targeted prevention and cessation support. As overall prevalence falls, further reductions will increasingly depend on focused, inequality-driven interventions.

Progress is supported by a comprehensive local stop smoking service offer delivered through Healthier Slough, which provides free, evidence-based support including weekly one-to-one behavioural support over 6–12 weeks, access to nicotine replacement therapy and other quit aids. It is flexibly delivered via face-to-face, phone, digital and app-based support. The service places a strong emphasis on community outreach and inclusivity, with support available in multiple languages and targeted engagement with priority groups, helping to maximise reach, uptake and quit success across Slough’s diverse communities.

Supporting residents to be independent, whilst providing quality services for the most vulnerable adults

Slough's Adult Social Care services have continued their journey of improvement, culminating in a *Good* rating from the Care Quality Commission following the March 2025 inspection. The CQC highlighted strong performance in several priority areas, including the council's clear focus on prevention and promoting independence, effective reablement services, a well-qualified workforce with good access to training, and the high number of residents using direct payments to exercise control over their care. Inspectors also recognised the council's clear safeguarding policies and its commitment to safe, high quality support.

This improved rating reflects the dedication of council staff, partners, care providers, and the Co-production Network, all of whom have worked consistently to deliver better outcomes for residents.

At the same time, the inspection identified areas that still require attention, including pressures on some care and support services, gaps in flexible assessments for carers, and challenges faced by young people transitioning to adult services. Work is continuing across the system to address these issues and build on the progress already made.

In February 2026, Adult Social Care brought together staff and partners for a workshop focussed on understanding the drivers of service demand and strengthening targeted early intervention and preventative approaches. This work will continue over the coming year to ensure residents receive the right support at the right time.

Case Study: Ask Sara

In September Slough and Windsor & Maidenhead Councils jointly launched AskSARA: a free, award-winning online self-help resource designed to give residents personalised advice that makes daily living easier and safer. By answering a few simple questions about their needs and home environment, users receive a tailored report offering expert guidance, practical tips, and impartial product recommendations to support independent living. The tool covers a wide range of physical and mental health needs, is suitable for all ages, and includes signposting to local services, charities, and sources of additional support.

This accessible, user-friendly approach plays a valuable role in Slough's wider prevention and early intervention ambitions. By enabling people to identify challenges early - such as mobility, daily living tasks, or home safety concerns - AskSARA helps residents take proactive steps before issues escalate into more complex care needs. The personalised advice and early identification of suitable equipment or support options can reduce reliance on statutory services, promote wellbeing, and empower individuals, families, and carers to maintain independence for longer.

Improving community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour

Community safety is a key determinant of health and wellbeing, influencing around five per cent of health outcomes. Anti-social behaviour can cause significant harm, disrupting daily life, reducing quality of life and contributing to poorer mental health, including increased stress, anxiety and depression. For these reasons, improving community safety remains a priority for the council and its partners.

This year saw the launch of the Safer Slough Partnership's new Community Safety Strategy, focusing on four priority areas: substance misuse, serious violence, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. Each priority is supported by an annual action plan and delivered through dedicated thematic boards, with overall progress overseen by the partnership to ensure a coordinated approach. Additional external funding has also been secured to strengthen activity across these areas.

There has been strong engagement with residents and communities throughout the year. A community safety day in Chalvey brought together council teams, Thames Valley Police and enforcement partners to address concerns such as anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance and reckless driving. Officers worked directly with residents and businesses to reinforce legal requirements, explain consequences and issue warnings where appropriate.

Engagement was further supported through the Community Safety Survey, which received more than 340 responses, and the borough's first Crime and Community Safety Summit, which brought together communities and professionals to discuss shared concerns. Feedback from both initiatives is now informing current delivery and future planning.

Case Study: Safer Langley: Clear Hold Build

The Safer Langley: Clear, Hold, Build model which launched in November 2024, is a collaborative initiative aimed at creating a safer, more resilient Langley by removing the harmful influence of organised crime. This multi-agency initiative, led by Thames Valley Police and Slough Borough Council, aims to work alongside local partners to focus on the issues that matter most to the Langley community, including crime, anti-social behaviour, health, youth opportunities, business development and employability.

Since launching the initiative there has been a 43% reduction in reported knife crime in Slough, alongside 67 stop searches, 41 arrests, and the closure of cannabis factories and properties linked to serious criminal activity. The initiative has won two major policing awards: the 2025 Thames Valley Police Laycock Award for problem solving and the 2026 Shrievalty Award and is a nominated finalist for the Local Government Chronical Award 2026. This was the first time that a Local Authority had been at the forefront of this partnership model from the outset and this approach is now being expanded to other areas across Slough.

