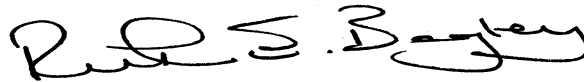


Date of issue: Wednesday, 24 February 2016

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b> (Councillors Nazir (Chair), Strutton (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Bains, Bal, N Holledge, Malik, Rana and Usmani)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	THURSDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2016 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	VENUS SUITE 2, ST MARTINS PLACE, 51 BATH ROAD, SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE, SL1 3UF
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	SHABANA KAUSER 01753 787503

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**RUTH BAGLEY**  
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
	<b>CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS</b>		
1.	Declaration of Interest		
	<i>All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Pecuniary or non pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 3 paragraphs 3.25 – 3.27 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 3.28 of the Code.</i>		

**AGENDA**  
**ITEM**

**REPORT TITLE**

**PAGE**

**WARD**

*The Chair will ask Members to confirm that they do not have a declarable interest. All Members making a declaration will be required to complete a Declaration of Interests at Meetings form detailing the nature of their interest.*

- |    |   |        |  |
|----|---|--------|--|
| 2. | Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 4th February 2016 | 1 - 12 |  |
|----|---|--------|--|

**SCRUTINY ISSUES**

- |    |                  |  |  |
|----|------------------|--|--|
| 3. | Member Questions |  |  |
|----|------------------|--|--|

*(An opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Assistant Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).*

- |    |   |         |     |
|----|---|---------|-----|
| 4. | Universal Credit - Implications for Local Residents | 13 - 20 | All |
| 5. | Slough Urban Renewal Update                         | 21 - 24 | All |
| 6. | Forward Work Programme                              | 25 - 28 | All |

**MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**

- |    |                                     |         |   |
|----|-------------------------------------|---------|---|
| 7. | Members Attendance Record 2015/16   | 29 - 30 | - |
| 8. | Date of Next Meeting - 7 April 2016 | -       | - |

**Press and Public**

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

The Council allows the filming, recording and photographing at its meetings that are open to the public. Anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting is requested to advise the Democratic Services Officer before the start of the meeting. Filming or recording must be overt and persons filming should not move around the meeting room whilst filming nor should they obstruct proceedings or the public from viewing the meeting. The use of flash photography, additional lighting or any non hand held devices, including tripods, will not be allowed unless this has been discussed with the Democratic Services Officer.



**Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 4th February, 2016.**

**Present:-** Councillors Nazir (Chair), Strutton (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Bains, N Holledge, Malik (until 7.22pm), Rana and Usmani.

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillor Anderson

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Bal

**PART I**

**51. Declaration of Interest**

Agenda Item 5 - Procurement of Environmental Services Contract. Councillor Bains declared that he was employed by Amey.

Agenda Item 9 – Capital Strategy 2016/22. Councillor Nazir declared that he was employed by Nationwide Building Society.

Councillor Strutton declared that he owned the freehold to a property that was rented by the Council.

**52. Minutes of the Meetings held on 12th January and 20th January 2016**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the following text to Minute 39:

*Councillor Strutton informed the meeting that he had requested for papers considered at a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be circulated to the Education and Children’s Scrutiny Panel Members. However, the Council’s internal procedures meant that this had not been possible. Ms Clemo stated that whilst she was not able to comment on the Council’s internal procedures, unless reports were intended for a private meeting, information should be made available on request. The Chair reiterated that individual Members were able to submit requests for information.*

**Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be approved as a correct record.

**53. Panel Membership**

The Committee were reminded that at the Council meeting in May 2015 the constitution had been amended to include a new policy regarding non attendance. If a Member missed three consecutive meetings of the same Committee or Panel, the Member will have their membership revoked unless

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

the Panel considered that there were exceptional circumstances that needed to be taken into account.

Councillor Bal was appointed as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16. In addition to apologies for this evening's Committee meeting Councillor Bal had submitted apologies for non-attendance at the meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Councillor Bal had advised that he had been called away to India due to a family emergency but wished to remain as a Member of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

Members of the Panel gave consideration to Councillor Bal's continued membership of the Panel. Following discussion the Committee decided to waive the revocation of his membership.

**Resolved** – That Councillor Bal continue as a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16.

### 54. Member Questions

None were received.

### 55. Procurement of Environmental Services Contract

Mr Hannon, Environmental Strategy and Governance Manager advised the Committee on progress made in the re-commissioning of the future service provision on the Environmental Services Contract. The Committee were reminded that the Council was responsible for waste collection, waste management, waste treatment, public realm (street cleaning and green estate), highways reactive works, highways and transport capital works and professional services. Delivery of these services were currently delivered by Amey, the contract for which expired in November 2017.

The waste management, street cleaning, green estate, highways and transport Heads of Services went through a dedicated commissioning process whereby the preferred contract delivery vehicle was appraised and assessed against critical criteria. This included feedback from the market through a soft market testing day.

Members were informed that a Public Realm, Environment, Transport and Highways (PREATH) sub-commissioning group was formed in June and met to discuss and create scopes for the respective services. This meant that some services were moved from one area to another to create improved synergies between service delivery and resolve issues that had been long standing within respective service areas.

The PREATH group reported to the Contract Re-provision Board in October that it did not recommend bringing the service in-house. However, it did state the second generation outsource would ensure that the client and contract

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

management teams integrate to ensure succession planning in filling the gaps identified. This is to ensure that an 'in-house bid' has greater potential after the conclusion of the second generation outsource term.

