

# **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

## **2018/19**

## **Annual Governance Statement 2018/19**

Slough Borough Council like every other local authority is required to review their governance arrangements at least once a year. The preparation and publication of an **Annual Governance Statement, (AGS)**, in accordance with the principles set out in the CIPFA/SoLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016) (The Framework) fulfils this requirement.

The Framework requires local authorities to be responsible for ensuring that:

- Their business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for
- Resources are used economically

The Framework also expects that local authorities will put in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs and ensure that the responsibilities listed above are met

### **Key Elements of The Council's Governance Framework**

#### *Council, Cabinet and Leader*

- Give Leadership
- Set Policy
- Support of Slough's communities

The Council operates a "Leader and Executive (England)" model of governance under the Local Government Act 2000.

The council currently consists of 42 elected members of the council (councillors). The Mayor chairs council meetings. The council constitution sets out how the council operates.

The council is given direction by the leader of the council. The cabinet (the council's executive committee) consists of the Leader elected by the council and the other Lead Members.

The Leader and Lead Members in the cabinet meet prior to each cabinet meeting to discuss the agenda items and the cabinet also meets with the Chief Executive and Directors and Officers to discuss a forward programme for the cabinet.

Reports prepared for cabinet and council require prior consideration by the Council's Management Team (CMT), the Section 151 officer and legal services Officers.

The cabinet structure covers different portfolio areas, each one led by an elected councillor / Lead Member. The Cabinet monitor the Council's performance by receiving quarterly performance management reports prepared by the Council's Project Management Office (PMO). The PMO track and report on performance on all the Council's major projects and a member of the PMO sits on the Council's Risk and Audit Board. The cabinet provides political and community leadership and makes many of the day to day decisions on service provision. The council still retains responsibility for setting the policy and financial framework and revenue and capital budgets

### Decision Making

- Council meetings
- Recording of decisions

Article 13 of the Council's current Constitution details the decision making process

<http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=563&MId=6238&Ver=4&Info=1>

### Risk Management

- Strategic and Operational Risks
- Where are key risks considered

Slough Borough Council (the Council) currently maintains a Corporate Risk Register; and one for each of the Directorates

The risk registers are a management tool utilised to provide a snap shot of the key risks that the Council faces and how they are managed.

Effective risk management assists in achieving the Council's priority outcomes and helps to optimise the quality and efficiency of its service delivery.

The achievement of the Council's priority outcomes is underpinned by the effectiveness of the controls identified to mitigate the principal risks which could affect the outcomes.

#### Scrutiny and review

- Scrutiny committees
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Budget Monitoring reports to Committee

Details of attendance can be found at <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/mgUserAttendanceSummary.aspx>

#### Corporate Management Team

- Josie Wragg is **Chief Executive**, (Head of Paid Service), responsible for all staff, and leading an effective management team;
- Neil Wilcox is the Director of Finance and Resources is the Council's **S.151 Officer** and is responsible for safeguarding the Council's finances;
- **The Monitoring Officer** is Hugh Peart and he is responsible for ensuring decisions made by the Council are legal, and are made in an open and transparent way.

#### **CIPFA/SoLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government**

This guidance is recognised as the proper practices referred to in the Accounts and audit regulations that we must follow and sets out seven core principles of good governance

These seven principals are:

Two overarching principles for good governance

- A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law**
- B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement**  
*and 5 principles of good governance*
- C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits**
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes**
- E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it**
- F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management**
- G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability**

Set out below is how the Council has complied with the seven principals set out in The Framework.

#### **Principle A**

- ***Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law***

The Council has a Constitution that is updated annually – The Constitution can be found on the Council's website <http://www.slough.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=563&MId=6238&Ver=4&Info=1> The Constitution is updated annually. The updates are agreed by Full Council after being through an consultation process that involves; Member Panel; Audit and Corporate Governance committee and input from the Monitoring Officer.

