

Date of issue: Wednesday, 30 March 2022

MEETING:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice Chair), Basra, Dhaliwal, Hussain, Kaur, Malik, Sharif and Smith)
DATE AND TIME:	THURSDAY, 7TH APRIL, 2022 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25 WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)	NICHOLAS PONTONE 07749 709 868

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.



GAVIN JONES
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I

AGENDA
ITEM

REPORT TITLE

PAGE

WARD

Apologies for Absence.

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

1. Declarations of Interest

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All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Section 9 and Appendix B of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed.



<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
2.	Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 8th March 2022	1 - 8	-

SCRUTINY ISSUES

3.	Member Questions <i>(An opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions of the relevant Director/ Associate Director, relating to pertinent, topical issues affecting their Directorate – maximum of 10 minutes allocated).</i>	-	-
4.	Initial ICT Improvement Programme	9 - 46	All
5.	Nova House/GRE5 Update	47 - 54	Central
6.	Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22	55 - 74	All

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

7.	Annual Petitions Report 2021/22	75 - 84	All
8.	Members' Attendance Record	85 - 86	All
9.	Exclusion of the Press and Public	-	-

It is recommended that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item in Part 2 of the Agenda, as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding the information) as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (amended).

PART II

10.	Initial ICT Improvement Programme - Appendices 6 and 7	87 - 112	All
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Press and Public

Attendance and accessibility: 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 any items in the Part II agenda are considered. For those hard of hearing an Induction Loop System is available in the Council Chamber.



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In addition, the law allows members of the public to take photographs, film, audio-record or tweet the proceedings at public meetings. Anyone proposing to do so 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.

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Covid-19: To accommodate social distancing there is significantly restricted capacity of the Council Chamber and places for the public are very limited. We would encourage those wishing to observe the meeting to view the live stream. Any members of the public who do wish to attend in person should be encouraged to contact the Democratic Services Officer.

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 8th March, 2022.

Present:- Councillors Gahir (Chair), Matloob (Vice-Chair), Kaur, Malik, Sharif and Smith

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Ajaib, Anderson, Hulme, Kelly and Minhas

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Basra

PART I

23. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Smith declared that he had been appointed by the Council as one of its representatives on Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service and that he was an elected member of Colnbrook with Poyle Parish Council. He stayed and participated in the meeting.

Councillor Kaur declared that she was an elected member of Wexham Court Parish Council and that she lived in a property owned by the Council. She stayed and participated in the meeting.

24. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 13th January 2022

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

25. Member Questions

No Member Questions had been submitted.

26. Section 25 Report

The Director of Finance gave a comprehensive presentation on all of the budget reports to be considered by the Committee ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 9th March and full Council on 10th March 2022.

The presentation covered:

- Section 25 Report
- Revenue Budget
- Capital Budget
- Treasury Management
- Dedicated Schools Grant
- Council Tax Support Scheme

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

The reports were intrinsically linked and were therefore presented together before the Committee scrutinised each report, asking questions of the Director and the Lead Member for Financial Oversight, Council Assets and Performance.

The Committee noted that:

- The Section 25 Report set out the Director of Finance's opinion and risks for Members to consider in taking decisions on the budget. It highlighted the seriousness of the Council's financial position with a financial deficit of £223.1m to the end of the current financial year and a further £84.1m for 2022/23.
- It was only with confirmation of significant financial support from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that the Director of Finance could give Members some assurance on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves. The Council would not be able to set a legal budget for 2022/23 unless the Government allowed the Council to capitalise the sums above. Taking future years into account the total capitalisation required was estimated to be £479m over 10 years.
- The support from DLUHC was set out in the Letter from the Minister included in the Supplementary Agenda. It confirmed that DLUHC was 'minded to' approve capitalisation directions for the period between 2018/19 to 2022/23 which would enable the Council to set a budget, noting the issues and conditions as set out in the report.
- The Revenue Budget report was summarised. In 2022/23 the Council's income was estimated to be £107m with £192m of expenditure, which meant that the budget requirement was 78% greater than the sources of funding.
- It was critical that the Council delivered the budget and savings proposals set to meet future financial targets. This would include approximately £600m worth of asset sales and £20m revenue savings every year for five years. The growth and pressures were summarised. The work of the scrutiny panels in reviewing every saving proposal for the directorates for 2022/23 was noted.
- Council Tax would rise by a total of 2.99% which included the 1% for the Adult Social Care precept. This was equivalent to an increase of 86p per week for a Band D property.
- Following a detailed review of schemes and affordability, the capital programme had been significantly reduced. The borrowing forecast was £760m but would have risen to £900m if the capital programme had not been fundamentally reviewed. The programme was now set out over a five year period. The profile for reducing borrowing in the coming years was set out.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

- The Treasury Management Strategy was now properly aligned to the capital programme which had not been the case in the past. The Council's borrowing of £760m as at June 2021 was the third highest per head of population of all unitary authorities in the country and annual interest and debt charges would rise to 32% of the net revenue budget by 2022/23, which was not affordable or sustainable.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant was included as a separate report with the budget due to the significant issues this year. The DSG deficit would grow to £43m by 2024/25 without mitigation and action was underway to bring it under control and stabilise the position.
- The Council Tax Support Scheme would remain unchanged from the current year, other than being uprated for inflation.

The Lead Member commented that the extensive and detailed work to address the Council's financial issues over the past year meant that the Council would be in a position to approve a valid and achievable budget for 2022/23. However, he outlined the key pressures and risks the Council would continue to face including demand pressures on services and rising energy costs. The Council would therefore need to deliver the budget it set and commence work quickly on developing next year's budget.

The Finance Commissioner commented on the seriousness of Slough's financial position which was unique in scale compared to any other local authority. Commissioners would continue to help Slough address its financial and other challenges, which would need everyone in the Council to work together in the coming months and years.

The Committee, and Members speaking under Rule 30, asked a number of questions and discussed various aspects of the reports which are summarised as follows:

- The targets for asset disposals and recurrent revenue savings were very challenging. What would be the impacts if they were not hit? The Director responded that external expertise was being brought in to support the asset disposal programme. The level of disposals was very significant but was considered achievable. Prudent estimates for the financial profile had been set with a target of £25m of disposals in 2022/23, so if the programme could be accelerated that would assist the Council's financial position, whilst always ensuring best value was achieved. In relation to the revenue savings target, it was recognised that delivering £20m worth of savings would be very challenging. Savings for 2022/23 would be closely monitored and savings for 2023/24 would need to be identified by the end of May 2022 so they could be refined, scrutinised and consulted upon. Many of the processes to manage and deliver savings programmes had been improved in the past year.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

- Queries were raised about the level of DLUHC support, conditions and future engagement. The Council had been in ongoing discussions with the department throughout the year and had had to demonstrate progress in relation to asset sales, service reviews etc. Officers would continue to be in constant contact with the department and the role of Commissioners in this regard was noted. In relation to a concern raised by a Member about whether the Minister's 'minded to' letter to approve the capitalisation was actual confirmation of the level of support required, the Director stated that this was the standard process and language for capitalisation directions. The capitalisation direction process and relationship to the annual accounts was explained, including the conditions which were set out in the Supplementary Agenda.
- The position regarding the sign-off of the Council's accounts since 2018/19 was raised as a concern and the Director said that a very significant amount of work had been done and it was hoped the first year's unaudited accounts, 2018/19, would be ready to be submitted to the auditors in the first quarter of 2022/23. Some prior period adjustments would be made and some items from 2016/17 and 2017/18 were likely to be restated.
- Questions were asked about the reasons behind the very serious financial problems the Council faced and the respective roles of Officers and Members were discussed. Minimum Revenue Provision was discussed in detail and it was noted that since 2016 the Council had made a number of serious errors in the implementation and calculation of MRP. The future priorities would include a new, permanent finance team; officer and member training; stronger financial management processes including the continuation of the financial controls introduced on 2021/22; and transparent financial monitoring and reporting, including to scrutiny. It was proposed and agreed that a Task Group of Overview & Scrutiny be convened to review the proposals for Members finance training. The Audit & Corporate Governance Committee had received a report on this matter in March and it was agreed the Task Group should meet to consider this issue further and discuss the lessons learned.
- The Committee emphasised the importance of prioritising the finance team restructure to ensure the Council could build a strong and skilled team for the long term. Solving the financial challenges would also need to be a shared responsibility across the Council, with departments needing to deliver the agreed budgets, manage any overspends and make compensatory savings when planned savings could not be delivered. Council would continue to receive regular reports on the finance action plan to provide assurance that all of the various recommendations and improvement points were being delivered and that good practice was being embedded.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

- The process and decision making around asset sales and valuations was discussed. It was noted that the Cabinet had agreed to procure external expertise to support the programme and that disposals over £1m would be approved by Cabinet, with delegated authority for sales below that level. The value of assets changed over time but Officers were confident that disposals of £600m from an estimated asset base of £1.3bn was achievable.

Members asked a number other specific questions about the levels of earmarked reserves, level of Council Tax support to vulnerable people and Covid funding which the Director responded to during the meeting. A query raised about parish precepts would be responded to outside of the meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a Task Group be convened to review the proposals for finance training for Members.

27. 2022/23 Revenue Budget

All matters relating to the revenue budget had been considered and discussed as part of the previous item.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

28. Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27

The capital programme had been considered and discussed as part of the overall budget presentation and discussion.

Further issues raised included the expected impact of reducing the size of the capital programme, for example on highway repairs. It was responded that there were still revenue budgets for highway maintenance and the fact that Slough's roads were in a good state of repair after many years of investment meant that it was not expected their condition would be adversely effected by this budget. The aim of reducing the capital programme was to limit any further borrowing, but the programme still included investment in key priority areas such as ICT.

A question was raised about the inclusion of capital funding for the park and ride in Colnbrook which was said not to be popular with residents. It was confirmed that the proposed scheme could continue as it had attracted external funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership and would not therefore require Council funding to proceed.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

29. Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23

The treasury management strategy had been discussed as part of the overall budget presentation and discussion.

Additional issues raised included the borrowing strategy and the management of the Council's short term borrowing requirements.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

30. Update Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan

The DSG report had been considered and discussed as part of the overall budget presentation and discussion.

There was further discussion on the previous management of the issue which had led to the DSG deficit rising in recent years. The Director of Finance summarised the detailed work and action that had been undertaken in the past year which had successfully reduced this years deficit and started to stabilise the position. It was noted that the DSG issue was not confined to Slough but it was a matter the Council needed to continue to address.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

31. Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

The Council Tax Support Scheme had been considered and discussed as part of the overall budget presentation and discussion.

A question was asked about whether Council Tax support had been stopped during the year as a result of the Council's financial problems. The Lead Member commented that Council Tax support had continued, but some discretionary hardship support schemes had been stopped during the year. This followed the withdrawal of Government funding some years ago. A new Household Support Fund had been put in place and Members were referred to the Cabinet report of November 2021.

The Council Tax collection rate was discussed and Members suggested that further incentives be introduced to encourage residents to pay by direct debit.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

32. Revenue and Capital Monitoring Report - 2021/22 [Quarter 3 - December 2021]

The Committee noted the revenue and capital financial monitoring report for the period to the end of December 2021.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 08.03.22

33. Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Programme for the Committee was summarised. It was proposed and agreed that the formal meeting scheduled for 17th March be cancelled and replaced with a Member Workshop on Section 106 governance which would be held jointly with the Planning Committee.

The items for the meeting on 7th April were agreed as the ICT Modernisation Programme, Nova House Update, Slough Children First update and annual scrutiny report and petitions report.

Resolved – That the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

34. Members' Attendance Record 2021/22

Resolved – That the Members' Attendance Record for 2021/22 be noted.

35. Date of Next Meeting - 17th March 2022

Members of the Committee would be invited to a workshop on Section 106 governance on 17th March which would replace the scheduled formal committee meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee would therefore be on 7th April 2022.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.08 pm)

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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	7 th April 2022
SUBJECT:	Initial ICT Improvement Programme
CHIEF OFFICER:	Steven Mair: Director of Finance (s151 Officer)
CONTACT OFFICER:	Vijay McGuire: AD Business Services
WARD(S):	All
EXEMPT:	No, except appendices 6 and 7, exempt under paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the LG Act 1972

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – ICT Improvement Plan
 Appendix 2 – ICT Modernisation Programme – Spending Breakdown
 Appendix 3 – Digital Team Developments
 Appendix 4 – Major ICT projects
 Appendix 5 – Licensing & Contracts

Part 2

Appendix 6 – Cyber Security & Resilience Activities
 Appendix 7 – DLUHC Cyber Treatment Plan

1. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 This report updates Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the current programme of work, as approved by Cabinet, which is in development to:
- start to stabilise and modernise the Council’s ICT to begin to mitigate existing risks and
 - improve ICT capabilities to then enable it to realise future benefits in terms of cost savings and service delivery improvements.
- 1.2 This work will be continually developed and as such this report represents the first phase of a much longer term analysis, assessment, and improvement plan for ICT. Recovering from this situation will be a long term programme and is subject to a continuous review of the current assessment of the position of the service
- 1.3 The report also addresses one of the recommendations from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which requires an action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority’s IT.
- 1.4 This report was approved by Cabinet on 29th March 2022. The Committee is asked to consider the report given its previous request to be updated on the progress in strengthening corporate services, particularly ICT, and comment on the programme which will be delivered in phases.

2. Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to note and comment on the Cabinet decisions to:

- note the initial assessment of the issues with the service set out in the Reasons for Recommendations
- note that these will be continuously worked on from now going forward
- approve the expenditure set out in Appendix 2 and contained within the Council's recently approved budgets
- note the work being undertaken by the digital team and the projects outlined in appendices 3 and 4 and that a delivery update will be brought back when the work has been fully assessed
- note that the Director of Finance will be approving the licences and contracts set out in appendix 5 and taking forward actions to avoid this reoccurring for these contracts in the future
- note that work continues to identify any other such matters
- note the outcome of the DLUHC cyber security assessment and the work being undertaken, appendices 6 and 7
- delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Leader, to appoint ICT officers on an interim basis and to commence procurement for an ICT partner (s)
- agree that a report is presented to Cabinet with an updated plan for future phases in quarter 3 2022/23

Reasons for Recommendations:

The Council faces a number of long standing and more recent issues with its ICT service, these include the below:

- old systems & infrastructure which are not robust, resilient and do not provide a foundation to deliver improvements
- old products which are out of vendor support and/or no longer supported
- a service heavily dependent on interim staff and urgently in need of a restructure
- historic under investment in ICT
- a digital function which while making changes to the service offered has a large number of further improvements to bring about
- a series of projects which are dependent on resource which is heavily temporary, and which have not been reported to CLT/Members on a regular basis
- a number of licences and contracts which have come to contract renewal on the 1st April 2022 without proper preparation to renew the contracts and which will have to be approved by the Chief Officer
- the need to protect the Council against potential cyber attacks
- unsuccessful experience of outsourcing
- the changing nature of work i.e. much reduced full time office environment
- peer reviews by both the LGA & the DLUHC have confirmed risks relating to cyber resilience

Commissioner Review

"The improvement of IT is an essential component of the Council's recovery plan required as part of the Directions regime. Progress on its delivery and implementation will be monitored as part of the Council's reporting to the Improvement and Recovery Board."

3. Report

Introduction

- 3.1. The report begins a long overdue process of addressing the many issues noted above in the Reasons for the Recommendations
- 3.2. It also starts to address one of the requirements of the Secretary of State's directions issued on 1st December 2021 to produce an action plan to achieve improvements in relation to the proper functioning of the Authority's ICT. This will feed into the Council's wider improvement and recovery plans

Options considered

i. Do Nothing

This is not a viable option. There are significant risks with the current ICT systems and infrastructure. Without investment in an alternative approach, the Council will not be able to deliver the improvement and recovery works necessary to respond to the Secretary of State's direction, nor will it be able to improve services to residents and businesses and increase value for money.

ii. Outsource ICT services

Whilst bringing in an external partner can ensure specialist skills, in the past this has not worked well, partly due to the lack of an intelligent client function and robust contract management. The Council needs to have an adequate level of control over its critical ICT systems and for that reason it is recommended that a more hybrid model is considered.

iii. Build an in-house team to deliver the improvements

The current market for ICT specialist is challenging and the Council needs to act at pace to secure significant improvements and reduce risk. There is insufficient time to build up the skills solely in an in-house team.

iv. Hybrid approach to in-house capacity and securing an ICT partner

This option provides the ability to bring in interim resource and build up a high performing in-house team, whilst also utilising the market by commissioning a specialist partner (or partners) where required. This approach will allow the Council to determine what elements of the architecture can be modernised using acceleration and cloud technology and combine these with off-the-shelf solutions that meet the remaining gaps, creating an orchestration layer to link these elements together. An interim partner may also be procured to act as an interim intelligent client

Background

- 3.3. To understand the context for the stabilisation and modernisation work programme that this report begins to address the reasons for the recommendations shown above have summarised the issues the Council ICT service faces
- 3.4. The urgent critical risk from the above situation is for a significant failure of business operations leading to an inability to deliver services. Amongst the specific risks are loss of data and a failure to execute in a disaster recovery scenario. A second longer term key risk is that the current state does not provide a platform for modernising ICT to better support business operations.
- 3.5. The Governance Review of the Council for DLUHC by Jim Taylor in September 2021 recommended that there needed to be a focus of support to the Council, particularly in corporate functions that included ICT. An action plan for ICT was also one of the seven actions in the Secretary of State's Directions.
- 3.6. The development of the infrastructure modernisation programme (See Appendix 1), presented within this report has undergone a series of validations to ensure that the approach and the investment required is proportionate to manage the severity of the risk to secure an efficient, modern, and stable infrastructure for the organisation.

These validations are:

- ICT Health Check (October 2020)
An independent ICT Health Check conducted by an accredited and qualified ICT Consultancy called Rainmaker was carried out on our infrastructure in the spring of 2020 which concluded that the Council had ageing infrastructure which essentially would lead to limited availability of vendor support to maintain the physical infrastructure. They further highlighted the heightened risks of system outages and failures.

Progress on these identified areas has been limited due to a number of factors. Resource skill availability, capacity and the ICT service response to the covid pandemic and the shift to remote working for all staff while also prioritising the transformation work programme. The ICT restructure from Our Futures programme, which was launched and then subsequently withdrawn as not 'fit for purpose' had an adverse impact as key posts and responsibilities for areas were not put in place.

- LGA Peer Review (December 2021)
With the direct support of the LGA, a modernisation business case and the 2019 ICT & Digital strategy was externally reviewed by an independent ICT expert in December 2021. The business case was broadly supported both in terms of the design proposals for a revised ICT restructure but also the approach to implement the modernisation programme of the SBC infrastructure. The report made specific reference to the technology direction being coherent and the level of proposed investment being appropriate. The report further stated that the Council could be confident in the basis on which the business case detailing the programme of modernisation had been produced.

- LGA Cyber funding (January 2022)
Following on from the LGA peer review of the Council's Modernisation business case, funding of £17k was made available to the ICT service to focus specifically on developing the councils response to cyber resilience.
- DLUHC & National Cyber Security Centre Review and Funding (January 2022)
In December 2021, the Council responded to the DLUHC local digital team. This set out to understand what mitigation Councils have in place to reduce cyber risk and the impact of malware and ransomware attack – Cabinet is asked to note that an award of £200k was made to the authority in Feb 2022 to support Cyber specific remedial work. (See Appendices 7 & 8)

Improvement Plan

- 3.7. This report sets out a significant three-year work programme to secure and stabilise the current operating environment, to start to mitigate the key risks and to provide a resilient platform for the modernisation and development of an ICT landscape that will then in the future support and deliver the opportunity for business operational improvements through cost savings in ICT and business operations and improved service delivery. It is possible the estimated costs will need to increase, if so this will be reported in the future
- 3.8. The first step is stabilisation and the need to focus and deliver on this challenge is such that the longer-term modernisation questions will need to be returned to in a subsequent phase.
- 3.9. Multiple reviews and reports have been undertaken both internally and externally and recommendations have been provided. These reviews have confirmed these risk factors. The priorities are:
- Tactical:** ICT needs to quickly update, replace, or remove systems and services which pose an immediate security or reliability risk to the day-to-day operation of the Council
 - Resource:** ICT is significantly stretched, as many areas are, and as such needs to maximise available time for the staff it has. ICT needs to not only deliver tactical improvements but build a foundation which means a more flexible and effective Council can operate utilising technology.
 - Strategic:** The Council needs to adopt and develop new ways of working and make technology work better and smarter to help provide services to the residents of Slough. However, ICT cannot implement strategic solutions until the foundations are stable, safe, and secure.

Appendix 1 contains a high level summary Improvement Plan setting out an approach to modernisation and improvement.

- 3.10. The critical first step is stabilising the ICT infrastructure as the current situation exposes the Council to major risks and needs to be tackled with some urgency. This reflects the first element above and is split into two stages. The infrastructure improvements are set out in Appendix 2 identified by cost and financial year. In respect of application modernisation, the following are key components of further detailed work that will be undertaken as a matter of urgency:

- i. List of Line of Business (LOB) Applications with details on each, as per a service catalogue
For each application:
- ii. Vendor Licensing costs and implications related to new infrastructure proposed
- iii. LOB Version upgrade path, or replacement if it is obsolete and cannot be migrated
- iv. Data migration plan
- v. Security considerations of the above
- vi. Support models

3.11. On timing for the first two phases, a high-level indicative timeline for the first two phases can be seen below.

SBC High level stabilisation and modernisation time line									
	2022/23								2023/24
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	etc	
Phase 1									
Determine solutions for modernised Infrastructure elements	█								
Procure solutions		█	█						
Build infrastructure			█						
Roll out new infrastructure			█						
Phase 2									
Detailed analysis of application portfolio			█						
Determine future state options			█						
Develop migration plans				█		█			
Carry out migrations						█			
Modernisation (Phases 3-5)									█

3.12. Beyond these first two phases but where possible running in parallel the vision for this program is that it should not only be secure, modern, and cost effective, but also that it is innovative, to ensure sustainability, longevity and meets the needs of an increasingly digital citizen profile. The aim is that the role of ICT shifts from being a cost to becoming an enabling tool for operational and financial improvements, with a modern and flexible infrastructure, a customer centric design and optimised processes and governance. This will be the subject of a future report.

Programme Delivery Approach – Interim appointments, procurement of partner

- 3.13. In terms of implementation of all elements of the immediate work and the ongoing digital developments and existing projects a partnership approach as set out paragraph 3.2 above will be adopted, leveraging the skills and expertise of:
- i. an Interim Chief Digital and Information Officer (CDIO)
 - ii. the ICT Team
 - iii. a technical PMO
 - iv. cloud adoption partner / Software engineer partner
 - v. experienced Interims
- 3.14. The existing team is very heavily committed in managing day to day ICT operations and have limited time to consider a strategic path forward. Given the scale of work that is needed to drive the ICT improvement plan, with no strategic technical role to oversee the delivery, approval has been sought and action taken to move to urgent recruitment to an interim Chief Digital and Information Officer post. This post will be in place for an initial period of six months to strategically drive the ICT improvement programme and provide technical knowledge and expertise to mentor and support the 'acting up' GM role.
- 3.15. The current ICT structure does not allow for a 'fit for purpose' service to be provided to the wider organisation or the Children's company either on an as is basis or for future proofing the Improvement programme referred to throughout this report.
- 3.16. A new permanent structure for the ICT service, including the digital function will need to be implemented to provide resilience, bridge technical gaps, eradicate single points of failure as well as reduce the over reliance on temporary resources – fostering a culture of development, growth, and investment in the service. Further detail will be provided in a future report to Cabinet.
- 3.17. Migration, modernisation, and major ICT projects can be complex, time consuming and costly. Therefore, appropriate preparation, planning and delivery approaches (such as partnerships with appropriate experts to complement the in-house teams knowledge) and built on a phased approach is required.
- 3.18. A Programme Delivery Board will be established to oversee the programme that will provide regular updates on progress to the Lead Member. Regular updates will also be provided to the Improvement and Recovery Board
- 3.19. Appendix 3 and 4 detail the digital work and the corporate ICT projects that are either currently in progress or known about that will require significant ICT effort to support / complete and which will be reviewed.

Licensing and contract management

3.20. A number of business applications, integral to the operation of the Council have reached the end of their contracts. Replacing this software requires a long lead in time and individual implementation projects. The ICT team have been under significant pressure to keep applications running under the current infrastructure and it has not been possible to undertake reviews required and tender processes. This has recently started to be addressed and will not recur. As all renewals were under £180,000 and have only been renewed for one year, decisions were made by the Executive Director of Corporate Services under delegated authority. Details are provided in Appendix 5. A further report will be brought to Cabinet seeking approval for the procurement process to renew these from 2023.

Cyber

3.21 A current assessment and work in progress is reported in Appendices 6 and 7.

4 Implications of the Recommendations

4.1 Financial implications

4.1.1 The £4.618m cost of phase 1 of the programme of work to stabilise and modernise the Councils ICT are set out in detail in Appendix 2. The costs have been included in the Capitalisation Direction.

4.1.2 Total spend on the programme, including that spent in 2021/22 is set out below.

2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		Total	
Revenue (£000s)	Capital (£000s)	Revenue (£000s)	Capital (£000s)	Revenue (£000s)	Capital (£000s)	Revenue (£000s)	Capital (£000s)
201	50	2,537	1,480	150	200	2,888	1,730
	251		4,017		350		4,618

4.1.3 The Capital spend of £1.680m for 2022/23 and 2023/24 is included in the capital programme and the one-off revenue costs of £2.687m is included in the revenue budgets for the same period. Any additional costs will be the subject of a further report.

4.1.4 Cost of current staffing who will support the management of the programme are covered by the current ICT budget.

4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 Legal implications will be addressed as part of the individual business cases / procurement to support the three-year remedial and modernisation programme.