The Options Appraisal presented to the Contract Re-provision Board in February discussed the appraisal of two options for the delivery of all of the services represented by the PRETH commissioning group. These two options were either a strategic partner contract or a series of separate contracts refined by service area and their associated scopes. The options were aggregated across several key areas including risk, ability to deliver against finance (cost savings), risk, IT, data and information availability, collection monitoring and management, Innovation, complexity of the procurement process, market appetite, procurement route, social value and timetable.

The PRETH group recommended that separate contracts for the services be procured. The Environmental Services Contract would comprise of waste collection, waste management and the public realm services with the potential option to include the waste treatment services. The Infrastructure contract would comprise highways reactive engineering works and highways and transport capital works. The professional services contract would potentially be a framework for the provision of professional services for Highways and Transport.

Following a soft market testing exercise, Members were informed that the market clearly indicated that the collation of all of the aforementioned services into one contract would impede competitiveness, innovation and would minimise flexibility, service enhancement and potential to deliver efficiencies and cost savings.

The Environmental Services contract would be a services based contract that would deliver all of the public realm activities for the borough across all land owned by the Council including highways land, leisure land and Housing land (with some minor exceptions). The Public Realm approach encompasses a 'one town, one place' ideology which is a holistic approach to the management and maintenance of public spaces through (grey, green and blue) infrastructure throughout the borough managed through a single client.

Members were informed Cabinet were due to consider approval for the procurement of these contracts in March 2016. An Environmental Services Board has been set up that would deliver the procurement of the contracts identified.

A number of questions were asked and replies received including:

- *Clarification relating to the process by which services required were identified and whether the Council could afford them.* It was explained that the contract would be formulated based on the Council's priorities and be outcome based. Contractors would be set targets and it would be for them how their work would be scheduled to meet the targets set.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

- *Oversee the contract works/management/performance of the contract.* Members were informed that a Partnership Development and Client Manager would be appointed and that the post holder would hold overall responsibility in overseeing the contract. Performance Indicators within the contract would be used to measure performance, with the possibility of funds being withheld for poor performance factored within the contract.
- *Local Employment/Apprenticeship Schemes.* It was confirmed that future contracts could stipulate the use of apprenticeships and that at the soft market testing exercise potential bidders had indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to implement such a scheme.
- *Member Engagement.* A briefing for all Members was held and a series of workshops would be scheduled to provide Members with an opportunity to raise any issues. The Strategic Director for Customer and Community Services assured Members that the relevant Scrutiny Panel would also be given an opportunity to scrutinise the contracts prior to completion.

*(Councillor Malik left the meeting)*

- *'Cash In' on Waste.* A Member raised the possibility of the inclusion of a clause within the contract to include the option of 'cashing in' on waste. Mr Hannon confirmed that this could be explored as part of the negotiations to be held at the next stage of the process.
- *Possibility of frontline staff to be rewarded when Key Performance Indicators had been met to be included within the contract.* It was noted that performance related pay could be raised with potential bidders for the contract.
- *Consultation with residents.* Members were informed that a Waste Consultation exercise was carried out in 2013. The option of establishing Focus Groups/Working Groups would be investigated as part of the overall procurement.
- *Anticipated Financial Savings.* All potential contractors had indicated that financial savings would be possible and a range of different opportunities were presented including revenue and digital transformation, bulk purchase of goods, control of overtime amongst staff base, shared risk in terms of commodities and waste composition for materials, self reporting functions and improvements in asset management process/systems.
- *Information Exchange between contract providers.* It was envisaged that a universal system would be implemented which linked all three contracts. The system would also allow residents to report and track progress on implementation of issues.
- *Anticipated Capital Spend on the contract.* It was anticipated vehicles may be purchased and investment into the transfer station was being considered. Any capital spend would be reported via the Capital Strategy.

**Resolved** – That the proposed and preferred contract vehicles and services scopes be noted.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

### 56. Financial and Performance Report - Quarter 3 2015/16

The Committee considered a report setting out the latest forecast financial information and the Council's performance against the Five Year Plan Balanced Scorecard indicators to date during 2015-16.

The Council was forecasting an overspend of £0.486m as at month 3. The overall position was significantly better than the month 8 report. The Children and Families service overspend position had now been confirmed, and there had been additional under spends reported in both the Chief Executive and the Customer and Community Services Directorates.

It was noted that service action plans had reduced the underlying overspend. Whilst no additional savings were expected from the Children and Families service the Adult Social Care service remained committed to ensuring all measures were taken to get as close to break-even as possible.

A summary of the seven 5 Year Plan outcome highlight reports submitted as at December 2015 indicated that the overall status of three was assessed as 'Green', three as 'Amber' and one as 'Amber / Green'.

A Member requested clarity regarding in which areas savings had not been achieved. The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit explained that Children's Services and Adult Social Care were the two areas that were currently showing an overspend. A Member queried whether additional/reclaim of funds could be sought from Central Government following the transfer of Children's Services to The Trust. It was noted that funds were transferred to The Trust in October 2015 and there was no possibility of claiming additional funds from Central Government.

Details were sought regarding the potential financial impact of delays in the implementation of major projects, including The Curve and the Slough Urban Renewal Scheme. Members were informed that financial implications as a result of the completion of The Curve were met by the contractor, Morgan Sindall. The Slough Urban Renewal Scheme at Ledger's Road was progressing ahead of schedule.