At part 5 of the Constitution is the Ethical Framework. The Ethical Framework contains

- Councillors Code of Conduct
  - Sets out the conduct expected of it's Councillors
- Local Code of Conduct for Councillors and Officer with regard to Planning and Licencing matters
  - Do's and Dont's for Councillors and Officers when dealing with Planning and licencing matters
- Local Code of Conduct for Employees
  - Sets out the standards of behaviour Slough Borough Council expects of it's staff, is incorporated in Contracts of Employment and meets the recommendations set out in the Nolan Committee's – Standards In Public Life
- Local Code governing relationships between elected Members and employees
  - Describes the roles of elected Members and employees and help all those concerned to understand the relationship between Officer and Members
- Confidential Whistleblowing code
  - Intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the Council rather than overlooking a problem or raising the problem outside the Council.
- Monitoring officer Protocol
  - Provides information on the monitoring Officer role and how those duties are discharged within Slough borough Council
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and policy
  - List of individual policies and strategies to counter fraud and corruption
- Sanctions Policy
  - Sets out the council policy of zero tolerance toward fraud and commits the Council to use the full range on sanctions against anyone who is found to have committed fraud against the council
- Joint Protocol of External Auditor regarding the legality of transactions
  - Details the arrangements for those instances where individual officers and/or members of the Authority, seek the views of the Appointed Auditor on the legality of transactions; and where the public refer questions or enquiries to the Appointed Auditor.
- Policy Statement on Corporate Governance

- Looks at the Council's vision and priorities and ensures that these are delivered in line with the Nolan Committee's Seven Principles in Public Life
  - Guidance on Housing and council Tax Benefit
    - For Officers and members involved in Housing and Council Tax benefit work
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## Principle B

- ***Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement***

All meetings are open to the public and agenda, reports and decisions are published on the council's website, and the Council consults with the public on a wide range of topics. Active consultations can be found at <https://www.slough.gov.uk/council/consultation/> .

The public can also raise concerns by using the Petition scheme, the details of which are contained within Part 2 the Constitution

Citizen is the council's publication for residents which is delivered to homes in the borough. It gives residents information and news about the council, its priorities and work. Citizen can also be read on-line at <https://citizen.slough.gov.uk/february-2019/latest-news/welcome>

The Council issues disseminates information and connects with stakeholders via Twitter @SloughCouncil and Facebook

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## Principle C

- ***Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits***

The 5 Year Plan is published every year and sets out

- The Council's vision
- The Council's priority outcomes
- the role of the council in making this happen

The 2018-2023 5 Year Plan also detailed the Council's five values these are:

- Responsive
- Accountable
- Innovative
- Ambitious
- Empowering

These values are used to drive our behaviours and how we work. We will recruit and manage people by checking how they perform against these

This 5 Year Plan defined the 5, (reduced from 8), priority outcomes. The table below shows the priority outcome and a summary of the progress made towards those outcomes

Priority Outcome	Progress Made
Slough Children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 175 (safeguarding in schools) audit 2018/19 has been rolled out, with schools required to demonstrate they have the necessary arrangements in place to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The corporate children's safeguarding (section 11) group has produced its own Child Protection Policy/Statement that cross-references the Pan-Berkshire Local Safeguarding Childrens Board Policy to which SBC subscribes.</li> <li>• Worked with Slough Children's Services Trust to secure a rating of 'Requires Improvement to be</li> </ul>

	<p>Good” from Ofsted. This is the first time in 8 years and 3 previous inspections that Ofsted have found that vulnerable children are safe and children’s services are not inadequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The refreshed LA School Effectiveness Strategy was implemented in September 2018 with emphasis on schools self-evaluating risks, and asking schools to identify their areas of effective practice and evaluate their capacity to offer school to school support. This has meant the Slough School Improvement Board (SSIB) has been able to have a more effective overview of the school system and facilitate support where needed and allowed for greater transparency in school improvement across Slough. Supporting all schools to become good or better will be to the benefit of the children and young people attending Slough schools.</li> <li>• Actively worked in partnership with Slough Children’s Services Trust to establish the Early Help Hub which is ensuring speedy and effective support for families to prevent statutory intervention. A revised Slough Multi Agency early Help Strategy was published in December 2018</li> <li>• Work has continued in partnership with children, young people, families, social care, health and providers in establishing appropriate provision that can meet the needs of the children and young people in Slough with SEN. This includes improved support offered to Early Years settings, schools and post 16 providers with training and development opportunities to ensure that providers are able to meet the needs of children and young people to ensure they are able to meet their full potential.</li> </ul>
<p>Our People will be healthier and manage their own care needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the latest results (published in March 2019), one in three residents locally in Slough (35.9%) compared to one in four nationally (25.1%) were reported as not participating in at least 30 mins of sport at moderate intensity at least once a week. The latest data indicates an increase in activity in Slough of 0.9%. With only two full years of data it is too early to meaningfully review trends over time. The council is working actively to make it easier for residents to participate in more physical activity. The Active Slough programme now offers over 100 sessions a week to people of all ages and abilities.</li> <li>• All of the new leisure facilities are open with The Centre opening its doors to the public on 25th March</li> </ul>

2019. Attendance and new memberships have exceeded targets to date, set by Everyone Active, the operator. A network of 21 green gyms are being well used by the community, with two sites hosting the 'Big Community Workout' initiative. Five new gyms will be installed in May 2019.

