

Slough Borough Council

Corporate Plan

2012 - 2013

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	160212	1 st draft for CMT consultation
2	030312	Incorporates CMT comments for SMT discussion
3	170412	Includes feedback from directorates
4	120512	Revised vision statement
5	260612	Amendments prior to CMT consideration
6	050712	Cabinet version
7	060712	With Leader's Foreword

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Message from the Leader of the Council

There often exists a utilitarian view of local authorities, as simply there to resurface roads, collect bins and plant flower beds. The council does all these things and does them well but there should also be an aspiration to take the decisions which can improve the lives of the local community. This was epitomised in the late 19th century municipal boom which delivered magnificent infrastructure and a new era of public services and spaces. From April 2013 councils will regain responsibility for public health, as well as additional new freedoms as part of the Government's Localism Act, which will allow councils to react more flexibly in response to the needs of the community.

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the priorities for the town based around themes of economy and skills, health and wellbeing, housing, regeneration and environment and safer communities. These priorities were agreed in 2011 following consultation with partners and residents through Slough Forward, the predecessor to the Slough Wellbeing Board. This Corporate Plan complements the Sustainable Community Strategy and establishes what the council will do to deliver on these priorities.

It has been a challenging few years for the public sector, with substantial cuts to funding. The needs of the local population however, remain the same. The council has therefore had to rethink the way it delivers services to ensure they reach those in most need, and deliver the best outcomes, within the resources available. As a result of the difficult decisions the council has taken, our services are now more focussed and efficient. The council has also been careful to ensure that dealing with the cuts to our funding has not become a distraction from delivering what residents really want.

Slough's success is the ability with which it reinvents itself to meet the current needs of its population and business. As a council we want to nurture that skill. We have a vibrant and resilient economy which is vital to the ongoing wellbeing of our population. Work remains to be done, with the completion of the Heart of Slough regeneration as well as in our neighbourhoods, we will continue to focus service delivery to those who need it most, and to look at the way the council operates to take advantage of innovative delivery.

This Corporate Plan shows how, as a council, we will remain focussed on our priorities, shaped by residents, and continue to deliver high quality services that local people value and expect.

Cllr Rob Anderson
Leader Slough Borough Council

About Slough

Slough is a predominantly urban area within the south east which is officially home to 131,100 people. However, we know that the actual figure is much higher as should be evidenced when the 2011 Census data is published (initial results in summer 2012). This growing population which includes a large number of new arrivals, not only to the town, but to the country, is very diverse. This diversity is a strength and we are proud of the way communities work together in a positive way, but the demands on council services have also posed some difficulties in managing scarce and diminishing resources.

Using the 2001 Census as a base the borough is estimated to have a 36% ethnic minority population, but this is now believed to be much too low and could be as high as 50% (as evidenced in our school population). Again we will know more when the Census results are published.

The town has tremendous assets notably the excellent road, rail and air transport infrastructure and the numbers of national and international business headquarters.

However, some significant challenges remain, to:

- Improve the skills of local people
- Improve housing quality, availability and affordability
- Improve the health of local people
- Reduce traffic congestion and pollution
- Build an attractive local environment
- Reduce crime and the fear of crime
- Maintain strong community cohesion

More information about the strengths and challenges of the borough is available in the 'Slough Story' which includes key statistics and information about Slough and is available on the Council's website at <http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/slough-story.aspx>

About this Plan

This Corporate Plan runs from 2012 - 2013 and sets out the Council's political and managerial objectives. These complement the priorities we have agreed with our partners for the town as a whole as expressed in our Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision and is an important part of our business planning and the way that we manage our performance, linking the Council's vision and priorities to the everyday activities of our staff. It sets out our key priorities and explains what we are doing to ensure that the organisation works more effectively so that our services can make a difference. Our service plans, which guide our day to day activity, link into this plan.