The report also highlighted that in 2014/15 the percentage of children of 'healthy weight' at the end of primary school in Slough of 58.9% was below the England and South East averages of 65.3% and 68.6%. It was agreed that further details regarding as to why only 13 schools in the Borough had taken up the Change4Life resources would be circulated to Committee Members. Given that childhood obesity was on the increase, a Member queried why the Leisure Strategy was aimed at youngsters who were over 14 years old. The Strategic Director for Community and Customer Services confirmed that the Leisure Strategy had been developed for all those who resided and worked in Slough.

A Member questioned what, if any, measures were being taken to ensure that any Major Contracts with the Council included sliding scale payments/profit share mechanism, which could provide the Council with the potential of

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

additional incomes. The Assistant Director Finance and Audit informed Members that a number of existing contracts contained such clauses including the Internal Audit Contract and stated that this could be explored with future contracts.

Members sought assurances that the 2% increase, as part of the 3.75% increase in council tax for 2016/17, would be ring fenced for Adult Social care. It was explained that the Council had to demonstrate to Central Government how the additional funds collected as part of the council tax increase were being allocated and spent.

**Resolved** – That details of the Financial and Performance Report Quarter 3 2015/16 be noted, including virements and write offs contained within the report.

### 57. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/20

The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit detailed the key points contained within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The MTFS outlined the financial challenge facing the Council and the different methods and strategies that were being undertaken to meet this challenge. Given the scale of the ongoing reductions in Central Government spend, the Council had, and would increasingly need to, deliver public services in a more joined up, effective and efficient manner. Maintaining the current levels and delivery of existing services was unlikely to be an option to the Council in the future.

The Committee were informed that the Council was well prepared to meet the financial challenges of the coming years. It had a history of ensuring a balanced budget was delivered, as well as over recent years increasing general reserves to a sustainable level to meet the future financial challenges. The Council had successfully delivered a number of change projects in recent years, with a number of the Council's services being delivered by private sector partners. At the same time, the Council had maintained investment in its infrastructure through the approval of capital budgets to deliver a variety of programmes.

It was highlighted however, that looking at the key outliers, and starting with the funding level and volatility around this, the Council was at a greater risk than many other Councils in its delivery of its services within the funding available to it. This was due to rising pressures within Council services in Children's and Adults social care, but also because the Council was exposed to risk from Business Rates and falling Government Grants. It was explained that whilst many Councils would face a significant risk from one of these funding sources, Slough was at risk from both of these due to having a large business community and a higher level of financial need for the Borough compared to other Councils.



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

Clarity was sought regarding business tax rates and the risks associated with them. It was explained that business rate buoyancy highlighted that the fluctuation in business rates had been significant and that the overall rate of growth had been lower in Slough compared to other Councils before 2014. It was anticipated that there would not be a decrease in Central government Business Rates.

Responding to how future spend by the Council would be prioritised, Members were informed that the Five Year Plan focussed on ensuring that the role of the Council, in addressing challenges and opportunities, were defined by providing a strategic approach in prioritising outcomes against allocation of resources. The cross cutting nature of the outcomes in the Five Year Plan and the introduction of outcome based budget, supported working in a more integrated way with partners and communities to achieve the best outcomes for Slough.

A Member questioned what levels of savings were anticipated from the procurement of the Waste Management Contract and whether there was a possibility of sharing services with neighbouring local authorities. The Committee was informed that achieved level of 35% cost base reduction was the corporate target required and all areas would be expected to contribute to this, including contracts. Sharing services for some contracts was not feasible as a number of the neighbouring local authorities were tied up in long term contracts and it would be difficult to align the contracts to run concurrently.

The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit confirmed that the Council was not expecting to borrow funds in 2016/17 and had repaid some funds to the Treasury in the current financial year. A query was raised as to what impact any changes in re-valuation of council tax bands for residential properties was likely to have on the council tax base. It was noted that Central Government had no plans to carry out a re-evaluation of residential properties at present.

**Resolved** – That details of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/20 be noted.

### 58. Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17

Details of the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 were outlined. The Council currently had £177.4m of borrowing and investments of around £80m to £90m on average throughout the year. The underlying need to borrow was measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) while usable reserves were the underlying resources available for investment. It was noted that the current strategy was to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels.

The strategy contributed to the Five Year Plan outcomes by contributing to the Council's financial planning and particularly Outcome 7 – the Council's income and value of its assets will be maximised.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

It was brought to Members attention that the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) prudential code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommended that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit, confirmed that the Council expected to comply with this recommendation during 2016/17.

A Member sought clarification regarding the Council's investments. The Committee were informed that although the Council held a diverse investment portfolio, it did not directly invest in commodities.

A Member asked about the level of assurance regarding the Council's Ethical Investment Policy. Whilst there was a high level of confidence that the policy was being applied to all direct investments, it was not possible to verify all transactions with every institution to ensure compliance.

The draft Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 was due to be considered by the Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

**Resolved** - That details of the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 be noted.

### 59. Capital Strategy 2016/2021

The Committee considered details of the Capital Strategy 2016/2022. The Council had a wide ranging number of capital commitments and the capital strategy, as with all other corporate documents, underpinned the delivery of the 5 year plan for the Council through to 2022.

