

**Corporate Plan**

**2014 - 2015**

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## [Contents]

	Page
Foreword from the Leader	3
Shaping services for the future	4
Our values	5
Our vision for Slough	5
What's important – Slough's priorities	5
1. Improve customer experience	6
2. Deliver services and facilities that meet local needs	7
3. Develop new ways of working	8
4. Deliver local and national change and improvement	9
5. Develop a skilled and capable workforce	10
6. Promote economic growth and protect the council's finances	11
Slough's budget challenge	12
Focusing on performance	13

## **Foreword from the Leader of the Council**

Welcome to the Corporate Plan - our roadmap of what we will achieve for Slough in the forthcoming year.

Knowing the needs and aspirations of our residents has led us to a range of actions – all designed to help deliver our and your priorities.

The money Government gives to councils has been cut dramatically and this is expected to continue. But despite this we are developing new ways to deliver services, protecting the front line services our residents rely on and focusing our efforts on plans which will bring the most benefit to the most people.

Slough is always on the move and through our major regeneration projects we are improving our neighbourhoods now and for the future – despite the difficult economic times. We have competing demands – to provide housing, to meet business' needs to support growth and provide jobs, to work with health and education providers, to provide community buildings and an infrastructure that supports them all.

Residents want more, we want to provide more, better and smarter and all within a shrinking budget. We cannot do it alone. And our strong partnerships within and outside our town are vital. But even more important are our residents; improving their town and encouraging them to play their part.

We have the right people and the right processes in place to make this happen and despite the challenges, the mountain we have to climb, I am confident we will not be diverted from the tasks we know are best for our town.

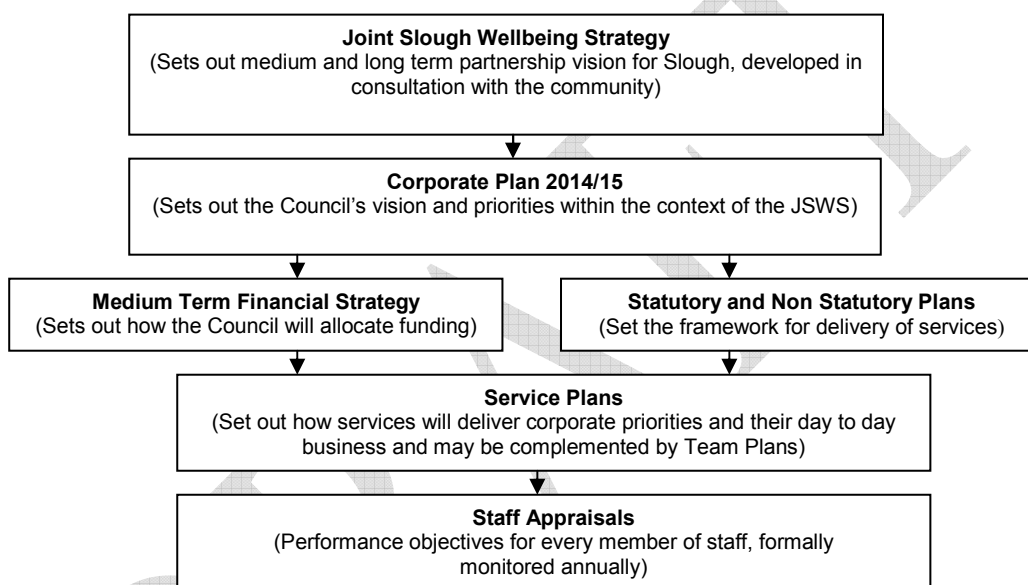
Councillor Rob Anderson  
Leader Slough Borough Council

## Shaping services for the future

This Plan outlines our approach to the council's business planning processes, ensuring that our vision, priorities and resource allocations are based on sound evidence and an understanding of our communities' needs.

The priorities identified in this Plan complement those that have been agreed for the town (and which are set out in borough's Joint Wellbeing Strategy<sup>1</sup>), are unpinned by a robust service planning process and a sustainable budget for 2014/15. This approach, known as the 'gold thread' ensures that all of our activities are suitably aligned to the achievement of our stated priorities and outcomes.