4.3 Risk management implications

4.3.1 *Delivery*

A purely contractor led approach carries delivery risks:

- i. The Council would have a very limited leverage over work product delivery, quality, and costs
- ii. The Council would find it difficult to secure end to end responsibility for the project outcomes with 'independent' contractors
- iii. There is unlikely to be any skills transfer to staff from contractors
- iv. Handover from the project to BAU operation is likely to be difficult.

The use of a software development partner will therefore be explored to mitigate these risks as well as upskilling the in-house team.

4.3.2 *Supply Chain*: There is a potential risk to procurement of technology components to support the modernisation. There has been since Covid a significant shortfall in global silicon chip and microprocessor production. This has led to significant constraints in manufacturing and delivery of all technology devices from memory chips to servers and has even affected car production. Therefore, it is imperative that once the funding is approved orders are raised on selected suppliers as soon as is practically possible.

4.3.3 *Governance*: There is a risk to delivery if the programme is not under enough control and governance. At present there is limited governance in ICT. So, to ensure the effective and successful delivery of the programme there will be a need to establish the project and programmes governance framework. This will ensure rigour and controls are applied for the scale and size of the programme both from a financial and technical perspective. A new technical project governance approach will be implemented to support this initiative as well as all ICT projects. This will specifically include:

- technical PMO support which will ensure the work is fully planned, implemented and progress tracked
- full partner engagement when appointed to provide further technical expertise
- all activities will be fully costed
- regular reports to CLT/Cabinet starting in quarter 3 2022/23

4.4 Environmental implications

4.4.1 The work being undertaken will allow the Council to continue to function, thus help address its environmental aspirations and will also support hybrid working which will reduce day to day travel for staff and therefore improve the environment.

4.5 Equality implications

4.5.1 The Council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will ensure it properly assesses the equality implications of each programmed activity of the improvement plan. Having better ICT functionality and systems will enable the Council to collect and analyse data, which will support its understanding of impact on particular protected groups. Failure to ensure effective ICT systems, including failure to prevent a cyber-attack or having in place effective disaster recovery system, places a

significant risk on services, which will particularly impact on those groups who have a need for such services, including vulnerable children and young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and groups on low incomes applying for financial or other support. Modern ICT will also enable staff and residents including those with protected characteristics to better access Council services.

4.6 Procurement implications

4.6.1 In some cases, the solution will be to utilise the products already available such as using more of the Microsoft products and designing and implementing that solution with no additional cost for products.

4.6.2 Work has already commenced on determining the best routes to market for each of the programme deliverables in collaboration with procurement. The options identified include:

- Use existing contracts with incumbent suppliers where contracts permit
- Take multiple quotes from suppliers when the value permits
- Use frameworks or G-Cloud to procure services or solutions.

4.7 Workforce implications

4.7.1 Implications relating to the proposed restructuring will be brought to Cabinet under a separate report.

4.8 Property implications

4.8.1 Any implications arising from the remedial and modernisation programme will be addressed under the associated business cases for each milestone of activity.

Background Papers

None.

ICT Improvement Plan

The below programme of works seeks to remediate the legacy position of the IT estate through stabilisation and modernisation. This improvement plan highlights the key activities required.

ICT Modernisation Programme				
<u>Service Objective:</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the Council to make effective use of the ICT systems and achievements service objectives through the stabilisation and modernisation of the IT infrastructure • Ensure best value of money for service delivery • Improved experience to staff 				
Improvement Objective	Activity/Actions	Supporting Information	Progress to Date	Responsible Officer
Full restructure of ICT service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of design structure • Consultation document • Job descriptions • FAQ's • HR/Finance engagement • Job evaluation • Union engagement • Key stakeholder engagement • Appropriate sign offs for permission to proceed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build resilience • Build capacity • Build capability • Bridge technical knowledge gaps • Eradicate single points of failure • Reduce reliance on interims • "Grow you own" ICT service provision 	Draft design structure developed Draft consultation document Draft job descriptions Draft FAQ's Dates to be agreed with HR/Finance, indicative dates for launch summer 2022.	AD-VM

<p>Slough staff have access to fit for purpose devices that enable them to work in a fast and efficient collaborative way that enables them to perform their job and serve our residents.</p>	<p>Implementing “Autopilot” build and cloud management to efficiently deploying mobile devices</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: Auto configured and managed device. Outcomes: Faster, standardise & secure device deployment Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>Engagement with 3rd party supplier underway to begin testing of Autopilot configuration with IT engineers Expected to be completed by April/May 2022.</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – AR</p>
<p>Slough staff have access to fit for purpose devices that enable them to work in a fast and efficient collaborative way that enables them to perform their job and serve our residents.</p>	<p>Replacing the Council’s mobile device management (MDM) solution</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Departmental staff. 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: New MDM solution Outcomes: Improve experience for staff Risks: Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>Scope discovery and market testing with inform milestones for delivery</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – PK</p>

<p>Slough staff can work and be productive from the office and any mobile location, their experience should be seamless wherever they work and be fast and efficient.</p>	<p>Commissioning a new wide area network enabling faster access to the cloud-based services from Council buildings</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff. 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: Faster and improved access to network from Council buildings Outcomes: Improve experience for staff Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>Statement of requirements currently been produced in conjunction with Procurement.</p> <p>Scope discovery and market testing with inform milestones for delivery</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – AR</p>
<p>Slough staff can work and be productive from the office and any mobile location, their experience should be seamless wherever they work and be fast and efficient.</p>	<p>Replacing and standardising the remote access service for Staff</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff, 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: One fit for purpose, secure remote access service Outcomes: Improve experience for staff Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>As a temporary solution to improve to current service, a change is being reviewed regarding the existing VPN configuration.</p> <p>Discovery work on a new solution is running in parallel and is currently underway and will inform milestones for delivery</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – PK</p>

<p>Collaboration tools and data storage will be cloud based (where appropriate) to enable access to data and tools to support business functions.</p>	<p>Replacing end of life disk storage systems</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: New storage systems in place Outcomes: Continued access to data and tools to support business functions Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>Quotes for new hardware have been received with procurement intended to be completed in March 2022. Installation will be prior to the end of the current maintenance contract (Jun 22)</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – AR</p>
<p>IT systems and services will be migrated to appropriate platforms, they will be rationalised across the organisation, support modern collaborative ways of working, support business transformation and be a firm foundation for digitisation of business processes.</p>	<p>Migrating business applications to appropriate platform</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, departmental staff, Procurement staff. 3rd parties, modernisation funding, existing revenue budgets. Outputs: Cloud based business applications Outcomes: Business transformation Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased</p>	<p>Applications including Modern.Gov (Committee Management System) and APAS (Planning & Building Control System) have planned migrations in March. Full application audit underway to identify further cloud migrations and upgrade paths. Scope discovery and market testing with inform milestones for delivery</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – AK</p>

		reliance on 3rd parties Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above		
IT systems and services will be migrated to appropriate platforms, they will be rationalised across the organisation, support modern collaborative ways of working, support business transformation and be a firm foundation for digitisation of business processes.	Implementing a full IT Service Management (ITSM) function	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff 3rd parties, modernisation funding.</p> <p>Outputs: Fully implement ITSM function</p> <p>Outcomes: Improve IT service delivery to staff</p> <p>Risks: Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	Scope discovery and market testing with inform milestones for delivery	GM – AC PM – AK
IT systems and services will be migrated to appropriate platforms, they will be rationalised across the organisation, support modern collaborative ways of working, support business transformation and be a firm foundation for digitisation of business processes.	Commissioning a new corporate and contact centre telephony solution	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff 3rd parties, modernisation funding.</p> <p>Outputs: New corporate and contact telephony solution.</p> <p>Outcomes: Business transformation</p> <p>Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	Statement of requirements currently been produced in conjunction with Procurement. Scope discovery and market testing with inform milestones for delivery	GM – AC PM – AR

<p>Sloughs infrastructure will be efficient, scalable, and secure, ensuring council systems and data are available and protected.</p>	<p>Replacing the Council's dated backup solution</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff 3rd parties, modernisation funding. Outputs: New backup solution in place Outcomes: Council systems and data are available and protected Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>A health check review of the existing backup system has been scheduled for the 1st, 7th & 8th April. This will be undertaken by our 3rd party support partner who will produce a health report and remediation recommendations for the backup service.</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – PK</p>
<p>Sloughs infrastructure will be efficient, scalable, and secure, ensuring council systems and data are available and protected.</p>	<p>Replacing aged infrastructure</p>	<p>Resources: ICT staff, Procurement staff 3rd parties, modernisation & DLUHC funding. Outputs: Cyber reporting in place Outcomes: Council systems and data are available and protected Risks: 3rd parties unable to meet council aspirations/expectations. Project slippage has knock on effect for other service enhancements. Internal resources over stretched leading to inability to fully engage with project requirements and objectives. Internal skills not sufficient to progress the development leading to increased reliance on 3rd parties. Costs escalate as a direct result of any of the above.</p>	<p>Scoping of the council's critical applications has commenced. This is a significant programme of work which will roll into 22/23</p>	<p>GM – AC PM – AK</p>

Robust policies, procedures and governance is in place for the IT estate	Responding to all audit actions	<p>Resources: ICT staff, existing revenue budgets</p> <p>Outputs: Audit actions completed</p> <p>Outcomes: Robust policies, procedures and governance is in place for the IT estate</p> <p>Risks: Existing budgets may not be able to fully support the action requirements. ICT or user resources may not be available when they are required</p>	Ongoing completion of audit actions liaising with RSM	GM – AC
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DLUHC – Cyber Treatment Plan				
Service Objective:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address identified issues in the DLUHC Cyber Treatment Plan. • Improve the councils cyber resilience 				
Improvement Objective	Activity/Actions	Supporting Information	Progress to Date	Responsible Officer
Sloughs infrastructure will be efficient, scalable, and secure, ensuring council systems and data are available and protected.	All actions as identified in the cyber treatment plan Part II papers.	<p>Resources: ICT staff, existing revenue budgets</p> <p>Outputs: DLUHC Cyber treatment plan completed</p> <p>Outcomes: Sloughs infrastructure will be efficient, scalable, and secure, ensuring council systems and data are available and protected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding received • Kick off meeting with Local Digital team at DLUHC 	GM – AC

		Risks: Existing budgets may not be able to fully support the action requirements. ICT or user resources may not be available when they are required		
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ICT Modernisation Programme: Financial Breakdown

High Level Plan

Activity	21/22		22/23		23/24	
	One off Revenue (000s)	One Off Capital (000s)	One off Revenue (000s)	One Off Capital (000s)	One off Revenue (000s)	One Off Capital (000s)
Migrating business applications appropriate platforms	94		386		150	
Replacing aged infrastructure (Server & Network)		28		822		200
Commissioning a new Wide Area Network			125			
Replace end of life disk storage systems		11		139		
Implementing Autopilot laptop build		11		39		
Replacing & standardising remote access service				170		
Replacing the Council's dated backup solution			75			
Replacing Mobile device management solution			80			
Commissioning new corporate and contact centre telephony solution			350			
Implementing a full ITSM function				100		
IT Resources to deliver modernisation	107		1,446			

Activity in Confidential Appendix 3			75	210		
	201	50	2,537	1,480	150	200
Total Yearly Funding	251		4,017		350	
Total Funding Requested	4,618					

2021/22 Breakdown

#	Reason	One off Revenue £000	One off Capital £000	Total 21/22 Cost (000's)
1	To upgrade, replace or consolidate or decommission c240 aged servers which support SBC applications and services		28	28
2	To migrate several key lines of business applications from being hosted at SBC datacentre to the application providers cloud bringing resilience and security.	94		94
3	To replace 3 old and end of life disk storage units which hold all the SBC data. In the result of a system or hardware failure it is unlikely they could be recovered, and the data could be lost.		11	11
4	To implement a standardised autopilot laptop build mechanism to improve speed of delivery, quality and security to laptop devices.		11	11

5	To establish the modernisation programme and have resources working on it this financial year.	107		107
	Total	201	50	251

1. There are approximately 240 servers, of the Council's 400 servers, which need urgent replacement, upgrade or a move to a cloud solution. Some of these are running operating systems over 18 years old. This gives rise to reliability and support issues. Resources recruited and assigned to this work programme and scoping of the council's critical applications has commenced.. This is a significant programme of work which will roll into 22/23 and will on completion provide the council with a supported platform to run council services.
2. Business applications that can be hosted by the software provider in their own secure resilient cloud are in the process of being reviewed and identified. This will give some cost benefit but will more importantly mean that they can be managed, updated and monitored by the supplier of the service . These will then be robustly performance managed through the contract management controls. Cloud migration reduces the organisation's risk and need to keep servers and provide system support. SBC would only need to provide the existing application support it already does and ICT resources would be more available to manage other systems. Applications including Modern.Gov (Committee Management System) and APAS (Planning & Building Control System) have already been migrated to the Cloud with further applications being scoped
3. The Council has application and user data stored on storage units which are all coming to, or are already, end of life both in their age and in support from their respective manufactures. IT are working with third party suppliers to replace the existing disk storage units and migrate the council's data and services onto these units. This will ensure the council's data and systems are stored on a supported platform and has the necessary performance and capacity to meet the current and future demand. Quotes have been received and it is intended the procurement will be completed in March 2022 with installation prior to the end of the current maintenance contract in June 2022.
4. The Council has moved to a deploying number of laptops for staff rather than the previously used desktop based ('thin') client devices. This has created a significant demand to install and configure laptops to a consistent standard. To address the council has identified a partner who is assisting with the setup of a solution that provides a standard laptop configuration and management service. This will benefit the council by automating a currently manual process and the reliance on interim staff to build and deploy laptops. This will enable the service to be more responsive to the needs of the council and will allow a more effective deployment of devices. Consultancy to support testing and configuration has been procured and testing is underway with IT engineers. This is expected to be completed by April/May 2022.
5. Resources recruited.