The council and its partners have also delivered a range of prevention and awareness activity. The relaunched Safe Places scheme has expanded access to safe spaces for people who feel vulnerable or at risk, alongside campaigns delivered during Drowning Prevention Week, Knife Crime Awareness Week and a week of action targeting illegal money lending.

Public Protection services continue to play a vital role in safeguarding residents and visitors. Licensing and Trading Standards teams work closely with businesses across the borough to support compliance, while taking enforcement action where necessary. In 2025/26, these teams carried out more than 1,000 inspections and visits to ensure that businesses meet required safety and regulatory standards.

The council has also intensified its focus on tackling fly-tipping and environmental crime. This has included multi-agency work to disrupt organised environmental offences, alongside the establishment of a dedicated fly-tipping project team. By tailoring evidence-based approaches that combine education, enforcement and prevention to the specific needs of Slough, the team has delivered tangible results, issuing 120 Fixed Penalty Notices over the past 12 months.

Priority Two: Performance against KPIs

Adult social care outcomes are consistently strong. Indicators relating to personalisation and independence - including the proportion of residents using direct payments and those supported to live independently - perform above national averages. This reflects a clear strategic focus on strengths-based practice, early intervention and enabling independence.

Health improvement and prevention also show strong performance. NHS Health Check uptake remains above regional and national benchmarks, and smoking prevalence continues to decline and outperform national averages. These outcomes demonstrate the effective delivery of preventative public health programmes referenced above and the success of targeted community engagement.

In contrast, adult safeguarding performance requires improvement, with the proportion of safeguarding referrals meeting Section 42 thresholds remaining below expectations, indicating inconsistency in threshold application and decision-making. While governance and quality assurance arrangements are strengthening, this remains an area requiring greater consistency.

Priority 3: A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough

Affordable, Safe and Healthy Homes

Case Study: Warm homes

The Warm Homes: Local Grant supports a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough by improving the energy efficiency of homes for low-income residents, particularly in the areas of greatest need. By targeting cold and poorly insulated properties, the scheme helps reduce fuel poverty and prevents illnesses linked to cold homes, such as respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, contributing directly to better health outcomes and reduced inequalities. Through coordinated delivery across Public Health, Housing and Environment teams, the programme promotes warmer, safer homes while also supporting Slough's wider climate and sustainability commitments. The creation of dedicated posts, targeted outreach, and ongoing monitoring ensures the scheme is effectively delivered, maximises uptake and strengthens long-term community wellbeing and prosperity.

Ensuring access to high-quality, secure and affordable housing remains a central priority for the council. Over the past year, Housing Services delivered substantial improvements to help more residents into safe homes more quickly. The number of void properties was reduced from 189 to just 49, significantly accelerating turnaround times so more council homes could be let without delay.

The council also invested in upgrading its housing stock to meet both the Decent Homes Standard and emerging net-zero requirements, ensuring homes are safer, warmer and more energy efficient. Compliance has been strengthened through the introduction of new building safety dashboards and regular resident building safety meetings, giving tenants greater oversight and reassurance.

Following a regulatory inspection, the council received a C3 grade for social housing, highlighting serious shortcomings in the transparency, influence and accountability standard, as well as the tenancy standard. It also identified weaknesses in the safety and quality, and neighbourhood and community standards. It did, however, also recognised that the council has a clear understanding of the issues and is implementing a rigorous improvement programme to deliver better outcomes for tenants.

To ensure a focused response, the council has created two new Housing Director positions, one focussing on the management of our council stock, and one focussing on housing need (including rough sleeping and homelessness). Work has begun on creating a new Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Scheme, and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Case study: Resident engagement driving improvement

This year has seen a key focus from housing officers to engage with residents in order to gain valuable insight, drive continuous improvement in services and build trust.

In January 2026, the council held a well-attended housing options open day for residents in temporary accommodation, offering personalised advice from council teams and partner organisations on available housing pathways, next steps, and essential support.

Residents were invited to the Housing Directorate's away day so staff could hear feedback directly and the council is publishing annual tenant satisfaction results, with tenant satisfaction embedded into goals for staff to drive continuous improvement.