The Capital Strategy provided an overall financial strategy to support the delivery of the Five Year Plan. New items in the capital programme for future financial years included:

- The Strategic Asset Purchase Scheme (approved by Full Council 2015)
- The Community Sports Facility
- The Council investment in LED street lighting to drive out revenue savings going forward
- Sustained investment in the Council's education provision.
- Approval for investment, with the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to invest in key transport infrastructure programmes across the borough
- Improvements to the Council's housing stock and infrastructure in the medium term
- Continued investment in the cemetery and crematorium, with additional costs for new works to extend the capacity and complete additional asset maintenance works
- Highlighting the potential required spend for new leisure facilities
- Sustained maintenance of the Council's highways infrastructure assets

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

- The Council's commitment to the Local Authority Property Purchase scheme to assist residents who are struggling to find a large enough deposit in purchasing a property in the borough

A Member queried what impact there would be given that a number of schools were no longer under local authority control. The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit, confirmed that whilst the local authority remained responsible for allocation of school places, any capital spend on schools would also need to be met from the local authority.

Clarification was sought regarding ownership of land following use of buildings as schools. It was noted that following the conversion of a maintained school to an academy, there was a 125 year lease designating the building/land for educational purposes.

Concern was expressed relating to the increase in residential properties within the Borough and the potential impact of this on school places. Councillor Anderson, speaking under Rule 30, informed the Committee that a number of factors, including welfare changes and immigration polices, had led to an increase in demand for school places. Work was on going in conjunction with the Department for Education regarding planning for school places.

**Resolved** – That details of the Capital Strategy 2016/2022 be noted.

### 60. Revenue Budget 2016/17

Details of the Revenue Budget 2016/17 were outlined for Members consideration and comment. The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit informed Members that 2016/17 was set to be another difficult year financially for the Council, with a continued reduction in Government funding, as well as an increased demand for Council services. The Council had managed to, wherever possible, protect Council services whilst ensuring that there was sufficient budget for the next financial year to deliver its key outcomes.

Although there remained many difficult years ahead for the Council the budget for 2016/17 would ensure that the Council's finances were based on solid footings for the future. It was noted that a 3.75% Council Tax increase was being proposed along with increases in the Housing Rent Account rents and service charges and Fees and Charges as detailed in the report.

In the ensuing discussion a number of points were raised including:

- *Impact on Statutory Services.* A Member expressed concern regarding the cumulative year on year effects of savings and reductions in services and the impact of these on the Council delivering it's statutory functions. The Assistant Director Finance and Audit assured Members that the proposed budget would sustain delivering the required services.
- *Council Tax.* A Member commented that the proposed council tax increase was approximately a £43 increase for an average band D

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16

property, which represented value for money given the financial pressures facing the Council.

- *Fees and Charges.* The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit, clarified that the proposed VAT charge on local land searches was due to changes imposed by Central Government.
- *Proposed amalgamation of highways/transport teams.* Clarification was sought as to how the restructure would be managed without having a detrimental impact on services. It was noted that combining the teams would lead to services being delivered in an integrated and more efficient manner.

**Resolved** – That details of the Revenue Budget 2016/17, as set out in the report, be noted.

### 61. Five Year Plan - Using Resources Wisely

Members were updated on the progress on the third theme contained within the Five Year Plan, Using Resources Wisely. Two outcomes within this theme included Outcome 7- maximising the value of the Council's existing resources and Outcome 8 - the Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation.

Referring to Outcome 7 Members were informed that the Council had set up a Strategy Asset Purchase Scheme of £25m to be utilised to purchase property for commercial returns / regenerative opportunities. So far, three properties had been purchased with over £500k p.a. of returns expected. The Medium Term Financial Strategy included an expected £1.25m return for next year and the Asset Management service were pro-actively looking for properties. It was also noted that commercial rent arrears had reduced by 68% during the year compared to the 20% target.

Outcome 8 specifically focuses on the potential for technology (and, in particular, information technology) to improve services and drive efficiencies. By providing the most effective and simplest methods for residents to interact with the Council, both the customer experience and Council's financial position should be improved. A Digital Transformation Manager had been appointed and a Digital Transformation Board established. The Strategic Director for Community and Customer Services confirmed that services would continue to be made available to those residents who were unable to access services online. A Member stated that whilst the Council often had useful data the issue seemed to be one of poor analysis and sharing of this information between council departments. The Committee were informed that officers were investigating options regarding data sharing systems, including approaching arvalo with a view to benefit from their expertise within this area.

The activity underway in both outcomes for Using Resources Wisely will support a focused approach and ensure resources were aligned to priorities.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 04.02.16**

**Resolved** – That details of activity being delivered for the theme of Using Resources Wisely in the Five Year Plan be noted.

### **62. Forward Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer outlined the Work Programme. Committee Members considered the items scheduled for future meetings. It was agreed that the work programme be amended as detailed below.

**Resolved** – That the work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year be noted, subject to the addition of the following items:

- Contract Management Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference (7 April 2016)
- Information Report – Use of Agency Staff

### **63. Attendance Record 2015/16**

**Resolved** – That details of the Members Attendance Record be noted.

### **64. Date of Next Meeting - 3 March 2016**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.26 pm)

This page is intentionally left blank

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**DATE:** 3rd March 2016  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Roger Parkin – Strategic Director Customer and Community Services  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875207  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

**UNIVERSAL CREDIT- IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS**

**1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update Overview and Scrutiny Committee members on the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) in Slough and the ongoing implications for local residents.