2022/23 Breakdown

#	Reason	One off Revenue £000	One-off Capital £000	Total 22/23 Cost £000
1	Continued Server upgrades and migrations		822	822
2	Migrate specific line of business systems to their provider clouds. E.g., Revs & Bens Academy system	386		386
3	Expand the scale of the network upgrade and replacement programme		139	139
4	Commission high speed WAN links for cloud access	125		125
5	Replace backup solution	75		75
6	Mobile Device Management	80		80
7	Replace and upgrade capability of remote access solution.		170	170
8	Implement improved software build and control		39	39
9	Upgrade Service Management platform (helpdesk and self-serve)		100	100
10	Telephony (contact centre and internal corporate phone system)	350		350
11	Resource costs for implementation of this programme of work.	1446		1446
12	Options in Confidential Appendix	75	210	285
	Total	2,537	1,480	4,017

1.Continued Server Upgrades and Migrations– Continue to replace or upgrade systems which have run on out of vendor support hardware, based on a “Cloud Appropriate” strategy, whereby the best solution (Software as a Service or SaaS, or public cloud would be selected. Physical or “on premise” servers are not excluded but would be minimised to reduce Data Centre costs and maintenance. The risk of not continuing with this work to the organisation is very high given the inability to repair or replace current hardware components should an issue arise. This is a highly complex area. Each upgrade or migration will require careful project management – provided by the Modernisation Programme Team. It should be noted that this will not be a single procurement, but

will consist of multiple elements, each of which will need to be properly assessed for value, technical compatibility, service need and high availability. This part of the programme links closely with the Business System reviews and plans to use system provider private cloud services.

2.Migrate specific line of business systems to their provider clouds. E.g. Revenues & Benefits Academy system– This work stream relates to the migration of key (and very complex) applications to provider cloud services (known as SaaS). These services provide a greater resilience for each application, removing the pain of upgrades and regulation changes (done automatically), protecting accessibility for the officers and reducing our server footprint.

One-off costs relate to the actual migration work required and undertaken by the provider (data integrity and transfers, training, system configuration specific to Slough BC), on-going revenue charges relate to the subscription (or licence) for access to the application.

3.Expand the scale of the network upgrade and replacement programme– Complete the replacement of end-of-life network equipment, across sites, office locations and data centre. Failure to replace this equipment will lead to areas of buildings not being able to work and increases the opportunity for cyber-attack. Legacy out of support hardware has no maintenance or patches released and could leave the council vulnerable. This work will be led by the Network team and fed into the wider modernisation plan. Key milestones will include, the purchasing, the installation, testing, migration and the set-up of the solution.

4.Commission high speed WAN links for cloud access– Replacement of the existing wide area network access to provide better bandwidth for cloud services and utilise more modern technology (called SDWAN) to manage the network.

5.Replace backup solution– Continue and complete the replace of the data storage back-up solution. The Council has its data stored on three storage units (racks of hard disk drives). These operate as individual units providing many Terabytes of storage. These units are all coming to, or are already in some cases, end of life both in their age and in support from their respective manufactures. SBC must consolidate the data storage into one larger unit which will provide greater performance, resilience, and reliability. The risk of not undertaking this is high and will amount to a catastrophic failure resulting in a loss of systems / data and applications/services. This work will be led by the infrastructure team and the key milestones will include, the purchasing, the installation, testing, migration and the set-up of the solution.

6.Mobile Device Management– A replacement is required for our currently outdated mobile device management software. This is the tool that allows mobile devices to be updated and maintained remotely and is used to secure stolen or lost devices.

7. Replace and upgrade capability of remote access solution– Complete the replacement of the current remote access solution. Currently there are a variety of solutions to support remote access to the council’s network, this will enable discovery and solution design of a consolidated solution ensuring continued staff access to hybrid, on premises and cloud as the systems are modernised. The work is being led by infrastructure team and the ICT modernisation programme lead and the key milestones will include the creation of a work programme and a replacement programme, followed by procurement, installation, testing and live deployment.

8. Implement improved software build and control– All newly deployed laptops have to be built manually – by built, we mean the software is loaded individually by one or more of the IT Operations Team. There are products that will automate this process and also control any unofficial loading of applications or data. These are commodity products, so a full tender process will determine the best product at the right price for Slough.

9. Upgrade Service Management platform (helpdesk and self-serve)– The IT Service currently utilises the Helix (Remedy) system to log, manage and complete IT Help Desk requests. This system is known as an ITSM (IT Service Management). The system was inherited following the transfer from Arvato into Slough BC. As an ITSM, the system is inadequate as it does not provide self-serve functionality, no AD integration, limited knowledge base functions, no asset management tools configured and more complex than is necessary.

An upgrade or replacement of the Helix (Remedy) ITSM is required to ensure Slough ICT are properly equipped to manage the IT estate in all its complexity

10. Corporate Telephony Solution – The telephony service is fragmented and uses different, somewhat old-fashioned, technology. This project will look at leveraging the MS365 functionality to provide a cohesive, robust and highly functional telephony solution. This will need to be done in the light of any Corporate or Service restructures, the need to reduce the number of inbound calls but maintain an acceptable service level to residents and visitors or Slough. This solution will also include telephony for the councils contact centre, IT service desk & Track Trace call centre.

11. Resources – Resource costs.

12. Refer to part 2 papers

2023/24 Breakdown

#	Reason	One off Revenue	One off Capital	Cost (000's)
1	Annual cost of Disaster recovery solution			
2	Continued Server upgrades and migrations		200	200
3	Continue planning and migration to cloud and cost of cloud environments	50		50
4	Migrate specific line of business systems to their provider clouds. E.g. Revs & Bens Academy system	100		100
5	Security Solutions			
6	Annual disk storage maintenance			
7	Expand scale or network upgrade and replacement programme			
8	Commission high speed WAN links for cloud access			
9	Cyber reporting			
10	Replace backup solution			
15	Infrastructure and cloud monitoring			
16	Upgrade Service Management platform (helpdesk and self-serve)			
17	Telephony (contact centre and internal corporate phone system)			
	Total	150	200	350

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Digital Team Developments

A large and growing internal technology estate

1,700 staff

With the IT department providing them with laptops, Office 365, network, and telephony



2,500 tech support requests

raised by council employees per month

Growing demand for online services and ability to self-serve

149,577 residents



In 2020, there were 149,577k residents in the Slough postcode area with over 109k being over 16 years of age.



Over 9,000 citizen accounts registered to date

Enabling residents to apply for jobs, report missed bins, log faults with streetlights and get notifications of progress of their reports

30+ business intelligence dashboards

Council departments have access to over 30 dashboards, including telephone stats, call waiting times, Google analytics and case management (CRM).

These dashboards are used for monitoring and performance



163,000

visitors to the council's website every month



396,000

Unique Pageviews page views

66% via mobile or tablet devices

134 online forms



Enabling residents to self-serve, saving the Council money, and making it easy for residents to communicate with us.

Over 8000 forms submitted per month



60+ line of business applications

powering the council's activities from council tax collection to case management via JADU CXM.

Each system needing maintenance, support, frequent upgrades, and regular replacement

Live Council Website Forms:

1	Service satisfaction survey	24	Customer access cancel appointment	47	Community centres for hire enquiry
2	Graffiti removal	25	Customer access cancel block booking	48	Adult social care complaints
3	Domestic abuse referral	26	Customer access reschedule appointment	49	Adult social care feedback
4	Report a road spillage	27	Contact us	50	Alternative resolutions
5	Report litter or a problem with a litter bin	28	Driver licence application	51	Community learning and skills service feedback
6	Allotment request	29	Vehicle licence application	52	Housing service repairs request
7	Building regulations submission	30	Better by newsletter sign up	53	Charitable discretionary rate relief
8	PPE request	31	Property buy back enquiry	54	Neighbourhood services complaints and comments
9	Customer access block book calendar	32	Report council fraud	55	Report an alleged breach of planning control
10	Report a COVID-19 related issue	33	Change of vehicle	56	Slough SENDIASS user evaluation
11	Customer access book an appointment	34	Private tenant service request	57	Update Business rates contact details
12	Report a highways issue	35	Parks and play areas faults	58	Slough local offer feedback
13	Active Slough registration request	36	Report an abandoned vehicle	59	Council tax refund application for executors
14	Fob request	37	Report dog-related issues	60	Garage application
15	Learning and development training application	38	Report electoral fraud	61	Members code of conduct complaint
16	Libraries volunteer application	39	Self and custom build registration	62	Council tax exemption
17	Outbuildings adapted for human habitation	40	Slough Youth award nomination	63	Housing benefit - Landlord application for payment by BACS
18	Report missed bin collection	41	Report a street cleaning issue	64	Bulky waste collection discount qualification
19	Adult social care general enquiry	42	Staff whistleblowing form	65	Housing benefit or Council tax support review entitlement
20	Council tax enquiry	43	Job application	66	Report antisocial behaviour
21	Council tax refund application	44	Staff car details form	67	Report a statutory nuisance
22	Council tax single person discount review	45	Social care personal assistant application	68	School admissions late application
23	Housing Direct Debit application	46	Child entertainment and performance licence	69	Housing benefit - Claimant application for payment by BACS

70	Insurance claims	87	Housing benefit - Request from landlord to be paid direct	104	School admissions Part B in-year application
71	School admissions appeal	88	Report flytipping, flyposting or flyboarding	105	Environmental enquiries - Customer set up
72	School admissions change a place application	89	Report a food problem	106	General enquiry
73	School Governor volunteers application	90	Leaseholder enquiry	107	Freedom of Information request
74	Vehicular access application	91	Benefits change of circumstances	108	Corporate complaints
75	Food business registration	92	Report faulty street lighting furniture	109	SBC website content update form
76	Customer feedback	93	School admissions enquiry	110	SBCinsite feedback form
77	Staff ID badge application	94	Free school meals - eligibility outcome	111	Provide additional information for a Council tax support or Housing benefit appeal
78	Staff PPE stock update form	95	Partially unoccupied relief	112	Provide additional information for a Council tax support or Housing benefit reconsideration request
79	Staff parking permit Hatfield application	96	Community trigger form	113	Housing benefits overpayments - Income and expenditure
80	IT work request	97	Follow up a Council tax support or Housing benefit decision	114	Concessionary bus pass application for the elderly and disabled
81	Building control - upload documentation	98	CTS/HB SoR, reconsideration or appeal - send letter	115	Bulky waste collection
82	Report dog fouling	99	Concessionary bus pass reschedule appointment	116	Concessionary bus pass cancel appointment
83	Free school meals application	100	Pavement licence application	117	Tenancy termination
84	Building control - make a payment	101	Council tax enquiry v2	118	Housing benefit - Change of address
85	Household support fund application	102	Council tax single person discount	119	Housing benefit - Self employed income
86	Electric vehicle charging points survey	103	Registrars feedback	120	Housing benefit - Request from tenant to pay landlord

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ICT Major Projects

Alongside the modernisation programme of works, there are projects that are either in progress, or known about that will require significant ICT effort to support / complete. Below is a list of the knowns at this time but this is likely to increase as service seek to drive efficiencies and to improve system capability.

Project Name	Description	Estimated completion / go live	Lead Officers	Significant Milestones	RAG Status
Completion of O365 Roll out	Migration of users to Microsoft O365 & provision of Microsoft teams. This includes roll out of windows 10 laptops.	June 2022	GM - ICT With service GM's	Service areas completed	Green
Migration of Revs & Bens to new modernised platform	Revs & Bens application (Capita Academy) comes unsupported on the current platform by October 2022, a new contract will need to be awarded and the system will need to be re-platformed to an on premise or cloud version.	October 2022	GM – Revs & Bens GM - ICT		Amber
CapitaOne Contract Renewal	Education system re-tendering and potential migration to new platform.	March 2023	AD - Education & Inclusion GM - ICT	Scoping stage	
Corporate Telephony	New corporate telephony solution needs to be contracted for providing desk-based telephony services.	March 2023	AD – Business Services GM - ICT	Scoping stage	
Data Strategy	Supporting the development and roll out of the corporate data strategy programme.	In progress	GM- Business Insight GM- ICT	Initial meeting held in March.	