This year the council also established a dedicated task force to improve how housing-related complaints are handled, and to achieve better compliance with the Social Housing Ombudsman's code.

Improving Air Quality, Promoting Active Travel and Acting on Climate Change

SBC's Corporate Plan includes a strong commitment to improving residents' health by encouraging active travel and more sustainable transport choices, while also preventing and minimising the impacts of climate change. These priorities support the Council's wider ambition to deliver a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough. Over the past year, the Council has taken important steps to build sustainable infrastructure, improve air quality and enable greener lifestyles across the borough.

Significant progress has been made through the delivery of two major Department for Transport-funded transport schemes. The A4 Cycleway is providing a new two-way cycle lane alongside junction upgrades, resurfacing of accident hotspots, improved pedestrian crossings, new average speed cameras and enhanced landscaping. At the same time, the Destination Farnham Road project is transforming the A355 corridor with a high quality offroad cycle route, upgraded footways and carriageways, an improved public realm and a safer 20mph speed limit through the main shopping area. In partnership with Network Rail, the Council is also enhancing the public concourse around Slough railway station, ensuring a more welcoming and accessible arrival point for residents and visitors.

To further support cleaner transport choices, the Council secured £2.233 million in April 2025 to expand electric vehicle infrastructure across the borough. This funding will support the delivery of at least 1,600 new on street charging points by 2040, particularly in residential areas without off-street parking. Alongside transport and environmental improvements, more residents are also reducing waste by participating in food waste recycling. In December 2025, an additional 5,300 households joined the service, bringing total participation to 15,300 households and demonstrating growing community engagement in sustainable living.

Case Study: Project Sponge

Project Sponge brings together partners across Slough Council, Buckinghamshire Council, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Middlesex University, and the National Flood Forum to trial nature-based solutions that tackle flooding, improve water quality, restore biodiversity, and help communities adapt to climate change.

The project works directly with residents and community groups to understand their experiences, provide support, and ensure local voices and expertise shape each stage of the project.

The festival was attended by hundreds of residents and featured citizen-science demonstrations, a solar-powered stage, performances, storytelling and the opening of a new nature trail.

Clean, Quality Public Spaces and a Modern Town Centre

The council continues to invest in making Slough a cleaner, greener, and more welcoming place.

Most recently, Slough was awarded £1.5 million from the government's Pride in Place Impact Fund, enabling wide-ranging improvements including enhancements to six local parks, better access to the canal towpath, upgrades to The Curve, and a series of town-centre initiatives. Part of the funding has also been allocated to community groups and charities delivering local improvement projects. The council also continued its strong backing for the Slough in Bloom competition, celebrating community pride in local gardening and allotments.

This year has seen Slough Borough Council working to enable the next major phase of town centre regeneration by helping facilitate Berkeley Homes' acquisition of the Queensmere and Observatory Shopping Centres. This unlocks one of the South East's most significant redevelopment opportunities, where outline planning consent is already in place for 1,600 new homes along with new retail, leisure and entertainment spaces. The council's ambitions for a modern, vibrant and accessible town centre are central to the scheme, which includes extensive landscaping, a redesigned public realm and new pedestrian routes to better connect the station, Wellington Street and the southern end of the High Street.

Our approach builds on the council's successful partnership with Berkeley Homes at the Horlicks Factory site and reflects its commitment to working with capable, well-resourced partners to deliver long-term regeneration. By supporting the transition of the Queensmere site into a high quality, residential mixed-use neighbourhood, the council is ensuring that the redevelopment reflects the energy and diversity of the local community while raising standards in design, sustainability and placemaking.

Case Study: Langley Pavilion

Langley Pavilion has undergone a transformation over the past year, evolving from a community space previously described by residents as resembling “a GP waiting room” into a vibrant, welcoming hub enriched with colour, art, and creativity. The refurbishment was delivered through a partnership between Viva Slough, Dulux (AkzoNobel), and Slough Borough Council, with Dulux fully funding the project and providing all paint, equipment, and corporate volunteers. The centrepiece of the refurbishment is a large mural designed by local artist Johana Plazas (Jho), featuring a young Slough girl, the iconic Dulux dog, and a cosmic landscape that pays tribute to the town’s scientific heritage, including astronomer William Herschel.

Over four days, Dulux volunteers worked side-by-side with ten Slough residents to repaint and reimagine the Pavilion, demonstrating the power of partnership in enhancing local environments. As part of the wider Safer Langley initiative, the refurbished Pavilion now stands as a symbol of positive change, demonstrating how investment in shared spaces can strengthen neighbourhood pride and contribute to safer, more vibrant communities.