### The Golden thread



## The Council's vision

Our vision is of a council that can continue to adapt to and lead change, through new ways of working and commissioning services.

Our recently agreed Organisation Development Strategy sets out how we aim to improve organisational effectiveness and:

- Get ourselves fit for the future through a process of organisational transformation
- Better understand the major issues facing us and set a clear direction for sustainable success
- Build consensus about what needs to change and mobilise the energies and abilities of people

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/slough-joint-wellbeing-strategy.aspx>

- Continuously improve service delivery to meet the increased demand for services from residents and businesses against a backdrop of challenging economic circumstances

## Our values

Our values state clearly and simply what the council stands for and what it wants to be known for. They are:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Respect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To treat everyone fairly and value difference</li> <li>• To communicate openly and honestly with customers and colleagues</li> <li>• To accept change and move on positively when a decision is made</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Taking Pride</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work as one council and promote Slough as a place to live, work and visit</li> <li>• To suggest ways to improve how we work</li> <li>• To find ways to improve our skills and knowledge</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Responsibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To resolve problems even if it's not our job</li> <li>• To make decisions and take the initiative</li> <li>• To get things done and in good time</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Results</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make it easy for customers to contact us</li> <li>• To respond to the needs of our customers</li> <li>• To ask customers for their views on our services and act on them</li> </ul>

## What's important – Slough's operational priorities

In order to deliver our vision, the council has adopted six operational priorities for 2014/15. These are to:

1. Improve customer experience
2. Deliver services and facilities that meet local needs
3. Develop new ways of working
4. Deliver local and national change and improvement
5. Develop a skilled and capable workforce
6. Promote economic growth and protect the council's finances.

Strategic actions to deliver these priorities are listed below – these do not include the wide range of “business as usual” activity set out in service and team plans. However, the most important changes we need to make this year are:

- Improving Children's Social Care
- Delivering our budget for 2014/15 and identifying further required savings
- Implementing Fit for the Future to ensure that all staff have the skills to meet the challenges ahead

## 1. Improve customer experience

### Why is this important?

Customers' expectations and needs are changing. People expect and want more from services at a time when resources are reducing. We need to listen to our customers but also develop their capacity to take more responsibility.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- Customers will receive the right information to access services first time in the most cost effective way
- Residents' and communities' capacity will be developed to enable them to take responsibility for their lives, their homes and the areas in which they live
- Customer satisfaction will improve.

### In 2014/15 we will:

#### Customer and Community Service

- Simplify and streamline service processes and procedures making it easier for customers to receive services more efficiently and effectively
- Develop the transactional capacity of our website making more services available online as part of our customer focus programme
- Develop plans for a new Langley community hub

#### Adult Social Care

- Increase the number of older people who achieve independence through rehabilitation or enablement and other types of non residential or short term care
- Increase the number of working age adults and older people receiving self directed support and direct payments so that they have more control over the support and services required to meet their social care needs

#### Children's Social Care

- Be more ambitious for the education of looked after children, listen to them and prioritise their aspirations and attainment by improving the quality and monitoring of their personal education plans and setting challenging targets.
- Ensure that pathway plans are an effective tool to drive planning for young people leaving care and that young people are listened to and involved in developing their own pathway plans.

#### Highways and Transport

- Undertake junction improvements at key locations across the borough to improve accessibility and reduce congestion
- Repair road damage and limit the impact of road works in order to improve the customer experience

#### Housing

- Amalgamate our housing management and neighbourhood enforcement functions to deliver neighbourhood services which are resident focused and reflect local priorities

## **2. Deliver services and facilities that meet local needs**

### **Why is this important?**

The council has made considerable savings since 2010 but has been successful in protecting frontline services. We have to make further savings so will have to continue to review the way we deliver and commission services within our limited resources.

### **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

- Customers will access services designed around their needs, within available resources
- More residents will benefit from early intervention/prevention services
- Service levels will be defined and fit for purpose according to need and priority
- Contract management will be improved to generate savings
- An increased number of vulnerable adults will receive an integrated service
- More people will take control of their care.