				Milestones to be agreed pending scoping.	
Contract Procurements	Re-contracting of all ICT contracts and new contracts associated with the remediation / modernisation programme of work.	Ongoing	GM - ICT	Full contracts register of procurement action in place.	Green
Northgate Housing	Ongoing support of the migration and implementation of the new hosted housing system.	June 2022	PM – HMS GM - ICT	User Acceptance Testing End user Training	Green
Freshdesk Replacement (Agresso ITSM).	Migration of Agresso service management tool to Remedy (Corporate ITSM) including knowledgebase.	May 2022	HR/IT/Finance	Scoping stage	
New Data Reporting Platform	Development of a new environment to host development of data insight reporting and the future data insight strategy.	In progress	GM- Business Insight GM- ICT	Scoping stage	
Data Centre Hosting Renewal	Contract negotiation of a new data centre hosting contract for all council systems, potentially could result in a complete migration of all council systems to a new site.	November 2022	GM - ICT	Identifying scope/requirements Procurement Migration	Green
Digital Team Form Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UAT form migrations - Helix Remedy access and training - Review of Registry Office processes to identify areas of digital opportunities. - Replacement bin form - Homeless or at risk form 	April 2022	GM - ICT	Service development activity	Amber

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexible home improvement loans form - Building control forms - Demolition notice and Permission to erect scaffolding - Report antisocial behaviour potentially convert to CXM process - Report flytipping, flyposting or flyboarding potentially convert to CXM process - Report a statutory nuisance potentially convert to CXM process 				
Robotics Process Automation (RPA) – Revs & Bens	Explore RPA for Capita Revs & Bens services.	TBC	GM – Revs & Bens GM - ICT	Scoping stage	
Flare – Environmental Health & Trading Standards System Upgrade	Flare system re-tendering and potential migration to new platform.	Awaiting service engagement	AD- Place Regulation GM - ICT	Scoping stage	
EDRMS Replacement (Document Management)	EDRMS system re-tendering and potential migration to new platform.	March 2023	GM - ICT With service GM's	March Cabinet Approval	Amber

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Licensing and contract management

- 1.1. In determining the way forward on individual applications individual licensing decisions will need to be made. Indeed, there are already some such cases that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- 1.2. All of the contracts can be extended by the Executive Director for Finance under the scheme of delegation as all are below £0.500m. These contracts are listed below:

System	Supplier	Contract Length	Contract Value £000
Website & Digital Platform - 2 nd Year Contract Extension	Jadu	24.02.22-23.02.23	104
Electronic Document Records Management System	Civica	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	179
Citrix Licence Renewal	TBC	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	130
Citrix Support Desk	ProAct	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	49
Email & Web Gateway (Clearswift) Licence Renewal	TBC	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	50
Wi-Fi Managed Service, Hardware Support & Licences	Intercity	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	27
Support & Maintenance for Revenues & Benefits System	Capita (Academy)	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	96
Support & Maintenance for Adults, Children's, and Early Help Case Management	Liquid Logic	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	170
Support & Maintenance for Adults, Children's Social Care Finance Systems	Oxford Computing Consultants	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	35
Support & Maintenance for Environmental Services System	Civica	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	42
ICS Consultant (ICT development)	Family Support Practise Ltd	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	90
ICS Floorwalking	Bytesize Training ltd	01.04.22 - 31.03.23	41
Total			1,013

Website & Digital Platform - 2nd Year Contract Extension

- 1.3. The Jadu digital platform was procured on the 24/02/2020 following a tender process under the G-Cloud 11 CCS framework. Three responses were received and reviewed by an evaluation panel. The decision to go with JADU was predicated on the combination of price and matching functionality and it was the only solution tendered that met the need for a CMS (website creation), on-line forms and a digital platform allowing for case management and links to line of business systems through API's (Application Process Interfaces). (See Appendix 3)
- 1.4. The product comprises three elements: The Website build process, the forms creation functionality (allowing us to create bespoke forms for customers to complete), and the

digital case management system. Each of these are fully integrated and work in tandem to provide an end-to-end digital service

- 1.5. JADU powers the Council's website which is the central and preferred point of all customer interaction with the Council. The website receives over 163,000 visitors per month, and over 8,000 form submissions. As more services are digitised it is predicted that the council will see an increase of up to 30% across this channel. The digital website provides clear signposting for what customers can do online, linking them with the service or information they need. With online form capabilities, JADU also offers customers with the full range of digital channels for both self and assisted service.
- 1.6. Customer Services use JADU as their CRM platform to log customers calls, emails and enquiries. The system replaced the legacy Oracle CRM system in October 2021, delivering £66k in savings in 2021/22

Electronic Document Records Management System

- 1.7. Slough Borough Council have been a Civica customer since 2004 and have been successfully using the desktop version of Digital360 Contact Management and EDM software in a number of key services. The current licence and support arrangements for Digital 360 with Civica expire on 31st March 2022. Hence this needs to be renewed for 1 year. During this one-year extension, Slough will explore options for an Electronic Document Management system that align with the future strategy of Slough Council

Citrix Licence Renewal

- 1.8. The renewal covers the Council's Citrix licences ensuring the relevant licences and subscriptions are in place for the 1 April 2022. Most staff access the Council's Citrix to access their applications and files. A valid subscription also provides the Council with licences to download the latest updates/bug fixes and version releases.
- 1.9. The renewal also covers the Council's Citrix environment that run on cisco servers. These servers need to have support and maintenance contracts in place should any issues arise that require. It is essential that the Council's hardware is supported for PSN compliance.

Citrix Support Desk

- 1.10. The support covers:
 - Unlimited four-hour Response Telephone Help Desk Support
 - Unlimited Remote Access / dial in diagnostic
 - Unlimited access to Proact Help Desk and Senior Consultants
 - Escalation through to Vendors via Proact held Support Contracts
 - Monday - Friday 09:00am to 17:30pm excluding public and bank holidays
- 1.11. ProAct have been a partner working with SBC (and previously Arvato) for seven years. Proact installed the Council's citrix Infrastructure and have provided valuable citrix support resolving several priority 1 ICT issues. They have knowledge about the Council's Citrix set up and configuration.

Email & Web Gateway

- 1.12. The Clearswift email appliances ensure all content and attachments on incoming and outgoing emails are scanned for viruses and malware and that spam emails are blocked. It provides key word (swear words) blocking so that undesirable words cannot be sent or received externally via email.
- 1.13. The Clearswift web appliances ensure staff are restricted from accessing undesirable or inappropriate websites as well as protecting from malware related to websites. It allows ICT to have different restriction policies and controls in place depending on business requirements.
- 1.14. If the annual licences for the Council's email and web gateway appliances are not renewed, the Council will not have any filtering or protection on incoming and outgoing emails as well as website access by staff. This could expose the Council to viruses, malware, and undesirable content.

Wi-Fi

- 1.15. The renewal covers the Council's managed service for the Wi-Fi. This is undertaken by a 3rd party to provide the following: -
 - Monitoring and incident management of the wireless network
 - Configuration & Patch Management of the wireless network
 - Change Management
 - Ongoing Service Management
- 1.16. This renewal covers the hardware maintenance for Aruba 7000 Controllers including an engineer to site with next business day response (if required). This ensures all the Wi-Fi hardware is supported and maintained. The renewal also covers the licence renewal for the Wi-Fi access points. All the Council's access points need to have a valid licence to operate. If there is no valid licence, the access point will not work

Support and Maintenance for Revenues and Benefits System - Academy

- 1.17. Academy is the main processing and administrative system for the Revenue and Benefits service. This includes Council Tax, Business rates, Business rates BID, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme processing and related on-line and supplementary services.

Support & Maintenance for Adults, Children's, and Early Help Case Management

- 1.18. Liquidlogic is the current supplier for the Adult and Children's and social care management systems.
- 1.19. The children's system (also Known as LCS) is a case management system that supports all aspects of social work with children and record keeping this includes children in need, looked after children, adoption, and child protection cases. It is also the main depository for all statutory reporting information for children's social care.
- 1.20. The Adult Social Care system (also Known as LAS) Is the main case management system for Adults Social Care it has comprehensive functionality to enable the management of contacts, referrals, assessments, reablement plans care commissioning, personal budgets, self-funders, safeguarding, DOLS, provider

management, financial management and assessment. It is also the main depository for all statutory reporting for Adult Social Care.

- 1.21. Liquidlogic is critical to ensuring that SBC and Slough Children First can deliver statutory services to the residents of Slough. The systems are also the main information repository for all our annual statutory reporting for both Children and Adult social care

ICS Consultant

- 1.22. This contract supports all ICT application development for children's services, including, project management, process design, system form development, upgrades and technical lead on integration projects. This role is fulfilled by a qualified social worker with ICT/Project management skills.

ICS Floorwalker

- 1.23. The support provided by the role is targeted primarily to support busy frontline social workers in children's services to deliver on their statutory responsibilities. One of the functions of this contract is to support and train new staff on how to use ICS which is the primary tool used within the service, this also supports the high turnover of staff. Floorwalking support for ICS has been identified as a top priority from the company leadership team in delivering services to children.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7th April 2022

CONTACT OFFICER: Fin Garvey, Group Manager
(For all Enquiries) 07511 048404

WARD(S): Central Ward

PART I
FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

NOVA HOUSE/GRE5 UPDATE1. **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the current position of Ground Rent Estates 5 Limited (“GRE5”) and the progress of works at Nova House.

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on the content of the report below.

Commissioners Review:

“Commissioners want to draw the Committee's attention to the comments in the budget reports approved by Council which noted that no further parent company guarantees or cash flow support will be provided without the explicit approval of Commissioners.”

3 **Report****Background**

Nova House is a block of 68 apartments in Slough town centre. It was converted from offices to residential accommodation in 2015 at which time further floors were also added to the existing structure. GRE5 owns the freehold of Nova House.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017 the cladding at Nova House failed two flammability tests and further survey work during the summer and autumn of 2017 revealed significant defects with the compartmentation within the building.

During September 2017 the level of defects within the building was such as to lead both the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (“RBFRS”) and the Council to question whether the building could continue to be occupied. Throughout this period the Council and RBFRS were in regular contact with the then owners of the building and began to have concerns about their capacity to undertake the substantial remediation work required to the building.

The primary concern of the Council was, and continues to be, to protect the safety of residents, the wider interests of the community as a whole, and the interests of leaseholders (some of whom are also residents of Nova House).

In 2018, the Council therefore decided to acquire all of the shares of GRE5 for £1. Whilst the scope of works was unknown at that stage, costs were anticipated to be less than £10m, and the Council assumed that any costs would be recoverable following a legal claim.

Interim fire safety measures were put in place, and continue to be in place, in the building to ensure the safety of residents, pending the completion of remediation works. These have included a high-quality heat detector system, the presence of a 24-hour waking watch and immediate evacuation procedures in the event of fire.

A scope of works and Development Agreement were agreed in 2021 with Slough Urban Renewal Community Projects LLP (“SUR”).

Progress.

The project has been delayed due to covid restrictions and the requirements to undertake additional tests and surveys in 2020/2021, which identified a range of defects and technical issues.

These additional tests and surveys have identified further significant structural defects dating from the conversion of the building in 2014/15 and the design solutions to these are ongoing with the contractor and design team. Solutions to these are likely to add further costs and time to the project.

By the end of January 2022 all ACM Cladding was removed from the building and a fire-resistant weatherproof membrane has been installed whilst solutions to the structural issues are designed and remediated. The current programme for the known works is for completion in early 2023.

In addition to the external works, internal works have been identified as being needed in order to protect the safety of the building and its residents. To date the flat entrance doors have been replaced and defective fire compartmentation to the staircase escape route has been addressed. This, combined with the removal of the ACM Cladding, means that the fire safety of the building has improved since the project commenced. However, further work is necessary to address the remaining issues compromising fire safety. This includes rectification of internal fire compartmentation to communal areas and the installation of an internal sprinkler system.

Due to the severity of these fire safety related defects, a Waking Watch remains in the building. The timing of the removal of this is currently under review with RBFRS and GRE5’s fire safety consultant.

Identified Structural Issues

There are three main structural defects so far identified within the building, these all date to the conversion works carried out in 2014/15.

- Defective Welds/Splice Details at level 4 – The removal of the ACM Cladding has revealed several instances where the primary steel joints are not compliant with building regulations and need to be rectified. Proposals

to carry out these works with the minimum disruption to residents are currently being developed by the contractor and engineers.

- Level 4 Shims – There are significant defects connecting the additional floor slab to the existing structure. In places, this slab is resting on shims that are not themselves fixed to the structure. This is not compliant with building regulations and needs to be rectified. Works to rectify these are likely to be disruptive and a satisfactory solution is being sought.
- Bracing – Investigations have not found bracing within the storeys that were added during the conversion works. This is also a significant defect that needs remediation. Provisional proposals to carry out these works have been produced; however, they will need to be completed following the rectification of the defective welds.