**2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

**3 The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

**3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The aim of Universal Credit is to assist people into work and to support them while they are in work. Universal Credit does not affect anyone who is over pension age and they will continue to claim Housing Benefit.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide support for people to find work with a work coach and a personal advisor; this could be with additional training or assisting them in producing a CV as well as in other areas.

Once a customer has found work, if this is low paid work there will be no need for them to make a new claim for benefits, they can amend their existing claim and as their income rises the amount of UC will diminish.

Universal Credit also offers Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) to help Customers manage their income as UC is paid monthly in arrears in the same way as wages or salary and therefore assisting people into work.

One of the overarching aims of Universal Credit is to increase access to work ensuring that customers have the skills to join the local workforce rather than relying on benefits which supports the Council's priorities

## Five Year Plan

Universal Credit is central to the Government's welfare reform programme and aims to help households become more independent, reduce worklessness and encourage more people to see work as the best route out of poverty.

There are a number of ways that Universal Credit supports the five year plan:

- **Premier Location in the South East for Businesses**  
The intention of Universal Credit is to make work pay, by supporting those on a low income, help the unemployed back into work with training and other incentives. With an increased workforce and a reduction in reliance on benefits this will assist businesses in the area.
- **Children and Young People:**  
Universal Credit will assist people back into work, and support those on a low income which in turn will help children and young people be healthy, resilient and have positive life changes
- **Digitalisation agenda:**  
Universal Credit service will be delivered online, supported by a network of high quality, face to face services. Universal Credit will be 'digital by default', with claimants making and managing their claim online. Alternative access routes will be available for the minority who cannot use online services.

## 4 Other Implications

### (a) Financial

There are no direct financial implications at the present time relating to the implementation of Universal Credit in Slough.

However, there are a number of possible indirect financial implications which officers are working to negate which include a potential increase in Council Tenant rent arrears and Council Tax arrears

### (b) Risk Management (Compulsory section)

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating action</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Legal	Not Applicable as this is determined by the DWP	
Property	Not applicable	
Human Rights	Not applicable as this is a DWP responsibility	
Health and Safety	Not applicable	
Employment Issues	The DWP have stated that there are no TUPE considerations for staff in Housing Benefits as the workload diminishes	



Equalities Issues	This is addressed by the DWP when writing and applying the legislation	
Community Support	Not applicable	
Communications	Not applicable	
Community Safety	Not applicable	
Financial	There are potential risks to the Council in that customers will not realise that they have to pay their rent from their Universal Credit which may then increase Council Tenant rent arrears, in addition there is a large risk that Customers in receipt of Universal Credit will not realise that they have to make a separate claim for Council Tax Support and this will have a negative effect on their payments and reduce Council Tax collection rates	Support given to customers to help them budget on a monthly basis Increase Council Tax Support take up campaigns Where customers are known to be in receipt of UC and have not claimed Council Tax Support to proactively target them and help them make a claim
Timetable for delivery	Up to 2021	
Project Capacity	Not applicable - this is not a project	

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Equalities Impact Assessments are undertaken by the Department of Work and Pensions as more Universal Credit claims come on line

(e) Workforce

There are no workforce implications

5 **Supporting Information**

5.1 Introduction

The DWP introduced new legislation to enable Universal Credits in 2012 and hailed it as the biggest change to the welfare system in 70 years.

The DWP saw the introduction of Universal Credit as a way to simplify a complex system of benefits by bringing them together in a single system for both in work benefits and out of work benefits for all working age applicants. The DWP have

stated that Universal Credit will continue to provide support for the most vulnerable in society.

Universal Credit is seen by the government as a key part of a package of welfare reforms supporting a more dynamic and flexible labour market - removing barriers to work, freeing people to get back into and progress in work, they have stated that for people who can work but are currently out-of-work, they want a welfare system that encourages a return to work as quickly as possible.

They have also stated that for people already in work, they want a welfare system that encourages them to progress in the labour market, increase their earnings and become more financially independent, and for people who cannot work, they want a welfare system that provides the support they need.

One of the overarching aims stated by the DWP is making work pay, they are doing this via Universal Credit by providing:

- more help for low income working families
- helping customers keep more of what they earn
- improving incentives to increase hours of work
- simplified system which will make moving to work feel less 'risky'

Universal Credit was introduced in April 2013 in a limited number of Local Authorities and is gradually being rolled out across the country; Slough's implementation went live in September 2015. It encompasses all new benefit claims for working age single people and couples without children

The intention is that Universal Credit will be rolled out further between now and 2021. The next phase will be for all new claims from all working age benefit recipients to be made for Universal Credit by July 2018.

It is not however, known at this stage, when Slough is scheduled to go 'live' for this phase. What is known is that it will be after December 2016. This is based on recent correspondence from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Once all authorities are live for all new claims the DWP will then commence a cut over of all the remaining working age claims. It is anticipated that this will be completed by 2021.

Universal Credit is a process by which six existing benefits including Housing Benefit, Income based job seekers allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits for working age customers will be replaced by one single payment. This means that people in receipt of Universal Credit may be in or out of work.

There is no intention as of yet, by the DWP to change non working age customers or those in exempt accommodation over to Universal Credit.

## 5.2 What does this mean for Slough?

As a customer who is either a single person or a member of a couple without children in Slough, makes a new claim for benefits, they will be directed to claim Universal Credit. This may be because they have not made a claim before or it may be

because they are changing their claim to such an extent that it is determined to be a new claim.