### **In 2014/15 we will:**

#### Adult Social Care

- Develop an integrated health and social care system 'My Health, My Care' that provides consistent, high quality, personalised support for residents who have a risk of hospital or care home admission

#### Children's Social Care

- Work effectively with partners to develop the responsive commissioning of Early Help services for children, young people and families in Slough
- Implement the Children and Young People's Engagement and Participation Plan and recruit, train and deploy Young Commissioners to help us to listen to children and young people and design services that meet their needs
- Mitigate the impact of poverty on the achievements and life chances of children and young people through development of a new Child Poverty Strategy

#### Community Services

- Improve and upgrade facilities at the crematorium and cemetery

#### Housing

- Build more than 200 new affordable homes for local residents
- Ensure that our social housing stock meets local demand in a fair and equitable way including by developing an effective transfer scheme

#### Leisure Services

- Implement the council's strategy for leisure to improve healthy living by increasing the physical activity of residents of all ages

#### Procurement

- Establish a central contracts team, framework for procurement and management of contract performance to deliver cashable efficiencies

#### Public Health

- Commission public health services, promote screening services and health checks and raise public awareness to improve the health of residents

### **3. Develop new ways of working**

#### **Why is this important?**

In order to deliver the scale of change required to meet savings targets the council has to work differently both in terms of service delivery and its internal operations.

#### **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

- Services will be delivered in the most effective ways including through partnerships and outsourcing
- The council will have a modern ICT platform which will facilitate service delivery and enable council staff to work flexibly and improve productivity

#### **In 2014/15 we will:**

##### Adult Social Care

- Develop a strategic approach with partners to reduce drug and alcohol misuse and their impact on health, domestic abuse and violent crime and respond effectively to identified cases

##### Children's Social Care

- Work with partners to improve frontline inter-agency working and communication in order to risk assess and prioritise all referrals about children at risk in order to keep them safe
- Develop and implement a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for Slough
- Work with the police and crime commissioner to ensure our priorities remain high on his agenda and to maximise funding opportunities

##### Community Services

- Implement community learning trusts to help develop joined up delivery of adult learning for local people

##### Housing

- Work with landlords to address issues with the quality, accessibility and availability of private rented housing across the borough
- Promote and encourage digital inclusion and explore ways of engaging with residents online, including allowing them to manage their tenancy, reporting repairs and managing their rent account

##### Procurement

- Use the major contract review to manage contractors more effectively, realise significant savings and ensure the most effective use of resources in the short, medium and long term

##### Regulatory Services

- Expand our regulatory services to businesses in order to increase income and work towards offsetting the cost of service delivery

##### Asset Management

- Change our approach to use of buildings, accommodation, materials and energy to reduce use, increase re-use and be more efficient



## **4. Deliver local and national change and improvement**

### **Why is this important?**

We recognise that some of our services need to be improved and we are focusing our resources to deliver improvement and change. We also need to respond to changing statutory requirements and those of our partners.

### **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

- Services that do not meet required standards will be improved and new statutory service requirements will be met
- Children will live in stable families or other circumstances
- People will be supported to live independently in their own homes resulting in more housing options
- The council will have a clear town centre strategy.

### **In 2014/15 we will:**

#### Adult Social Care

- Work in partnership with the Care Quality Commission and the local NHS to prevent abuse and keep vulnerable adults (and carers) safe from harm and neglect

#### Children's Social Care

- Improve the quality of social work practice to ensure that children in need of help and protection make good progress and have positive experiences of the support and services we provide
- Develop and implement a new permanency strategy for children in care that provides increased opportunities for adoption and long-term fostering arrangements in and around Slough

#### Community Services

- Implement the Berkshire City Deal in Slough to help more local young people find employment including via education and training, as part of Slough Aspire
- Start building work on The Curve, a new learning and community venue, in the centre of town, completing it by July 2015

#### Housing

- Minimise the amount of rental income lost through reducing the length of the void periods (the period before we re-let an empty property)
- Meet, and where possible exceed, the decent homes standards for all new builds

#### Assets, Regeneration and Environment

- Work with local businesses and partners to develop the town centre including the retail offer, parking, infrastructure and housing
- Replace 80% of street bins and 100% of parks bins with split litter and recycling bins to improve recycling rates across the borough
- Establish processes (during the refresh of our Asset Management Plan<sup>2</sup>) to enable the redevelopment of land and property

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<sup>2</sup> see [www.slough.gov.uk/business/land-and-property/council-land-and-property.aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/business/land-and-property/council-land-and-property.aspx)

## **5. Develop a skilled and capable workforce**

### **Why is this important?**

We need to recruit and retain a skilled and flexible workforce to deliver our objectives and to do this we must invest in our employees and listen to their views.