These defects have been notified to the warranty provider with a view to their inclusion within the insurance claim being pursued by GRE5, if not accepted.

Fire Safety Defects

One of the major fire safety defects affecting the building, the ACM cladding, has now been removed and will be replaced with an approved safe alternative.

The following additional fire safety defects sit outside the scope of the current works contract. Solutions to rectify these are ongoing with individual specialist contractors.

- Defective compartmentation works – These present a significant risk that needs to be rectified and works will follow the installation of the sprinkler system to ensure that there is no damage caused during its installation.
- Sprinkler Installation – This is required to mitigate a range of fire safety risks in the building. Draft proposals for this have been received and these are being reviewed by GRE5's fire safety consultant and RBFRS. Works to install this will be carried out in a manner to minimise disruption to residents.
- Missing/defective fire protection to the primary frame – There are several locations that have been uncovered during removing the ACM cladding, proposals for ensuring the adequate replacement of this are underway.

It is also noted that various other defects have been remediated during the works to date. In addition, the replacement of the flat entrance doors and compartmentation works to the escape staircase have been carried out.

The cost of remediation of these items forms part of the insurance claim against the warranty provider that GRE5 are pursuing.

Insurance Claim

GRE5 and the Leaseholders are currently engaged in legal proceedings with the insurance backed warranty provider for the building. Mediation proceedings are expected to take place in May 22. A separate paper will be produced for Members and Commissioners which will inform the establishment of mediation principles for the mediation process. If the parties are not able to reach a commercial settlement, the matter will proceed to trial next year. Current work is on finalising the quantum of the claim prior to the end of March 2022.

Leaseholder Engagement (inc. Residents)

GRE5 have met with the Leaseholders at the end of January 2022, and have a meeting proposed for the beginning of April 2022. This will be followed by more regular meetings to keep them updated on progress of the works and discussions around recovery of costs will be included where appropriate. Meetings are proposed to be held every 8-10 weeks.

In addition, GRE5 are planning to hold sessions specifically focused on residents who, in many cases, are not the leaseholders. These are planned to take place in April 2022 to focus on the day-to-day activities and disruptions of the project and safety updates rather than the financial aspects.

GRE5 are currently seeking legal advice on reclaiming costs from leaseholders.

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

3a. **Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The original project was intended to ensure that the private housing block was brought up to standards to meet those required for private sector housing. The Council choose to do this via acquiring the shares in GRE5, as opposed to utilising its enforcement powers under the Housing Act 2004.

3b. **Other Strategic Outcomes**

The project was intended to ensure that Nova House was brought up to standard to allow tenants to safely live in the property without the need for ongoing interim measures to address the fire risks evident from the defects in the building.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Nova House refurbishment costs

Total costs have increased significantly and are now estimated to be in the region of £19.6m, although this continues to remain under review. The Capital Strategy report includes £1.5m of contingency and therefore allows for a total cost to £21.1m.

Costs have increased since the July 2021 Council report which provided an update to members. Total costs have increased from £18.8m v £19.6m; an

increase of £0.8m. This remains an estimate and is subject to ongoing discussions with advisors and RBFRS.

Costs relate to the main external development works (under contract), internal works, legal costs, waking watch costs, project management costs, tests, surveys, and advisor costs.

Total costs incurred to date are estimated to be in the region of £10m (as at the 31/1/22) which includes some pre-development works funded by Homes England. The remaining costs are projected to be incurred in FY 22/23.

Most costs associated with the Nova House refurbishment programme have been included on the Council's balance sheet (P181 code) within its capital programme pending the execution of a Council loan to GRE5 (see loan summary below).

Grant funding

During FY 21/22, the Council and GRE5 successfully agreed grant funding of £9.3m from Homes England for eligible development costs. This includes £1.7m for pre-development works which have been completed and grant funding drawdown. The Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) has now been completed by DLUHC and the first grant drawdown is being processed with immediate effect. Further applications will then be made monthly. Discussions continue to take place with Homes England with regards to changing the scope of eligible costs which may result in additional grant funding being made available to GRE5. This will reduce financial risk to the Council.

As per the GFA, Homes England may clawback a proportion of its grant should GRE5 be successful in its legal claim against the warranty provider. The clawback mechanism has not yet been agreed with Homes England and will be set out in a Deed of Variation/side letter to the GFA. This may result in the full grant being clawed back by Homes England (£9.3m), although it is anticipated that the clawback mechanism will reflect the Council's costs in pursuing the claim.

Should the legal claim be unsuccessful, the maximum financial exposure to GRE5, and therefore the Council as 100% shareholder, is up to £10.3m (£19.6m costs less £9.3m Homes England grant). Alternative funding strategies are being considered to meet any funding shortfalls, including potential recovery of costs from leaseholders. A tribunal has already determined that leaseholders, and not the freeholder, are liable for waking watch costs.

Loan facility and PCG

In July 2021, the Council approved a loan facility to GRE5 of up to £10m to meet its short-term cash flow requirements, pending the:

- outcome of the legal proceedings;

- approval of the grant funding agreement with Homes England;
- completion of works to determine total final costs; and
- recovery of monies from leaseholders.

A draft £10m loan facility agreement has been produced and is scheduled to be executed before the end of the FY 21/22. This loan facility agreement formalises a loan facility that was originally approved by the Cabinet in 2019 but was not approved in accordance with the Council's Investment Strategy. The Council has funded GRE5 costs to date; costs have been included in a separate capital programme cost centre on the Council's balance sheet. These costs will be recharged/passported to GRE5 following the execution of the loan facility. The terms of the loan are similar to the Council's other commercial loans with third parties such as SUR.

Latest cash flow projections estimate that the maximum financial exposure to GRE5, and therefore the Council as 100% shareholder, is up to £10.3m. The peak funding requirement will be dependent upon the agreed GFA drawdown schedule and any impact on the accrual of interest on the Council loan facility. The outcome of the legal case and timing of any associated financial payments will also impact upon the peak facility requirement.

As noted elsewhere in this report, additional defects have been identified which could result in increased costs which are not eligible for inclusion in the insurance claim. The financial position is updated monthly and any increased loan facility requirement will require Council approval in line with the Council's Investment Strategy.

In FY 21/22, the Council entered into a Parent Company Guarantee (PCG) to enable the works under the Development Agreement to be completed. The majority of the Development Agreement costs are considered to be eligible costs under the terms of the Homes England GFA but there is a shortfall in the region of £1.3m which would be covered under the terms of the PCG should GRE5 be unable to pay the total costs under the Development Agreement. It should be noted that the Council is not a party to the GFA or the Development Agreement.

(b) Risk Management

As identified in previous reports, the main risks for the Council in relation to Nova House are financial and are covered in the finance implications. GRE5 as the freeholder has responsibility for maintenance responsibilities under the leases, however this does not provide an obligation on the Council, as the sole shareholder, to provide a specific level of funding. As in most residential leases, whilst the maintenance responsibilities for structural issues lie with the freeholder, the cost of these are chargeable via service charges, subject to compliance with statutory consultation and other obligations. GRE5 have taken appropriate advice from professionals to support the board of directors with compliance with its statutory responsibilities. As sole shareholder, the Council is responsible for appointing directors to the company board.

GRE5 maintains a risk management plan which will be considered as part of the overall review of GRE5 and the development of an Action Plan.

The following key risks have been identified:

- Increased costs – As the project has progressed, several additional defects have been identified. Where appropriate these are being added to the Particulars of Claim for the insurance litigation. Where these are not eligible under the policy then alternative funding is being investigated by GRE5. Variations to the contract are being interrogated and reported by GRE5 as part of the financial and risk management of the project.
- Further unknown defects – There is an ongoing risk that further defects may be identified during remediation works
- Legal Claim – The actual amount recoverable remains unknown.
- Leaseholder Recovery – The amount that will be sought from Leaseholders to meet any shortfall in with the insurance claim remains uncertain. Central government has recently suggested this will be capped. However, this has not been confirmed and GRE5 are seeking clarity.
- Delay to Home England Grant Funding – The main Grant Funding Agreement has been signed and preparation of the first claim is underway. Any delay to this claim being paid could impact the ability of GRE5's cash flow and the loan facility may not be sufficient to meet obligations.

(c) Legal Implications

GRE5 is responsible for regulatory compliance of the Nova House site and has worked closely with key regulators: RBFRS, SBC Building Control and Housing Regulation.

In November 2018, MHCLG issued guidance to local authorities in relation to their Housing Act 2004 duties. This specifically addressed the profile for the hazard of fire in relation to cladding systems on high rise residential buildings. The guidance clarifies that the 2004 Act permits the inspection and rating of the common parts as separate residential premises and that this includes the exterior of the building and internal common parts of each floor and that consideration should also be given to balcony areas and terraces, service risers and ducting.

The guidance confirms that the fire authority also holds responsibility for fire hazards under the Fire Safety Order. It is recommended that there be a local protocol on the liaison between the Council and the fire and rescue authority, including the need for the Council in its enforcement role, to consult with the fire and rescue authority in advance of any action, except in an emergency situation.

The guidance confirms that interim measures such as waking watches should not be considered in the hazard assessment but will be relevant to decisions on what action should be taken in response to an assessment.

If, following assessment, a local housing authority identifies a Category 1 hazard, it has a duty to use the provisions of the 2004 Act. If the hazard is identified as a Category 2 hazard, it has the power to take action and the guidance makes it clear that in this situation, it will be necessary to show how its discretion has been used.

To date, the Council, in its enforcement role, has not conducted a formal assessment of Nova House. Instead, it has worked with the fire and rescue

authority and the freeholder to seek to advise on the most appropriate works to respond to the defects identified. The Council's duties as enforcement body remain the same regardless of whether it is the shareholder of the freehold company, as Nova House remains a private sector housing block.

If the Council assessed the building as having a Category 1 hazard and served an improvement notice, this would place responsibility on the building owners and/or leaseholders to take appropriate action. There is a right of appeal against relevant notices, and this can be used by the recipient if they believe they are not the responsible person. Failure to comply with a notice gives the Council the right to do works in default and charge these back to the responsible person.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no identified needs for an EIA at this juncture

(e) Workforce

There are no workforce implications, although it is recognised that significant additional Council and external resource will be required to deliver this project, pursue the legal claim and provide governance and management.

5. **Supporting Information**

None

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7. **Conclusion**

This report has updated the Committee on the progress being made towards the remediation of the fire defects at Nova House. It has highlighted a range of new defects that have been discovered through surveys and investigations and the associated challenges. It has provided an overview on the status of the grant funding being received from Homes England and also an update on the progress towards the resolution of the insurance claim with the potential implications for leaseholders and the Council.

The report has also highlighted the key risks to the Council and potential path forward. While no viable alternative options have been identified at this stage, these will continue to be investigated and reported.

8. **Background Papers**

None

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7 April 2022

CONTACT OFFICER: Nick Pontone, Democratic Services Lead
(For all Enquiries) (01753) 875120

WARDS: All

PART I
FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2021/22**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report which will be submitted to Council. Members are asked to comment on and endorse the draft report.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- a) endorse the report, subject to any amendments, before it is presented to Council.
- b) consider what lessons can be learned from scrutiny this year, to enhance scrutiny in future years.

Commissioners Review:

“The contents of the report are noted, as is the desire to produce an action plan for the further development of the scrutiny function in Slough Borough Council which will reflect the recommendations from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny report which is expected shortly.

The development of an effective scrutiny function is one of the key Directions to the authority set out by the Secretary of State, and progress must be monitored carefully over the coming year.”

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- 3.1 Overview & Scrutiny plays an important role in scrutinising the progress made in the delivery of all aspects of the SJWS.
- 3.2 Overview & Scrutiny is central to ensuring accountability in the delivery of strategic priorities, including those in the emerging Recovery Plan.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

The work of the scrutiny function is included within existing SBC budgets.

(b) **Risk Management**

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
Endorse that the report be presented to council.	The information and narrative is not agreed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee	The report will accommodate any amendments by members.
Consider lessons that can be learned.	Scrutiny fails to improve in line with the requirements of the Directions.	Producing a lessons learned summary, which can be included in the report.

(c) **Legal Implications**

The Council has a leader and executive model of governance under the Local Government Act 2000. Under this model, there is a requirement for the executive arrangements of the Council to include provision for the appointment of one or more committees known as overview and scrutiny committees. The arrangements must ensure that this committee has the power to do the following under s.9F(2) of the aforementioned Act:

- (a) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (b) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive,
- (c) to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (d) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive,
- (e) to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area

The power of an overview and scrutiny committee under (a) above relates to a power to review or scrutinise a decision made but not implemented and provides the power to recommend reconsideration or to arrange for its function to be exercised by the Council. This power is referred to as call in and the procedure is covered by the terms of reference governing overview and scrutiny.

The overview and scrutiny committee may require members of the executive and officers of the authority to attend to answer questions and may invite other persons to attend meetings of the committee.