Universal Credit is a DWP benefit and as such statistics are not available on an authority basis as these have not been made available.

The DWP regularly publish national statistics for Universal Credit, the most recent statistics are as at 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015. These show that just over 250,000 claims have been made since Universal Credit was introduced in April 2013.

There were 141,000 people on the universal credit as at 8th October 2015 of these, 45,827 (32.5%) were in employment and 95,177 (67.5%) were not in employment.

The DWP stated on 8th October that 23,842 claims for Universal Credit were made in the preceding four weeks at an average of 5,961 claims per week across the country.

A customer who makes a claim for Universal Credit and has rent costs either to a private landlord or to the council will have their rent costs calculated and paid within their Universal Credit.

If a customer makes a claim for Universal Credit and they have to pay Council Tax they are directed to the Slough Borough council web site and are asked to make a separate claim for Council Tax Support.

There are no formal statistics for Universal Credit claims in Slough alone as this is a national benefit and only national figures are published, however officers have been keeping records of the contacts made regarding Universal Credit and the issues raised

As at 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016 there have been 70 individual contacts regarding Universal Credit claims, this could be any forms of contact in relation to their claim. It can therefore be assumed that at least 70 people have claimed Universal Credit in Slough

### 5.3 Council Tenants

There are 12 Council Tenants currently in receipt of Universal Credit. In reviewing the accounts of the customers on Universal Credit it was noted that 11 of these customers were currently in rent arrears, however before they claimed Universal Credit only 6 were in rent arrears.

At this stage it is not possible to say if this is directly due to them having recently claimed Universal Credit and the fact that this is paid monthly in arrears which could have resulted in them not receiving payment yet, or there is a trend developing.

Officers dealing with rent arrears are monitoring accounts very closely and making all efforts to engage with the customers to identify, and where possible, assist customers in mitigating this risk.

### 5.4 Private Tenants

There are 11 Private Tenants who are currently in receipt of Universal Credit. However, there is no information available on how this has affected their rent payments as Council officers do not have access to this information.

## 5.5 Council Tax Support

On the basis that there are 23 claims known to the Council for help with rent payments from customers in receipt of Universal Credit, it is assumed that there should be 23 claims for Council Tax Support. However, at this stage there are only 6. This may be because the customers are living in houses in multiple occupation (HMO) but could also be because they are unaware that a separate claim has to be made.

Our partner arvato is in the process of contacting these customers to see if they wish to claim Council Tax Support. Without a valid claim for council tax support it is unlikely that they will be able to pay their council tax, which will adversely impact the councils Council tax collection rates.

## 5.6 Personal Budgeting Support (PBS)

PBS was introduced by the DWP in order to assist customers claiming Universal Credit to manage their money better. Universal Credit pays all the benefit including help with rent costs, monthly in arrears. It was acknowledged that many of their customers would not be used to receiving a monthly payment and would need support on how to manage their money on a monthly basis and to budget for the month.

The payment is being made monthly in arrears to bring the benefits payments in line with how wages and salaries are paid which in turn the DWP hopes will support people into work.

There are two levels of PBS, and the DWP determines which level of support a customer needs. "PBS Simple" which is for people generally without debts who need support to manage a monthly payment and "PBS Complex", which is for more complex cases usually where there are debts which would make it harder to manage monthly payments.

A person will be allocated an initial PBS appointment and if the support needed is classed as "simple" one further appointment will be offered where the customers individual needs are discussed. If their need is classed as "complex" six further appointments will be offered over a period of time for the advisor to work with them and for them to put the advice into practice.

The DWP are the only service that can authorise a PBS appointment, though as a Council we can ask them to authorise appointments, but this is their decision. They will then refer the customer to the Council for the appointment. As this is such a specialist area we have contracted with Shelter to provide this service.

To date Slough has not received any referrals for PBS from the DWP. This is also a similar situation for many other Council's nationally who are live on Universal Credit. This issue has been raised with the liaison officer in the DWP and they are actively trying to ensure that their staff make referrals. In addition a nationwide initiative has started to remind all DWP advisors to make referrals for PBS

## 5.7 Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

The DWP chose to roll out UC slowly with the intention of being able to address issues as sites became live with a small caseload so as not to have a major impact on customers. There remain a number of issues that the DWP are still working to resolve:

- All interactions with Councils by the DWP are still being done manually, which increases the workload for the Council. Making the Authority is more open to information not arriving at its destination or being readily available. The DWP anticipate that by mid February 2016 some of this will be able to be done electronically.
- There is currently no legislation in place allowing Universal Credit to be a passporting benefit for free school meals and other services. Currently if someone is on Income Support for example this means that their child(ren) will automatically qualify for free school meals. Under Universal Credit they will have to make a separate claim for free school meals, which mean some children may miss out on this benefit. The DWP have stated that they are looking at this.
- The intention of the DWP was for customers to update or confirm their income and relevant expenditure for example rent paid on a monthly basis via a digital portal and to be able to check their Universal Credit claim via this portal. Unfortunately the DWP have delayed their digital roll out and this is not available to customers at this time.

## 5.8 Public Accounts Committee

The Public Accounts Committee has spent some time recently looking at Universal Credit and issued a report which is available on the government website.