### **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

- The council will recruit and retain a skilled workforce, developed to deliver prioritised services
- The council will have a competent workforce to meet statutory requirements
- Employees will be engaged to deliver our vision.

### **In 2014/15 we will:**

#### Corporate

- Implement the Fit for the Future programme of workforce initiatives
- Equip our managers and staff with the right skills and competencies to support and manage change and deliver our priorities
- Carry out staff engagement activity on a regular basis to ensure that staff understand council priorities and their role in delivery
- Develop a customer focus learning and development programme for our managers and staff
- Increase our capacity to manage contracts, programmes and projects.
- Continue with our recruitment and retention campaigns for hard to recruit posts (particularly across our professional services and in Children's Social Care)
- Develop and promote a range of part-time employment opportunities for local people within the Thames Valley Transactional Services Hub

#### Social Care

- Set-up a Social Work Development Unit for student and newly qualified social workers to provide support, learning and development to develop their professional knowledge, skills and practice
- Expand our social work post-qualification learning and development programme to ensure that social workers are offered attractive and relevant professional development opportunities
- Increase the number of independent and voluntary sector organisations who participate in social care training provided by the council

## **6. Promote economic growth and protect the council's finances**

### **Why is this important?**

The strength of Slough's economy is vital to its success. We have many advantages but competition with other locations is fierce and we need to work hard to retain existing businesses and attract new ones. The growing reliance on business rates as an income source has made this even more important.

The council's resources are reducing. We need to ensure that our limited resources are used in the most cost effective way to deliver our priorities.

### **What outcomes do we want to achieve?**

- Use resources effectively, identify savings and increase income
- Ensure a return on capital spend including social return on investment
- Ensure that full cost recovery and whole life costings are achieved
- Social care and health costs will be reduced
- Business support services will be improved to increase business rate retention.

### **In 2014/15 we will:**

#### Corporate

- Deliver a balanced budget including agreed savings for 2014/15 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015
- Deliver an anticipated collection rate of at least 98% of Council Tax and Business Rates
- Explore how full and whole life cost recovery and value for money can be achieved through our future contract specification documentation

#### Social Care

- Work with Slough's Clinical Commissioning Group and Adults and Children's social care teams to identify efficiency savings and develop 'invest to save programmes'

#### Children's Social Care

- Work with partners to recruit more foster carers to reduce dependence on more costly foster placements through Independent Fostering Agencies and increase the numbers of locally looked after children
- Work more effectively to identify forever families for all looked after children and increase the numbers of adoption and special guardianship orders granted, providing stable families for children and reducing the costs of care
- Improve care planning for looked after children to increase the stability of placements, to improve children's experiences of care and reduce costs

#### Economic Development

- Develop an improved approach to increase inward investment, retention of existing businesses and entrepreneurship
- Increase the percentage of council expenditure on contracts with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in line with government targets