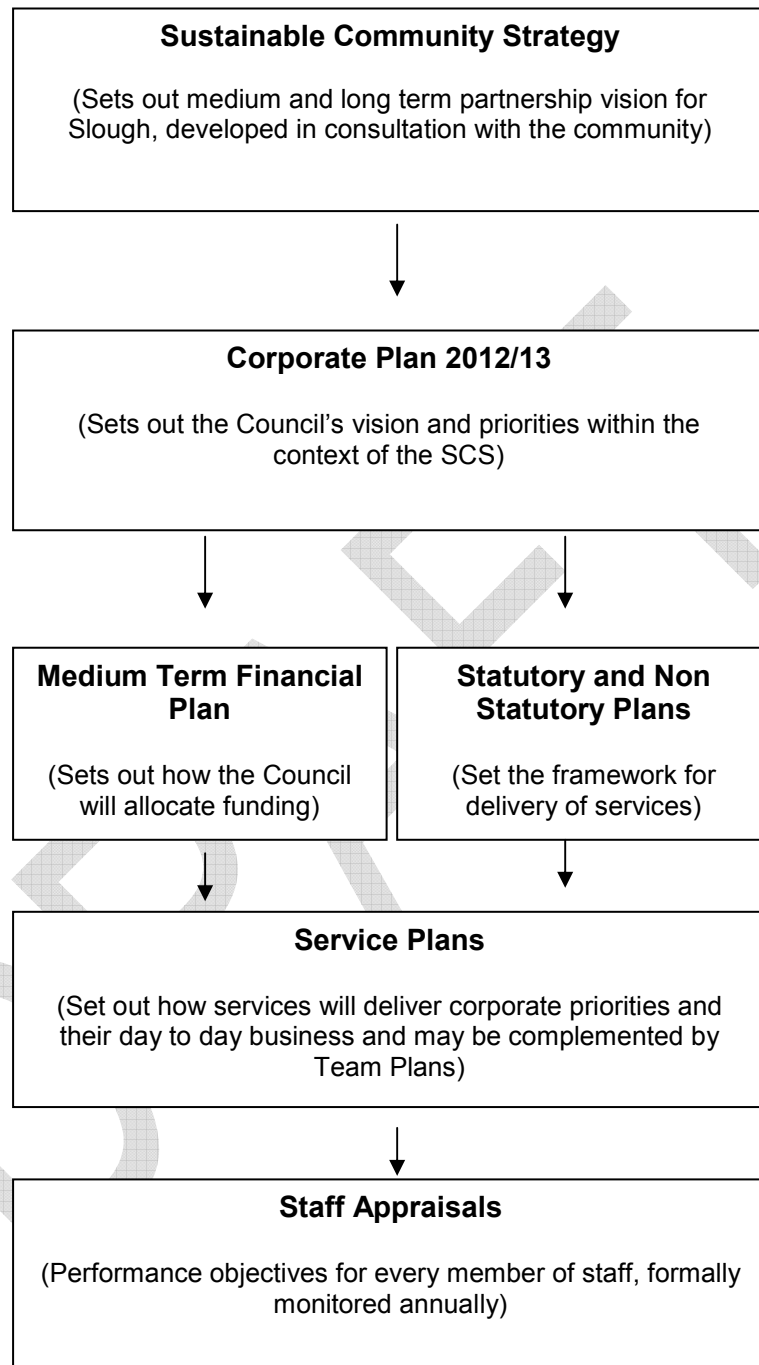
The Corporate Plan and the business planning process provide a mechanism to consider competing demands on the Council's resources and agree how these will be prioritised. The Corporate Plan focuses on key areas of activity with corporate importance and other activity will be set out in service plans.

This Plan forms part of the 'golden thread', the way in which our corporate, service and financial planning is aligned (see diagram below). We manage performance through monthly assessment of progress on our 'gold' projects (the most important projects being managed by the Council, ranging from infrastructure to change projects, see list in Appendix A) and through a balanced scorecard of performance measures under the quadrants of people, volume, quality and outcomes.

There are a range of statutory and non-statutory plans and strategies which guide service delivery, the main ones are listed in Appendix A.

We also produce the Annual Report which looks back on progress during the previous year and reports on the performance of our services.

The 'Golden Thread'



A Vision for Slough and the Sustainable Community Strategy

“People are proud to live in Slough where diversity is celebrated and where residents can enjoy fulfilling, prosperous and healthy lives.”