The statutory guidance on the role and function of overview and scrutiny committees emphasises the importance of the scrutiny process being led and

owned by elected members, as part of their role in creating an organisational culture, behaviour and attitudes that can ensure the scrutiny function succeeds. Effective scrutiny can and should lead to improved policy-making and the efficient delivery of public services. Low level of support for and engagement with the scrutiny function can lead to poor quality and ill-focused work that services to reinforce the perception that it is of little worth or relevance. The guidance emphasises the importance of the following in creating a strong organisational culture for effective scrutiny:

- a) Recognising scrutiny's legal and democratic legitimacy.
- b) Identifying a clear role and focus - this should include clear prioritisation to ensure that work is of genuine value and relevance and a clear division of responsibility between the scrutiny function and the audit function.
- c) Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny.
- d) Managing disagreement - whilst scrutiny has the power to "call in" decisions, this should not be a substitute for early involvement in the decision-making process.
- e) Providing the necessary support.
- f) Ensuring impartial advice from officers - the statutory governance officers and scrutiny officer have a particular role in ensuring that timely, relevant and high-quality advice is provided to scrutiny.
- g) Communicating scrutiny's role and purpose to the wider authority.
- h) Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee - the annual report being presented to full Council is a requirement, but consideration should be given to regular reports that supplement this annual report.
- i) Communicating scrutiny's role to the public.
- j) Ensuring scrutiny members are supported in having an independent mindset.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no Equality Impact Assessments required as a result of this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 At the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee for each municipal year the committee receives the draft Annual Scrutiny Report.
- 5.2 Annual reports are an opportunity to review the scrutiny work programme for the past year and assess the impact scrutiny has had on influencing policy. Looking at an annual report can help us to understand the nature of the work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny and to assess its effectiveness. It also gives an opportunity to reflect on any lessons learned during the year to help guide future work.
- 5.3 The production of an annual report is a constitutional requirement and in addition the committee "must report annually to the full council on future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate." The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is provided with a draft of the Annual Scrutiny Report which highlights some key achievements from the year where scrutiny has made a difference.
- 5.4 This year the structure of the report has been altered to try to focus on particular examples of effective scrutiny by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the three scrutiny panels.

6. **Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Local Authority, through its Overview and Scrutiny Function, has an influential, as well as statutory, role in scrutinising the activities and performance of the Cabinet and External Bodies. The Annual Scrutiny Report provides an opportunity to communicate the work the committee and its panels have undertaken, challenges faced and the improvements made as a result of scrutiny.

6. **Appendices Attached**

A Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22

7. **Background Papers**

None.

Draft Annual Scrutiny Report

2021/22

Chairs



Cllr Harjinder Gahir
Overview & Scrutiny
Committee



Cllr Ruqayah Begum
Customer &
Community Scrutiny
Panel



Cllr Naveeda Qaseem
People Scrutiny
Panel



Cllr Maroof Mohammad
Place Scrutiny Panel

Contents

Chair's Introduction	4
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	6
People Scrutiny Panel	8
Place Scrutiny Panel	10
Customer & Community Scrutiny Panel	12
Priorities for Improvement	16

4. Chair's Introduction



Cllr Harjinder Gahir
Chair

Overview & Scrutiny
Committee 2021/22

Page 62

I am pleased to present the Annual Scrutiny Report for the 2021/22 municipal year which summarises the work of my committee and its panels over the past year. It outlines our work, particularly on budget scrutiny.

It has been a very challenging year for the Council and for scrutiny itself with the removal of dedicated scrutiny resource in Our Futures, which has limited the scope of work we were able to carry out. Scrutiny needs to be properly valued and resourced to be effective and I hope this issue will be addressed for 2022/23.

Our focus this year has been to carry out the most extensive scrutiny of budget and savings proposals Slough has ever undertaken. This was achieved by dedicating eight of our eighteen meetings through the year to reviewing every directorate savings proposal to ensure they were deliverable and proportionate.

Other highlights included our constructive meeting with Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable and extensive pre-decision scrutiny of key issues such as the A4 bus lane, closure of day centres and library services, as well as prioritising performance reviews of services such as revenues and benefits and housing repairs.

I have sought to ensure our meetings are positive and forward looking which give Members the opportunity to ask the key questions and hopefully contribute to better decision making. By regularly attended Cabinet meetings I've sought to strengthen the links between scrutiny and the Executive to make sure our voice has been heard.

I would like to thank all the members of the Committee and scrutiny panels for their work. There is much still to do and I hope we have laid a platform during this transitional year to build the much needed effective scrutiny function this Council needs in the future.

5. 2021/22 Scrutiny Summary and Highlights

May 2021

- Council agrees a new scrutiny panel structure to reflect the new directorates of People, Place and Customer & Community.
- New chairs were elected for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and all three scrutiny panels.

June/July 2021

- Scrutiny training and chairing skills training was held.
- First scheduled scrutiny meetings of the year were cancelled in the run up to and during the issuing of the Section 114 notice.

September 2021

- Scrutiny meetings return to business as usual with a busy programme of meetings. In the period to the end of the year pre-decision scrutiny was carried out on the Adult Social Care provider services review, housing repairs contract, library service review and A4 bus lane.

October/ December 2021

- The O&S Committee and all panels were refocused on the most detailed scrutiny of the budget and directorate savings proposals ever carried out by Slough Borough Council.

January 2022

- Annual meeting to scrutinise the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable was held in January 2021.
- Further round of budget scrutiny of directorate savings proposals.
- Centre for Governance and Scrutiny commence Scrutiny Improvement Review.

March 2022

- Overview & Scrutiny scrutinise the final budget reports.
- Annual scrutiny survey and review commences.

April 2022

- Total of 18 formal and panel meetings held through the year, plus a series of pre-meetings, training and workshops.

6. Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Highlight – budget consultation

Meeting: Thursday 4th November 2021:

- The early opportunity to scrutinise the budget position and savings proposals was welcomed. There were a total of 8 meetings dedicated to scrutinising the budget proposals across the Council and individual directorates.
- The Committee reviewed corporate services and raised concerns about issues including: the contract procedures and costs of the externalised procurement function; the weaknesses in subsidiary company governance; and the robustness of plans for debt recovery.

Page 64

- The Committee generally agreed the corporate savings proposed for 2022/23, but also emphasised the importance of ensuring adequate resources to bring key corporate services, including finance, IT and HR to the required standard to support the Council to deliver its services and wider strategic plans.

Meeting: Tuesday 8th March 2022

- The Committee scrutinised all the budget reports prior to Cabinet and Council approval. The Lead Member and Director of Finance were questioned on the overall budget strategy and robustness of the savings plans.

7. Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Areas scrutinised in 2021/22 by the committee:

- Joint scrutiny with Customer & Community Panel on the housing repairs contract
- Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring
- The work of the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner & Chief Constable
- The Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Treasury Management Strategy
- ICT Improvement Programme
- Nova House Update
- Annual report to scrutiny from Slough Children First
- Petitions received and the annual petitions report

8. People Scrutiny Panel

Highlight – budget scrutiny

Meeting: Thursday 11th November 2021

- The Panel reviewed the People directorate savings proposals and large parts of the discussion focused on the risk of the Council not meeting its statutory duties with respect to some adults and children's services.

The SEND inspection was raised and Members emphasised the importance of ensuring robust action was taken to address the weaknesses identified.

- Members highlighted the risk that some service reductions, e.g. children's centres, could lead to pressures elsewhere in the system. A comprehensive plan was needed to manage these risks so that sustainable savings could be delivered.

Meeting: Monday 31st January 2022

- An update was provided on the Provider Services Review and Members were assured that the service users had all been reassessed and the planned savings had been achieved.
- The response to the SEND inspection report would require adequate resources to be put in place and this was supported by the Panel.
- The Panel also discussed demand pressures, placement costs and the work taking place on the permanent recruitment of social workers to seek to reduce agency spend.

9. People Scrutiny Panel

Areas scrutinised in 2021/22 by the panel:

- Adult Social Care provider services review including the closure of day centres
- Draft Health and Care Plan for Slough
- Directorate budget proposals from the adults and children's People directorates and Slough Children First
- Slough Children First in year performance update
- Annual safeguarding report
- SEND written statement of action
- Procurement of ASC domiciliary care contracts

10. Place Scrutiny Panel

Highlight – budget scrutiny

Meeting: Wednesday 1st December 2021

- The savings proposals in the former Place directorate were reviewed and Members focused on two key themes – generating additional income and service reductions in some areas.
- The Panel considered how savings to street cleansing and grass/hedge cutting could be achieved whilst maintaining acceptable service levels.
- Members agreed with the proposal to generate income through renting space in buildings and broadly accepted the increased waste charges on the basis it was not expected this would increase fly-tipping.

Meeting: Wednesday 12th January 2022

- Consideration was given to the emerging Place directorate restructure and the Panel requested a further update report to a future meeting.
- The Panel raised some concern about the proposed changes to bulky waste discount charges, although it was recognised that this would bring Slough more into line with other nearby local authorities. The Panel requested that the Director give further consideration to the eligibility criteria for discounted collections prior to any final charging structure being adopted.

11. Place Scrutiny Panel

Further areas scrutinised in 2021/22 by the panel:

- Air quality and health
- Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report
- The Adult Social Care Local Account
- The implementation of the recommendations of the Disability Task and Finish Group
- The future plans for the East Berkshire CCG
- GP provision
- Immunisations and screening
- Mental health
- The Frimley Health and Care System Annual Plan
- The Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Annual Plan
- The Adult Social Care Strategy & Budget
- The Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service

12. Customer & Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Highlight – Budget scrutiny

Meeting: Tuesday 9th November 2021

- The Panel reviewed the initial savings proposals in what was the former Customer & Community Directorate, particularly the details of the proposed £400,000 library savings. A full report on the public consultation results was considered by the Panel.
- Members expressed significant concern about the proposal to stop the community development and youth work services and asked that the alternative funding be vigorously pursued to seek to continue these services.
- Members also raised concern about the proposal to cease free leisure passes for looked after children in 2021/22 and swimming for over 65s.

Meeting: Tuesday 25th January 2022

- The Panel was updated on the proposed savings for community development services and welcomed the £90,000 funding secured for health related community development work but was concerned that funding had not been identified for the youth work team and youth voice. Members asked that continued efforts be made to try to seek alternative funding sources.
- Members commented on a number of other specific savings proposals including the leisure contract management fee, addressing problems in customer services and rough sleepers.

13. Customer & Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Areas scrutinised in 2021/22 by the panel:

- Library Service consultation results and service plan
- Repairs, Maintenance & Investment contract, jointly with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Performance update of the Revenues & Benefits Service
- Budget proposals for the Customer & Community Directorate
- HRA Rents and Service Charges
- Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods progress report
- Learning, Skills and Employment Ofsted report
- Council call centre performance

14. 2021/22 Attendance and Training Summary

Members attendance record

Overview & Scrutiny		
Councillor	Expected	Attended
Gahir	5	5
Matloob	5	5
Bal	2	2
Basra	5	1
Dhaliwal	5	3
Hussain	5	0
Kaur	5	5
Malik	5	5
Sharif	4	4
Smith	5	5

People		
Councillor	Expected	Attended
Qaseem	4	4
Kelly	4	4
Ajaib	4	3
Basra	4	4
Begum	4	4
Brooker	4	2
Matloob	4	4
Mohammad	4	4
Sandhu	4	4

Place		
Councillor	Expected	Attended
Mohammad	3	3
Strutton	3	3
Bal	3	2
A Cheema	3	2
H Cheema	3	2
R Davis	3	2
Gill	3	3
Grewal	3	2
Minhas	3	2

Customer & Community		
Councillor	Expected	Attended
Begum	4	3
Muvvala	4	4
Ajaib	4	3
Ali	4	3
Hussain	4	0
Kaur	4	3
Minhas	4	4
Mohammad	4	4
Sandhu	4	3

15. 2021/22 Attendance and Training Summary

Training Record

- **Annual scrutiny training held on 17th June 2021.** The session was delivered by an industry recognised external provider and 16 councillors from the Committee and Panels attended.
- **Committee chairing skills training was held on 14th June 2021.** All 4 scrutiny chairs were present and 3 of the 4 vice-chairs attended the training.
- **Scrutiny chairs training session was held in January 2022.** This session was facilitated by the LGA.
- Individual support has included an LGA mentor for the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

16. Priorities for 2022/23

The Council recognises the importance of developing an effective scrutiny function and will be producing an action plan in accordance with Directions to the Authority. This will draw upon the recommendations of the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny review expected shortly.

This work, and the annual members scrutiny survey, highlight a number of areas for improvement:

- Improved work programming which is aligned to the Council's recovery and improvement plans and the Cabinet forward plan.
- Building on the enhanced scrutiny training delivered in 2021/22.
- Continuing the good practice of full and detailed budget scrutiny including monitoring the delivery of 2022/23 savings and proposals for 2023/24.
- More pre-meetings and preparation by restoring dedicated officer support for the scrutiny function.