#### Transport

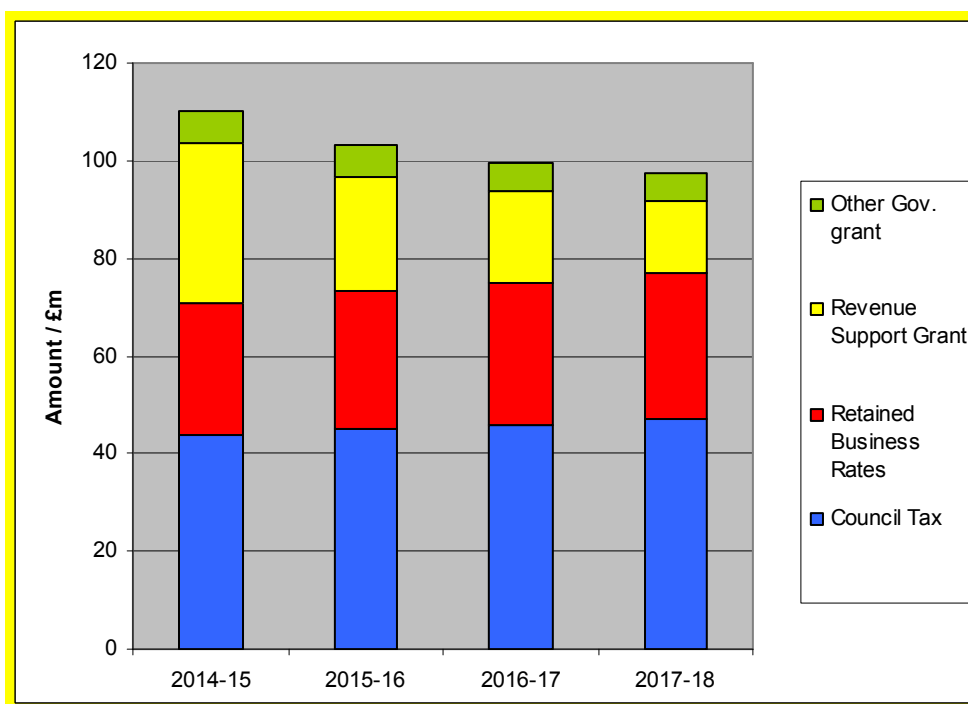
- Prepare for the impact of Crossrail and WRAtH and maximise the benefits from these national projects to stimulate local growth

## Slough's budget challenge

Slough Borough Council is facing an extremely tough financial challenge.

In 2010, as part of the Spending Review, the government announced its plan for reducing the national financial deficit. Funding to local authorities will be reduced by 28% from 2011 to 2015 after taking account of inflation and, in fact, some grants have been stopped altogether. Some towns, like Slough, have been hit hard.

Over two years the Government will have reduced its grants to the council by over £16.5m. That is a reduction of 42%.



At the same time, the council has to pay for unavoidable cost increases due to inflation, changes in legislation, the changing needs of local people and financing costs. These are expected to cost at least £28m extra by the end of 2017/18.

The combined impact of these grant reductions and rising local costs means the council will have to make savings of around £45m by 2017/18.

The challenge for 2014/15 is therefore to save around £12m in addition to the £20m that has already been saved in the previous two years.

In recent years, efficiency savings have been made and these have helped to bridge the financial gap. This is no longer enough. Over the next few years we will need to target our limited resources to where they are most needed - balancing the needs and demands of residents with what is right for Slough. This may result in some services changing and, indeed, in some instances being discontinued altogether.

In light of these challenges we need to continue to adapt and make changes to services and how they are run, particularly by embracing new and improved

models of delivery and we will continue to involve residents in the shaping and delivery of these services where possible. Throughout this process the council will however ensure that it makes the best use of resources for those most in need – protecting those local people who are the most vulnerable or at risk.

Our Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014 - 18<sup>3</sup> sets out our high level financial plans for the next 3 years. It explains the council's objective of securing a sustainable balanced budget position across the medium term, while accommodating clearly identified savings and known future challenges.

### **Focusing on performance**

Given the budgetary and resource pressure the council faces and the expectation that these pressures will increase in the coming years, it is now more important than ever the council manages its operations and resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In order to do this we regularly take a robust look at our performance, celebrating our improvements and focusing attention on those areas where we need to do better. The council's Performance Management Team creates quarterly reports for Cabinet, which includes information on the progress of our key list of Gold projects<sup>4</sup>, to ensure that we remain on track to achieve our vision for Slough, as set out in this Plan and in our Wellbeing Strategy.

Contact for more information: xxxxxxxxxx

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=4867](http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=4867)

<sup>4</sup>See [www.slough.gov.uk/council/performance-and-spending/budgets-and-finance.aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/performance-and-spending/budgets-and-finance.aspx)