The overview noted:

*"We acknowledge that Universal Credit has stabilised and made progress since the previous Committee of Public Accounts first reported on the programme in 2013. However, there remains a long way to go.*

*Implementation of Universal Credit so far has focussed mainly on the simplest cases, and the Department for Work & Pensions has again delayed the programme".*

*On the other hand,*

*"The Department for Work & Pensions appears either unable or unwilling to level with Parliament and the public about Universal Credit.*

*This lack of clarity creates needless uncertainty for claimants and those tasked with running the programme. It's also an unnecessary obstacle to Parliament and taxpayers holding the government to account.*

*Since our previous Report it has emerged there will be further delays before Universal Credit becomes fully operational, the full implications of which are unclear. It's also worrying that the approved business case for the programme*

*has not been updated to take account of the Spending Review and Autumn Statement.*

*If taxpayers are to have any faith in what is already a complex and controversial project then the Department must provide clear information about the impact of these factors and the roll-out of the programme as a whole."*

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None relevant.

7 **Conclusion**

As expected the implementation of Universal Credit has been slow allowing for only single customers and couples without children who are making new claims to be eligible. It will take some time to determine the true impact of the change in benefit. However, it is expected that when more customers start claiming Universal Credit in Slough, it will be easier to analyse the effects more closely and consider what changes we as an authority need to make to best serve our residents. We anticipate that this will not be possible much before 2017 by which time we will have access to more information as well as review lessons learned by other authorities.

8 **Appendices Attached**

None

9 **Background Papers**

Public Accounts Committee report  
Universal Credit statistics – DWP 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 3 March 2016

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Stephen Gibson, Head of Asset Management  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875301

**WARD(S):** All

**PART 1**  
**FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

**SLOUGH URBAN RENEWAL UPDATE**

1 **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on existing projects being developed via Slough Urban Renewal (SUR).

2. **Recommendation**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

The creation of expediently delivered, high quality new housing and civic assets will maximise the value of the Council's asset base, increase council tax receipts and provide an income stream that can be used to contribute towards the provision of front line services.

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The SUR delivers on the following priorities:

- Regeneration and environment: the SUR is a special purpose vehicle that is helping deliver a range of regeneration projects improving the environment across the town.
- Housing: SUR is delivering 178 new houses and flats from the first two development sites (Ledgers Road and former Wexham Nursery) and potentially many more over the 15 year life of SUR.
- Economy and skills: building the Curve, new leisure centre and community sports facility in addition to identified sites for housing will bring direct benefit to the local economy and local skills base. SUR is implementing a local economic benefit programme (SMEs, training, apprenticeships etc) so the more activity of SUR, the greater the potential benefit in relation to job creation. A concerted effort is being made to engage local businesses in the supply chain and incorporate training opportunities for people employed in the construction process and a 'Meet the Partner' event for local suppliers and training providers is being arranged for April 2016. It has recently been accredited by CITB as a National Skills Academy. and a monitoring and reporting system is being created so that there is a formal reporting procedure and KPIs moving forward.

- The actions of SUR will contribute to improving the image of the town through the construction of the Curve; demonstrate the Council's commitment to the regeneration of the Heart of Slough through substantial public investment in the town centre and through a considered and innovative approach to the design of new developments on key sites.
- Value for money: SUR is expected to achieve a higher rate of return when assets are eventually sold when compared to traditional routes for disposal. For example on Ledgers Road Slough received an independently verified "market value" for the land but will also participate in the development profit once the private units start to sell.

### **3b Five Year Plan Outcomes**

By working effectively and expediently with the council SUR is addressing the five year plan outcomes:

- Quality new homes are encouraging people who work in Slough to also live in Slough which will in turn help businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay,
- The homes being delivered directly address the need for more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures,
- The central sites such as Alpha Street will contribute towards keeping the centre of Slough a vibrant location to live,
- Continuing to design schemes with security as a priority will help to ensure Slough is a safe place to live; all sites will aim to achieve Secure By Design certification,
- Quality homes will attract upwardly mobile residents who are more likely to take responsibility for their own health, care and support needs,
- Brand new leisure facilities and continuing to ensure that residential schemes are designed in line with amenity requirements will contribute towards children and young people in Slough being healthy and resilient,
- Participating in the development risk will ensure that the Council's income and the value of its assets are maximised,
- Re-furbishing and extending currently owned properties will make the best of existing housing stock; and
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing will help prevent homelessness where possible.

### **4 Other Implications**

#### **(a) Financial**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **(b) Risk Management**

There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### **(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act implications associated with this report.



(d) Equalities Impact

There are no Equalities implications associated with this report

**5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Slough Regeneration Partnership (“SRP”) was established in 2013 and is a joint venture Limited Liability Partnership between the Council and Morgan Sindall Investments Limited (“MSIL”). Following a typical Local Asset Backed Vehicle (“LABV”) approach, the Council invests primarily through its land assets and MSIL invests primarily through finance and/or provision of services. The company was rebranded in 2015 and now trades under the name of Slough Urban Renewal (“SUR”).
- 5.2 SUR has developed into a key enabler of the Council’s regenerative and commercial policy. The company is building both council infrastructure, such as the Curve building, as well as major housing and commercial schemes across the borough.

**Partnership Business Plan**

- 5.3 The first Partnership Business Plan (“PBP”) was adopted by Slough Regeneration Partnership and by the Council in March 2013. The PBP sets out the strategic direction of the Partnership, with governance arrangements and operational business arrangements.