Our vision for Slough is shared with our public, private, voluntary and community sector partners and is set out in our Sustainable Community Strategy. This vision was developed after the council and its partners spent nearly a year talking to local people, public, private and voluntary sector agencies to identify and agree our long term vision and ambitions for the future. It was reviewed in 2011 and the refreshed five priorities supporting the vision are:

- **Economy and Skills**
By 2028, Slough will be an accessible location, competitive on the world stage with a sustainable and varied business sector and strong knowledge economy, supported by a local workforce who have the skills to meet local businesses' changing needs.
- **Health and Wellbeing**
By 2028, Slough will be healthier, with reduced inequalities, improved wellbeing and opportunities for our residents to live positive, active independent lives.
- **Housing**
By 2028 Slough will possess a strong, attractive and balanced housing market which recognises the importance of housing in supporting economic growth.
- **Regeneration and Environment**
By 2028, Slough will be distinctive from our competitors, harnessing the diversity and creativity of our people and our cultural and physical fabric to create an attractive local environment for our residents and businesses.
- **Safer Communities**
By 2028, Slough will have levels of crime and disorder that are not significantly higher than in any other town in the Thames Valley. Agencies will be working collaboratively to address the underlying causes of crime and communities will feel safe and able to play an active part in making Slough a better place to live, work and visit.

There are also two cross-cutting themes:

- Civic responsibility
- Improving the image of the town

The Sustainable Community Strategy priorities also relate closely to the summarised Joint Strategic Needs Assessment priorities:

- Reduce inequalities in health
- Reduce adult and childhood obesity
- Improve the quality and availability of housing and environment for Slough residents
- Increase skills and employment opportunities
- Reduce violent crime, domestic abuse and sexual abuse
- Early intervention to reduce child poverty and improve child safety
- Reduce the impact of mental illness
- Early diagnosis of long term conditions

During 2012 we will be developing our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (called the Slough Wellbeing Strategy) and our aim is to merge this with the Sustainable Community Strategy to form our overarching strategic plan with partners.

The Council's Vision and Objectives

Our Three Year Plan

Slough is a place of opportunities and challenges, unlike anywhere else in the south east. Our vision is of a Council that can continue to adapt to and lead change, though new ways of working and commissioning services.

We want Slough Borough Council to be an organisation that continues to deliver high quality services to meet local needs, through a committed and capable workforce and partnerships that provide value for money for our customers. We want the Council to be the force that drives the borough's continued success – ensuring that Slough's residents can contribute to and benefit from our opportunities.

Over the next three years we will move to a more mixed form of service provision, with more commissioned services delivered by partners, contractors and the voluntary sector, and fewer directly staff employed directly by the Council.

We will recruit flexible and adaptable staff who already have the skills we will need, including commissioning, entrepreneurial, commercial, change, and transformational leadership. We will develop those skills further where needed to ensure we can deliver our objectives.

The people we employ and work through will reflect the local community in ethnicity, age and gender. We will work hard to ensure that local people have the skills to compete for our jobs wherever possible. Our employees will be committed to promoting and improving equality in employment and passionate about excellent customer service, meeting customers' needs, and responding to their feedback. They will work hard to know our communities so that we have better understanding of current and future local needs. They will be adaptable, able to respond quickly and effectively to changes in service demand. They will be excellent communicators; able to explain what we do and why we do it to manage community expectations within available resources.

The way we employ people will need to change to support this vision for our people. We will put in place increased flexibility in working patterns and arrangements including working hours, fixed term contracts, use of temporary staff and home working. We will need to develop succession planning and talent management particularly in areas where high turnover is expected; and address the causes of relatively high sickness and low and high turnover in some services. These are the foundations we will build to enable our people to build the vision we share.

To deliver this vision and in addition to the Sustainable Community Strategy's five priorities, the Council has its own objectives which will shape its work over the next two years:

1. Improve customer experience
2. Deliver high quality services to meet local needs
3. Develop new ways of working
4. Deliver local and national change
5. Develop a skilled and capable workforce
6. Achieve value for money

We have also agreed a set of Values which set out the culture of the organisation and which are included in Appendix A.

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1. Improve the Customer Experience

The Council has agreed a customer focus programme which aims to improve customer satisfaction with access to our services, improve the quality of response across all access channels and increase access to “self-service” information, automating transactions where appropriate.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Bring all services' duty desks and first line enquiries into My Council (the Council's frontline face to face and telephone point of contact)
- Work with service areas to ensure that customers' telephone inquiries are responded to and reduce repeat calls
- Ensure that all customer service advisers are trained and supported to resolve more calls when a first inquiry is made
- Launch a new council website to help customers get information and services and to increase the range of online transactions
- Develop a strategy to encourage more customers to use the website and telephone rather than visiting the council
- Agree a Community Engagement Strategy and guidance for staff
- Develop more opportunities for customers to provide service feedback and respond to suggestions for service improvement
- Work with health services to improve the customer experience across health and social care.