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7th April, 2022

CONTACT OFFICER: Nicholas Pontone, Democratic Services Lead
(For all Enquiries) 07749 709 868

WARDS: All

**PART I
FOR INFORMATION****ANNUAL PETITIONS REPORTS 2021/22****1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with details of the Annual Petitions Report for information.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the Annual Petitions Report 2021/22.

Commissioners Review:

Commissioners have reviewed and noted this report.

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

Overview and Scrutiny is a process by which decision-makers are accountable to local people, via their elected representatives for improving outcomes relating to all priorities for the Borough and its residents. Scrutiny seeks to influence those who make decisions by considering the major issues affecting the Borough and making recommendations about how services can be improved.

4. Other Implications**(a) Financial**

There are no financial implications of this report.

(b) Risk Management

None associated with this report.

(c) Legal Implications

None associated with this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

None associated with this report.

4. **Supporting Information**

4.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, an annual summary detailing all petitions submitted under the Petitions Scheme is reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 For the period 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022 a total of 12 petitions were received - 6 paper petitions and 6 e-petitions on the Council website. The table below summarises the subject matter and total number of signatures received for each petition.

Paper Petition Title	Signatures
21-06 - Against New Parking Restrictions - Scholars Walk	15
21-07 - Cippenham Lane Parking Restrictions - 30 Minutes Limit	36
21-08 - Parking Issues - Broad Oak Court	29
21-09 - Public Footpath Obstruction at 111 & 161 Tamar Way	10
21-10 - Increase in Residents Parking Permits - Kings Road	11
21-11 - Arthur Road Residents Only Parking Scheme	16

Date Range: 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022 - 6 – ePetitions

ePetitions Title	Signatures
Petition to Reject The Planning Application (Ref: P/07584/011) For The Stoke Wharf Development Project in Slough, which will be Redeveloping The Bowyers Recreation Ground and The Surrounding Areas and to Save The Bowyers Recreation Grounds from being Destroyed	228
Slough Hockey Club Official Objection to Slough Cricket Clubs 3rd Pitch Planning Application	383
Support Slough Cricket Clubs 3rd Pitch Planning Application Number- P/10482/013	438
Resignation or Vote of No Confidence	1, 112
Abandon Planned Closure of Day Centres	804
St Mary's Road Speeding	0

4.3 Responses to the petitions are detailed in Appendix A.

4.4 The number of petitions received in 2021/22 is significantly lower than the previous year (12 in 2021/22 compared to 26 in 2020/21), as set out in the table below.

Year	Paper petitions	E-petitions	Total petitions
2017/18	23	4	27
2018/19	25	4	29
2019/20	18	2	20
2020/21	16	10	26
2021/22	6	6	12

4.5 Whilst Covid restrictions limited the ability of petitioners to collect paper petition signatures during the year, this does not explain the reduction in total petitions as similar restrictions were in place through much of the previous year as well. The number of e-petitions is broadly average was previous years.

4.6 Two petitions reached the threshold of over 750 signatures for consideration at a scrutiny meeting. These included the closure of day centres at which the petitioners addressed the People Scrutiny Panel in September 2021 prior to scrutiny of the proposed closure.

4.7 In view of the reduction in the number of paper petitions submitted this year, Democratic Services will carefully monitor the number submitted in 2022/23 to determine whether this is a sustained fall and the Petition Scheme will be reviewed later in the year.

5. **Conclusion**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members are requested to note details of the report.

6. **Appendix Attached**

A - Annual Petitions Report 2021/22

7. **Background Papers**

None.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Annual Petition Summary Report

Date Range: 1st April, 2021 to 31st March, 2022

6 - Paper Petitions

6 - ePetitions

Page 79

Paper Petition Title	Signatures	Date Responded / Response
21-06 - Against New Parking Restrictions - Scholars Walk	15	<p>18th April, 2021</p> <p>Initial Response: Thank you for submitting the attached petition in response to the proposed scheme for Scholars Walk, I will ensure this is formally logged. The consultation will be ending on Friday 19th March, 2021 and after this date all the correspondence received will be analysed and a decision will be made on the next steps.</p> <p>Full Response: I would like to inform you that we have analysed all the feedback received during the consultation period and a collective decision has been made with your ward Councillor to not proceed with this scheme to implementation stage. We will however continue to monitor any complaints received for this location and liaise with your ward Councillors accordingly.</p>
21-07 - Cippenham Lane Parking Restrictions - 30 Minutes Limit	36	<p>2nd June, 2021</p> <p>I would like to inform you that we have analysed all the feedback received during the consultation period and a collective decision has been made with your ward Councillors to amend our original proposal to accommodate the feedback received.</p> <p>Please see below the amended plan showing the scheme that is to be implemented in the coming weeks.</p>
21-08 - Parking Issues - Broad Oak Court	29	<p>10th June, 2021</p> <p>Thank you for submitting a petition to us that requested for residential permit parking. I have investigated the issues that residents are facing and the request for permit parking. We receive a large volume of similar type of requests for a controlled parking zone (CPZ) from all over the Borough. Since we are only able to work on a limited number of such parking schemes each year there is various requirements which must be met in order for one to be considered and we often try to discourage the implementation of permit zones covering just one road as best practice is to cover a number of roads within a zone. Unfortunately proposing permit parking on just one road would actually exacerbate the issues at this location, this is mostly due to the road containing many flats which would actually imbalance the roads parking.</p> <p>As parking on the footway at this location would not be encouraged due to its narrow width, we would only consider the bays that are offset in front of the properties and those spaces which can park fully on the carriageway without obstruction. With this said, there are only 24 marked spaces and approx. 8-10 on-street spaces. We have 40 properties on record, which is over what would be</p>

		deemed as acceptable. As car ownership numbers often increase throughout time, these figures would unfortunately not provide for a successful scheme and we therefore would have to reject the request on these grounds.
21-09 - Public Footpath Obstruction at 111 & 161 Tamar Way	10	<p>9th August, 2021</p> <p>I have been liaising with our NET team and we now have a letter that can be sent out to residents as there is a set procedure that must be followed before any action can be taken by our NET team to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, I have copied my Inspector into this response so he can contact you direct to arrange a site meeting on the next steps as resources are limited and you have mentioned you are happy to assist where possible.</p> <p>I have also spoken with our Communications team and they will be looking to place a message on relevant web pages as a kind reminder to residents to pull their bins in after collection days.</p>
21-10 - Increase in Residents Parking Permits - Kings Road	11	<p>5th August, 2021</p> <p>As advised in the letter to all resident permit holders in the Borough the resident parking permit charges have not been reviewed since 2003 and the number of controlled parking zones and cost to provide and support this service has increased over the last 18 years. We believe the new charges are reasonable and fair and will support the enforcement and maintenance of the controlled parking zones in the Borough.</p>
21-11 - Arthur Road Residents Only Parking Scheme	16	<p>5th January, 2022.</p> <p>Thank you for the petition received on 7th December, 2021 requesting a resident's permit scheme in Arthur Road. Firstly please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in acknowledging this petition, as mentioned with limited staffing resource we are delayed with responses.</p> <p>You have requested a Residents Parking Scheme to be implemented for Arthur Road only, when looking to implement any scheme within the borough the Councils policy is to consider what other restrictions are in place in the surrounding area and if such schemes can be implemented alone or should be combined with other roads. However this piece of work will be undertaken as part of the survey the Engineer would conduct at the time, including looking at kerb capacity, number of households, effect on surrounding roads etc.</p> <p>Due to the current financial position of the Council unfortunately, we do not have the funding or resources to consider this scheme at this time and it has been placed on our forward plan and will be consider in the new financial year when potential new funding is available. We will write to all residents in the ward, and consult with Ward Councillors when the scheme is ready for consultation and formal representation can be submitted.</p>

ePetition Title	Signatures	Date Responded / Response
Petition to Reject The Planning Application (Ref: P/07584/011) For The Stoke Wharf Development Project in Slough, which will be Redeveloping The Bowyers Recreation Ground and The Surrounding Areas and to Save The	228	<p>5th May, 2021</p> <p>I refer to the recent Petition to Reject The Planning Application (Ref: P/07584/011) For The Stoke Wharf Development Project in Slough, which will be Redeveloping The Bowyers Recreation Ground and The Surrounding Areas and to Save The Bowyers Recreation Grounds from being Destroyed.</p>

Bowyers Recreation Grounds from being Destroyed

As you know, this ePetition was active from 20th January to Tuesday 9th February this year. The Planning Application that the petition relates to was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 10th February, when members resolved to approve the application subject to:

1. Referral to the Planning Casework Unit for the casework team to decide if the application would be called in either for decision by the Secretary of State, or the application remained to be decided by the Local Planning Authority.
- 2 The receipt of formal amended plans for consultation.
- 3 Consultation by site notice with residents and Ward Members (Central and Elliman by email) on the amended plans referred to in the Amendment Sheet.
- 4 Completion of the Section 106 Agreement.
- 5 Agreement of pre-commencement conditions.
- 6 Any changes to conditions.

With regards to the above points, I can provide you with the following update:

1. We will be writing formally to the Planning Casework Unit to refer the application the Secretary of State. Meanwhile we have been are keeping the Planning Casework Unit up-to-date on progress with the application. I understand that the decision as to whether or not the application will be called in by the Secretary of State will be made when the Council is ready to issue its decision.
- 2 Amended plans and a Design and Access Addendum were submitted to the Council on 24th and 25th February.
- 3 Site notices were placed at 18 locations around the site, on 3rd March, with a consultation end date of 24th March. Ward Councillors have been advised of the reconsultation, and the application was also advertised in the Slough Express on 3rd March, with a 21 day period for written submissions.
- 4 The Councils legal team has been instructed on preparation of a Section 106 Agreement legal agreement, which will secure funding for local infrastructure made necessary by the development.
- 5 The exact text of Pre-commencement conditions has yet to be agreed with the developer and work is-going on this. It is expected that the text for these conditions will be substantially the same

		<p>as in the Committee report.</p> <p>6 We will be working on the conditions with the applicant; however it is expected that the text for other conditions will also be substantially the same as in the Committee report and amendment sheet.</p> <p>Please note that the Committee report, the amendment sheet and confirmed minutes can be accessed via the following link:</p> <p>Planning Committee Report</p> <p>I trust that this is of assistance.</p>
Slough Hockey Club Official Objection to Slough Cricket Clubs 3rd Pitch Planning Application	383	<p>19th May, 2021</p> <p>The Council note the issues raised within the petition and objections received in relation to the application. These matters will be discussed within the officers report.</p>
Support Slough Cricket Clubs 3rd Pitch Planning Application Number- P/10482/013	438	<p>Due 24th May, 2021</p> <p>Planning to send this response to publish to the Council website.</p>
Resignation or Vote of No Confidence	1,112	<p>Due 19th August, 2021</p> <p>The petition requested the resignation or vote of no confidence in the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>Following a motion proposed by the requisite number of councillors, a vote of no confidence in the Leader of the Council was held at Council in July 2021.</p> <p>The petition was discussed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2021.</p>
Abandon Planned Closure of Day Centres	804	<p>16th September, 2021</p> <p>The contents of the petition 'Abandon planned closure of day centres' have been noted.</p> <p>It is recognised that people with learning disabilities and autism are some of the most vulnerable members of the community and that carers require assistance to enable them to continue to support their loved one.</p> <p>The e-petition highlights the importance of social interaction, fun, learning, safety, stability, and reliability as well as breaks for carers.</p> <p>We are confident that we can work with local people to identify ways to achieve these outcomes that do not include the council directly providing the services.</p> <p>Subject to Cabinet agreement, all people who use the services affected will be involved in a full assessment of need and go through the process of working with professionals and providers in the wider market to identify ways to meet assessed need. This process will include Carers Assessment.</p>

		<p>We are also keen to work with existing and new providers to co-produce personalised outcomes with people and this will form an important part of our support planning process.</p> <p>We are committed to enabling vulnerable people and their carers to achieve personalised outcomes via solutions they have been part of the design of.</p>
St Mary's Road Speeding	0	Nobody signed this ePetition.

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MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD 2021/22
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR	10/06/21 Cancelled*	13/07/21 Cancelled	16/09/21	04/11/21	13/01/21	08/03/22 Re-arranged from 17/02/22	17/03/22 Cancelled for informal s106 workshop	07/04/22
Gahir (Chair)			P	P	P	P		
Matloob (Vice-Chair)			P	P	P	P		
Bal **			P					
Basra			P	Ap	Ap	Ap		
Dhaliwal			P	Ap	P	Ab		
Hussain			Ap	Ap	Ab	Ab		
Kaur			P	P	P	P		
Malik			P	P	P	P		
Sharif **				P	P	P		
Smith			P	P	P	P		

P = Present for whole meeting P* = Present for part of meeting Ap = Apologies given Ab = Absent, no apologies given

* The Committee meeting scheduled on 10th June 2021 was technically cancelled as the only formal item of business is appointments to the scrutiny panels and these had been made at Annual Council to reduce the need for a formal in person meeting during Covid-19 restrictions. This meeting is usually combined with O&S training which took place online on 17th June 2021

** Councillor Sharif replaced Councillor Bal on the Committee from 23rd September 2021

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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