- Adult Social Care have been undertaking reviews of all commissioned care packages and encouraging our clients and their carers to take up the option of using a direct payment to purchase personal assistants or services to meet their assessed support needs. We have exceeded our target of facilitating a 25% increase in direct payments by March 2019, with 536 carers and service opting to take up this method of purchasing care as at the end of the financial year.
- NHS Health Check activity has not been as positive as aimed for so we have been completing a deep dive to understand the issues better. In addition, a large scale Health Beliefs research project is currently underway (reporting by Jul 19) to understand what Slough people make of their health and attitudes to various Public Health services including NHS HCs. Public Health continues to work with Slough GP Members on how to improve coverage within their own practices and as part of the new Primary Care Networks.
- Longer term, Public Health have initiated new work on a Local Action Plan for Immunisations to improve the uptake in children and older adults in particular.

Regulatory services including public protection and prevention activities such as tobacco control, 'Scams' wellbeing initiative and 'Concern cards' to flag safeguarding concerns.

- During 2018/18 - 49 victims of mass marketing scams have been visited. Each one of these victims have been offered further support including a home fire safety inspection, opting into mail and telephone preference services and also directed to many providers of further support to vulnerable people. Referrals have been made to adult social care where necessary.
- Trading Standards took part in national rogue trader day. This resulted in identifying several potential victims of doorstep crime including one vulnerable individual who had given over £10000+ for very

	<p>shoddy and unnecessary work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trading standards took part in 2 tobacco operations supported by specially trained tobacco dogs. These resulted in 14 visits, which resulted in 2 premises being identified where illicit tobacco was found with a retail value of approximately £15000. Both traders are currently subject to a criminal investigation.</li> <li>• Trading standards carried out 7 visits to premises and used under age volunteers to see if they sold alcohol. In total 4 premises out of the 7 sold alcohol. Those traders are currently subject to a criminal investigation.</li> <li>• Safe Place Scheme is growing, with the Ice Rink, Activity Centre and the Centre are signed up and are displaying the sticker.</li> <li>• Over 1100 existing licensed drivers and operators, new applicants and home to school transport staff have undergone in-house Safeguarding Awareness training.</li> <li>• Mental health services including Community asset based community approach to developing further preventative and wellbeing approaches.</li> <li>• Public Health's other services including stop smoking, healthy eating and social prescribing.</li> <li>• Adult Social Care establishing a co-production network to more effectively engage with local people in the commissioning and shaping support and care.</li> </ul>
<p>Slough will be an attractive place where people chose to live, work and stay.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearance of Curry's Yard and other 'grey' areas completed.</li> <li>• Successful initiative to improve food hygiene rating scores in town centre food businesses completed. Of the 14 premises that were included in the project 64% improved their FHR score, 50% are now 'broadly complaint' FHR 3 or above with. 33% are now rated at a 4 and 11% achieving a FHR 5.</li> </ul>

- Successful funding bid for 'pocket park' due for completion on share site at Paradise Gardens between the church and The Curve. Extensive outreach work with rough sleepers in partnership with the voluntary sector.
- Town centre user's survey completed and a residents group established.
- Funding received for Town Centre Community Clean Up.
- Application for Purple Flag Status progressing with detailed action plan.
- The parks service work with a range of community groups to engage local residents in the design and maintenance of their parks. We have planted over a million bulbs throughout the parks and open spaces in Slough.
- 200 trees have been planted throughout the parks and open spaces. Tulip trees have been planted in Upton Court Park to replace the diseased horse chestnuts and additional bulbs have been planted down the avenue.
- A large-scale Residents survey was initiated in the autumn 2018, following the same methodology used in a survey conducted in 2008.
- Headline results from more than 1,700 responses were received in March 2019.
- Initial headlines were presented to CMT and at TalkAbout. Detailed analysis is now taking place with communications and strategy to inform service leads of relevant data and insight gathered. The full report and headlines will be presented at lead members and directors in the new municipal year.
- Building on the success of work undertaken in Manor Park this initiative is now in planning stages of