Engaging with businesses and driving jobs and skills

The council has strengthened Slough’s economic foundations by supporting businesses and encouraging investment that creates new employment opportunities for local families.

Case study: Empowering Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) Lab

In December the council launched a 12 week enterprise programme designed to support young people aged 16–30 who are not in education, employment or training to unlock entrepreneurial potential. It combines practical training, personalised one-to-one business advice, guest speaker sessions, and real-world enterprise experiences. Participants were guided from creating early-stage ideas through to developing launch-ready business plans, as well as being provided with offsite inspiration visits and the chance to secure £1,000 in startup funding.

Delivered in partnership with Start-Up UK and local business experts, the initiative reflects SBC’s ongoing commitment to nurturing local talent, building confidence, and creating sustainable pathways into self-employment - supporting young entrepreneurs to overcome barriers, develop essential skills, and transform their ideas into viable enterprises.

A new Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) was adopted for the Slough Trading Estate, replacing the original 1995 scheme. Running from 2024 to 2034, the SPZ streamlines planning by granting advance permission for certain types of development - including data centres, warehouses, and R&D facilities - removing the need for individual applications and giving Slough a competitive edge for growth and innovation. The Slough Trading Estate continues to be central to the borough’s economic success. In 2023, it was home to 350 businesses, provided over 15,000 jobs, and generated more than £49 million in business rates. The Estate continues to attract international investment, support business expansion and provide essential funding for local public services.

A significant array of activity has been undertaken by council teams to engage with businesses and build relationships.

In June 2025, the council participated in a cross-Berkshire business survey in partnership with the other five Berkshire authorities, inviting firms to share their priorities, challenges and workforce needs. The survey provided a direct channel for businesses to feed back their expertise and shape council-led support, ensuring programmes are aligned with real business requirements while helping residents access and sustain employment. Alongside gathering insight, the council encouraged businesses to become “employer champions” and is working collaboratively with employers, the Department for Work and Pensions and health partners to develop inclusive employment opportunities, address skills gaps and tackle recruitment challenges across the local economy.

In November 2025, the council also, in partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses and Slough Town Football Club, hosted a business networking and supply chain event, attended by around 80 local businesses and other partners such as Heathrow, Resource Productions, the Thames Valley Chambers of Commerce and the Institute of Directors. This provided an opportunity for local employers to discuss their growth needs, critical challenges facing their business and supply chain opportunities.

Throughout the year, the councils has also been out beating the drum for growth in the borough; providing tours of Slough for those looking to build or invest, and attending key investment events, such as UKREiF (the UK’s Real Estate, Investment and Infrastructure Forum), MPIM (International Market for Real Estate Professionals) and LREF (the London Real Estate Forum).

This year also saw the council host its own ‘Slough is Now’ developer forum – with over 50 developers, investors and partners meeting to explore Slough’s regeneration and investment pipeline - from town centre renewal and major sites to employment space, innovation and growth linked to Heathrow and the wider Thames Valley. Berkeley Homes, Plus X and others spoke about why they are in Slough and how they are working with the Council, with attendees also discussing how Slough is moving from strategy to delivery, the role of placemaking in unlocking investment, building confidence and how Slough can deliver sustainable, high-quality development at scale.

Priority Three: Performance against KPIs

Homelessness prevention has strengthened significantly, with consistently high levels of prevention activity. However, performance within housing management remains challenging.

Re-let times remain variable as the team clear long-standing cases; a taskforce is now in place, looking at removing blockers and focussing on early pre-void notification and early offers to minimise downtime and reduce avoidable delays.

Emergency housing repairs completed on time overall remains consistently high and in line with the previous year, despite some operational pressures increasing towards the end of the year.

While tenant satisfaction has improved, it remains below national benchmarks. As referenced above, a comprehensive service improvement and engagement plan is now in place, with heads of service meeting regularly with the regulator to monitor progress.

Recycling rates have increased compared to the previous year but remain significantly below national and regional averages. The Council will continue targeted engagement to support the rollout of the food waste service, helping residents to take part and use it correctly. Efforts will focus on areas with lower participation, alongside promoting waste reduction and reuse to improve recycling rates and reduce residual waste across the borough.

More positively, performance for major planning applications is consistently high and exceeds national benchmarks, demonstrating an effective planning function despite wider organisational pressures.