2. Deliver High Quality Services and Facilities to Meet Local Needs

The Council aims to deliver high quality services that meet the diverse needs of local people despite reduced resources and will look for opportunities to regenerate and improve Slough.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Continue to deliver the Britwell Regeneration programme including the Britwell Hub, new housing and shops
- Develop other community hubs to bring services closer to residents
- Invest in neighbourhood environmental and community safety improvements
- Implement the School Places Project to meet the demand for school places
- Deliver personalised social care services
- Increase family placements to improve fostering and adoption outcomes

- Respond to the Raising Participation Age to ensure that young people recognise the opportunities of continuing in education
- Raise achievement for the youngest children
- Improve the skills of local people and access to work including via apprenticeships and the Aspire project with private and public sector partners
- Increase opportunities for participation in sport

3. Develop new ways of working

The Council will continue to look for new ways of providing high quality services and making best use of our resources through partnerships and outsourcing.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Launch the Thames Valley Transactional Services Centre in April 2012
- Consider whether to agree a Local Asset Backed Vehicle, which would involve a partnership to maintain and develop our building and land assets
- Consider social enterprise as a means to provide social care and other Council services
- Review whether other Council services are suitable for partnerships and outsourcing.

4. Deliver Local and National Change and Improvement

The Council needs to ensure that all services identify areas where they need to improve and put plans in place to do so. There are also many local and national changes including new statutory requirements, which we need to respond to.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Implement the Children's Safeguarding Improvement Plan.
- Agree and implement a Public Health Transition Plan
- Develop the Slough Wellbeing Board (Health and Wellbeing Board) while in its shadow formation including its sub-structure
- Agree a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Use the opportunities provided by the Localism Act to improve services for local people and be more responsive to communities aspirations
- Increase the range of social care services that are provided jointly by the Council and NHS
- Commission the new Healthwatch body to give local people a voice in the provision of health and social care
- Invest in transport infrastructure to improve communication links

- Coordinate activity in the town centre to improve the retail offer, including via the appointment of a town centre manager

5. Develop a Skilled and Capable Workforce

The Council's staff are our most important resource and we need to attract the best staff to Slough and develop them while they are here, both to deliver the highest quality services and to retain good staff.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Agree a Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy and an action plan to implement the Strategy's objectives.

6. Achieve value for money

More than ever the Council needs to ensure value for money, make the most effective use of its resources, identify savings, increase income and ensure that budget variances are monitored tightly during each financial year.

During 2012/13 we will:

- Continue to implement our Accommodation Strategy to reduce building maintenance costs
- Review, redesign and where appropriate de-commission major contracts and commissioned services to ensure value for money
- Implement year one of our new three year Procurement Strategy which will provide savings and improve the way we procure and commission services
- Develop joint commissioning opportunities with the NHS and other partners
- Reshape our capital programme to ensure we make best use of capital resources
- Reduce staff agency costs
- Implement a revised approach to business continuity planning to ensure that we have recovery plans if services are lost
- Improve the way that we manage projects to ensure that resources are used effectively and costs are minimised
- Complete reorganisation of the Council's structure to reduce costs and improve efficiency
- Develop and publish equalities monitoring information to meet statutory requirements
- Implement the Income Collection and Debt Recovery Policy to improve performance in these areas.

Finance

The Council has agreed a Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012/13 – 2015/16. The strategy delivers the Council's objective to secure a sustainable balanced budget position across the medium term. In so doing a balanced budget position is presented across a five year period, accommodating both clearly identified savings and known future challenges.

Members of the Council are drivers of budget policy and have set clear objectives for community and service priorities:

- Protecting front line services
- Investing in service improvements to secure improved quality
- Maintaining and increasing employment opportunities in the town
- Providing capital investment for major regeneration, housing and infrastructure schemes
- Investing in local community priorities
- Increasing general fund balances to provide improved financial security in the current economic climate
- Delivering savings requirements resulting from national government cuts in public sector spending
- Accommodating the withdrawal of government subsidy for housing stock.