The Agreement requires that the PBP is updated annually and is formally agreed by both partners. For SBC, Cabinet is the identified decision making body. The next PBP is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in June 2016.

**Community Projects**

- 5.4 The construction of the Curve is well underway. Since the last formal report to Cabinet some unanticipated site issues have come to light that have delayed the opening until summer 2016. Upon completion, the Curve will be Slough's premier library and cultural centre, housing a brand new library, cafe, museum, performance venue, learning rooms and computer suite.

Meetings have been held between senior officers of the Council, SUR and Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure (the main contractor) to ensure improved communication and reporting lines are in place, earlier communication and escalation of any adverse issues and clear roles and responsibilities for future projects.

- 5.5 The Arbour Park project has evolved over several years as a way to maximise the use of the vacant site created by the relocation of Arbour Vale Special School in 2007. The Arbour Park development strategy comprises three SBC-led projects that are being built by SUR in tandem with the new Lynch Hill Free School. These are:

- The first phase of a new Community Sports Facility will be complete by August 2016 with the entire facility completed by spring 2017.
- A 4 court sports hall, MUGA and some internal reconfiguration for St Joseph’s Catholic High School, and

- The remodelling of Orchard Youth and Community Centre to facilitate the relocation of the Creative Academy from the West Wing to be complete in March 2016.

### **Commercial Projects**

- 5.6 The first SUR house building project went on site at Ledgers Road (marketed as 'Milestone' and named after the listed milestone on Bath Road) in August 2015 and will provide 50 homes for sale and 23 homes for rent. It is anticipated that the 23 social rented units will be handed over to the Council by November 2016 and that the whole site will be completed by January 2017. Marketing of open market homes is being targeted at local and first time buyers (rather than investment purchasers) and the site has been registered for Help to Buy.
- 5.7 Planning permission was granted in February 2015 (subject to completion of a s106 agreement) for 104 houses on the former Wexham Nursery site. This project includes 34 social rented houses that will be purchased by the HRA and will be available for Slough residents on the housing waiting list. Construction will start later in 2016 and the first completed homes will be available in late 2017.

### **Small Sites Strategy**

- 5.8 Having considered options for the redevelopment of small Housing Revenue Account ("HRA") sites, Cabinet has agreed that these should also be developed by SUR. This has the potential to introduce over 100 additional new build homes within the next three years. An update report will be considered by the Cabinet on 14 March 2016.

### **6. Comments from other Committees**

None.

### **7. Appendices**

None

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Dave Gordon – Scrutiny Officer  
**(For all Enquiries)** (01753) 875411

**WARDS:** All

**PART I**  
**FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2015/16 WORK PROGRAMME**

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Overview and Services Committee (OSC) to discuss its current work programme.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

That the OSC note the current work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3.1 The Council's decision-making and the effective scrutiny of it underpins the delivery of all the Joint Slough Wellbeing Strategy priorities. The OSC, along with the four Scrutiny Panels combine to meet the local authority's statutory requirement to provide public transparency and accountability, ensuring the best outcomes for the residents of Slough.

3.2 The work of the OSC also reflects the priorities of the Five Year Plan, as follows:

- Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow, and stay
- There will more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough
- The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living, and cultural opportunities
- Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley
- More people will take responsibility and manage their own health, care and support needs
- Children and young people in Slough will be healthy, resilient and have positive life chances
- The Council's income and the value of its assets will be maximised
- The Council will be a leading digital transformation organisation

4. **Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The current work programme is based on the discussions of the OSC at previous meetings, looking at requests for consideration of issues from officers and issues that have been brought to the attention of Members outside of the OSC's meetings.
- 4.2 The work programme is a flexible document which will be continually open to review throughout the municipal year.

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 This report is intended to provide the OSC with the opportunity to review its upcoming work programme and make any amendments it feels are required.

6. **Appendices Attached**

A - Work Programme for 2015/16 Municipal Year

7. **Background Papers**

None.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016**

Meeting Date
Thursday 3 March 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Benefits System: Implications for local residents</li> <li>• Local Asset Backed Vehicle</li> </ul>
Thursday 7 April 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thames Valley Police – Chief Constable</li> <li>• For approval – Scrutiny Annual Report</li> <li>• Analysis – final review of Burnham Station road network alterations</li> <li>• Petitions – annual summary</li> <li>• Contract Management Task and Finish Group: Terms of Reference</li> </ul>

To be programmed – Leisure Strategy (decision made by Cabinet January 2016)  
 Transactional Services – Annual Report (July 2016)  
 Burnham Station road network (July 2016)

This page is intentionally left blank

**MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

COUNCILLOR	17/06/15	09/07/15	10/09/15	12/11/15	12/01/16 (Joint meeting with ECS Panel)	20/01/16	04/02/16	03/03/16	07/04/16
Ajaib	P	P	P	P	P	Ap	P		
Bains	P	P	P	P* (from 6.35pm)	P	P* (from 6.56pm)	P		
Bal	P	P	Ap	P	Ap	Ap	Ap		
N Holledge	Ap	P	P	Ap	P	P	P		
Malik	P	Ap	P	P	P	P	P		
Nazir	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Rana	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Strutton	P	P* (from 7.22pm)	P	P	P	P	P		
Usmani	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		

P = Present for whole meeting  
 Ap = Apologies given

P\* = Present for part of meeting  
 Ab = Absent, no apologies given

This page is intentionally left blank