Each year, the Council must prepare a budget that fulfils five main purposes:

- To set the level of Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year;
- To prioritise resources;
- To authorise expenditure;
- To provide a base to control expenditure and income;
- To establish targets against which performance and achievements can be measured.

Budget Timetable

February to April	Council agrees general revenue budget framework; capital budget framework; associated council tax levels; and treasury management policy.
April/May	Council tax and non-domestic rate bills are despatched. Work commences on next year's revenue and capital budget frameworks.
August/September	Financial Reviews (i.e. Fees and Charges, Option Appraisals, Growth and Savings options).
October	Financial Reviews (i.e. Fees and Charges, Option Appraisals, Growth and Savings options).
November/December	Financial Reviews (i.e. Fees and Charges, Option Appraisals, Growth and Savings options).
December	Government publishes provisional local authority funding

levels for next year for consultation.

Precepts announced by Parish Councils.

Council tax-base and collection fund surplus/deficit calculated.

January

Financial reviews completed.

Government publishes final local authority funding levels for next year.

February

Council housing rent and Housing Revenue Account business plan review.

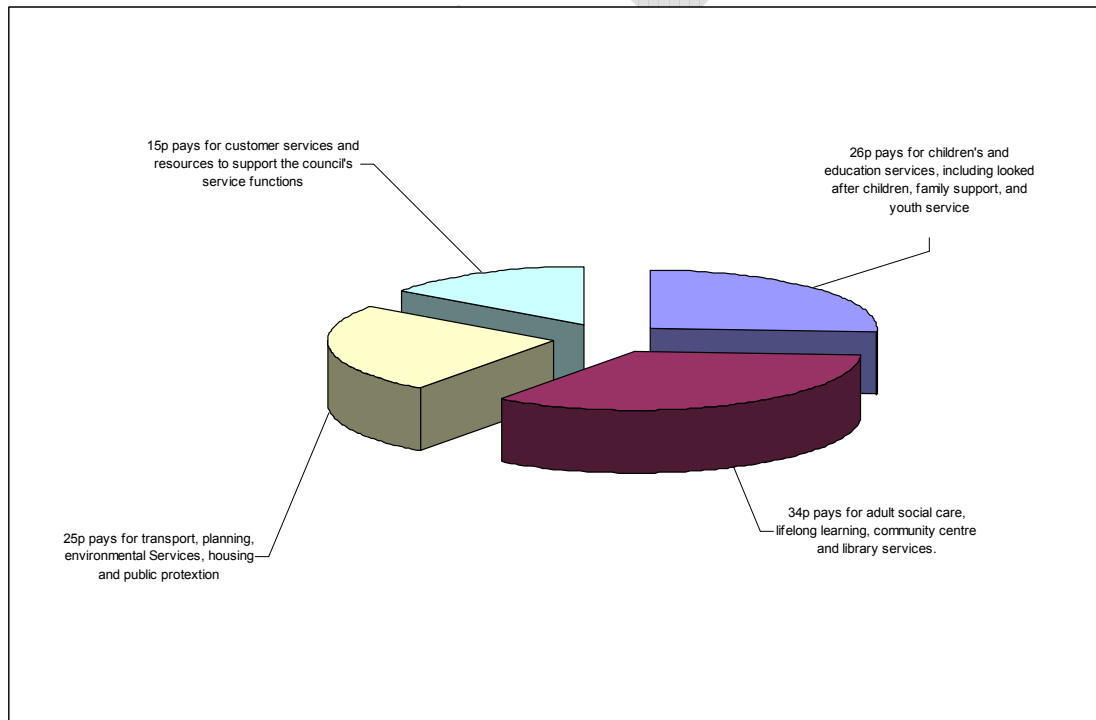
Precepts and levies announced by Fire and Police Authorities

February to April

Council agrees general revenue budget framework; capital budget framework; associated council tax levels; and treasury management policy.

Council tax and non-domestic rate bills are despatched.

How the money is spent



Sources of Funding

Source of funding	2011/12		2012/13	
	£000	%	£000	%
Business Rates Pool	43,730	42%	51,109	51%
Revenue Support Grant	13,517	13%	1,014	1%
Total from Central Government	57,247	54%	52,123	52%
Balance from Council Tax	47,860	46%	48,337	48%
Total Budget Requirement	105,107	100%	100,460	100%

Service Budgets

2011/12 Gross Budget £000	Services	2012/13 Gross Budget £000
27,789	Education and Children's Services	26,972
39,139	Community and Wellbeing	38,895
5,206	Customer and Transactional Services	4,574
33,257	Resources and Regeneration	32,741
657	Chief Executive	1,525
266	Corporate	262
0	Inflation	2,949
106,314	Total Cost of Services	107,918
3,017	Treasury Management	3,317
4,233	Earmarked Contingencies & Other Balances	809
(65,704)	Sources of Funding	(63,707)
47,860	Council Tax Requirement excluding Parishes	48,337
264	Local Parishes	268
48,124	Total Council Tax Requirement	48,605

How the Council Works

Political Structure

The Council has 41 elected members of the Council (councillors). Each councillor is democratically elected to represent their wards for four years. Each ward has three members representing it. A third of councillors are elected in each election.

The Cabinet (or Executive)

The Cabinet sets the vision and direction of the local authority. It prioritises resources and activity to ensure that services are delivered to meet local needs and that where necessary services are improved. The Cabinet is made up of eight councillors - the Leader plus seven Commissioners.

Commissioners are councillors who are appointed by the Leader to look after their own range of services (called a portfolio). The Cabinet makes recommendations to the full Council on the most important policy decisions and the budget.

Overview and Scrutiny

The Council has an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three Scrutiny Panels. These are made up of councillors and co-optees (people with particular expertise in a certain field). Overview and Scrutiny provides a check on the activities of both the Council and the work of our partners such as the Police and the NHS. Overview and Scrutiny may question the Cabinet's decisions to ensure that they take account of community concerns and the way that they take the decisions is transparent and reasonable.

Organisational Structure

The leadership and management of the Council are undertaken by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), led by the Chief Executive. The four Strategic Directors sit with the Chief Executive on CMT. CMT works with the Council's staff to translate the elected councillors' vision into action. CMT regularly monitors the Council's overall performance and ensures that improvement activity is undertaken where necessary.

Background Information

The Council's "Gold" Projects:

1. Britwell Regeneration
2. Business Continuity
3. Customer Focus Programme
4. Debt Management
5. Delivering Personalised Services Programme
6. Family Placement Service
7. Public Health Transition Programme
8. Safeguarding Improvement Plan
9. School Places in Slough
10. Slough Local Asset Backed Vehicle('LABV')
11. Thames Valley Transactional Services Project

Supporting Plans and Strategies [links to these in final version]

Sustainable Community Strategy
Slough Story
Local Economic Assessment
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2009/13
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011
Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014
Children's Safeguarding Improvement Plan
Supporting People Plan
Adults Safeguarding Plan
Personalisation Strategy
Commissioning Strategy for Adult Social Care
East Berkshire Dementia Strategy
Housing Strategy 2005-2010
Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011
Carbon Management Plan
Climate Change Strategy
Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
Heart of Slough Masterplan
Britwell Regeneration Masterplan
Asset Management Plan
Local Development Plan, Core Strategy
Waste Strategy
Local Transport Plan
Strategic Needs Assessment 2011
Safer Slough Partnership Action Plan
Drug and Alcohol Abuse Team Adult Drug Treatment Plan
Accommodation Strategy
Procurement Strategy

Our Values

We all have our part to play in making Slough a better place to live, work and visit. We need to share a common approach to the way we work and deliver services, whether we work directly with the public or in support services. The Council's Values set out that shared approach.

Our values are:

- Customer Focus
- Taking Responsibility
- Respecting Others
- Taking Pride

Customer Focus

We will:

- Make it easy for customers to contact us and use our services
- Ask our customers what they think about our services and act on their views
- Respond to the needs of our diverse communities

Taking Responsibility

We will:

- Get things done and in good time
- Resolve problems even if it is not our job
- Take decisions and the initiative

Respecting Others

We will:

- Treat everyone fairly and value differences
- Communicate openly and honestly with customers and colleagues
- Accept change and move on positively when a decision is made

Taking Pride

We will:

- Work as one Council and promote Slough as a place to live, work and visit
- Suggest ways to improve how we work
- Find ways to improve our own skills and knowledge