	<p>being rolled out to the following three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trelawny Avenue</li> <li>• Foxborough (Social Housing)</li> <li>• Chalvey</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following various discussion, the initiative is being extended and will include key partner agencies and will be known as strong, healthy and attractive communities. This allows us to seamlessly connect the work streams of the 5YP outcome 2 and outcome 3. In addition we will also be taking in to account economic prosperity as this plays a key role in the health and wellbeing within communities.</li> <li>• A meeting to ensure all relevant SBC services are on the same page takes place on 9th January and this will be followed by meetings with partners and then soft launches in the identified communities. Papers have been presented to Scrutiny and the Peoples Board on next steps due in Q1 2019.</li> <li>• Two workshops have been held on developing the Slough Brand and The Council adopted the Low Emission Strategy on 27th September 2018. The strategy sets out 19 objectives to improve air quality.</li> <li>• We have been working with partners to improve our natural environment with for example: The River Scheme with WW, commissioning a green infrastructure assessment to help inform the local plan, the Mayors 500 trees and the Parks and Open Spaces Team are planting over 100 trees, restoring the Salt Hill Rose gardens, planting a new herbaceous border and many other developments. Managing the impact of developments and infrastructure is actively shared between O3 and O5. The O3 lead attends the Town Centre Regeneration Group.</li> <li>• Work has started on reviewing the Council's Public Realm Strategy.</li> </ul>
<p>Our residents will live in good quality homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of homeless prevention cases (this is where homelessness is prevented before moving them into temporary accommodation and accepting a homeless duty to them) has increased this year. The target for 2018/19 to prevent homelessness was 150 and has reached 205 for the year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current work around prevention, increased offers to homeless households has seen homeless numbers in temporary accommodation fall to 409 at the end of March 2019.</li> <li>• A Selective and Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation was agreed in Cabinet in March 2019.</li> <li>• After the changes to the Allocations Scheme, which offered £2k per room (given up), there have been 25 moves resulting in 40 rooms being released.</li> </ul>
<p>Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work completed on Burnham Station improvements including new car park. • Farnham Road: Peak time tidal flow system being evaluated at the junction between Whitby Road and Pitts Road. This work will commence when Chalvey work has completed to release capacity and resource in the team.</li> <li>• Gateway design for junction 5 commissioned. Consultants appointed, design work underway. Completion deadline March 2020</li> <li>• Continuing to support at officer level HSPG to contribute to Masterplan Assembly options. Bi-lateral meetings continuing on Slough specific issues. An Economy subgroup has been formed with SBC representation</li> <li>• Bid submitted to HAL circa £1m to improve bus, cycle and pedestrian links in the Colnbrook area. Secured £0.5m, remainder still under negotiation with in principle approvals.</li> <li>• Poyle Business Forum established. Discussions for the wider Masterplaning of Poyle area underway with SEGRO and HAL.</li> <li>• On-going discussions with Net Rail/DfT and GWR on land acquisition for TVU</li> </ul>

## Principle D

- ***Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes***

**Programme Management Office (PMO) work** – The PMO provides Project Management and Project Support to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to delivery of the Five Year Plan. This includes the Project Management of projects that are considered a priority by CMT and Cabinet. The PMO's work includes:

- Project Portfolio Management - Portfolio reported monthly, and recently reviewed to ensure reporting meets CMT requirements
- Project Management - Project Management of key projects and Transformation Projects
- Assurance that the Council's Project Management Methodology is being followed consistently

**Transformation programme** – The transformation programme is about how we should organise ourselves efficiently to ensure our residents and customers get the best services we can afford. The programme will define the future operating model for the council – and potentially our key partners.

The transformation programme is driven by a key vision and a series of principles, each of which has key outcomes. The principles will guide our work and help define the programme of change and specific projects to bring it about.

4 Transformation Boards have been set up to deliver the Transformation programme. These are:

- Accommodation and assets;
- People;
- Technology;

- Performance.

Each of these boards is chaired by a Strategic Director with a Transformation Programme Board responsible for monitoring the progress of the Transformation programme.

A Business Case to implement the Transformation Programme and deliver a new Operating Model for the Council was approved by Cabinet on 15 April 2019. Governance of the Programme will be reviewed as required to ensure effective oversight.

### Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge

In February 2019 the Local Government Association undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge.

The focus of the Corporate Peer Challenge was on the following areas:

- understanding of the local place and priority setting
- leadership of place
- financial planning and viability
- organisational leadership and governance
- capacity to deliver

The final report from the LGA will include a number of recommendations and the Council’s response to these in the form of an Action Plan will be published early in 2019/20.

The initial findings are set out below:

Positives	Key recommendations
Recent leadership stability welcomed by all	Establish a stronger sense of where the Council wants to get to.
Lots of ambition and energy	Develop and deliver this vision which identifies what the future looks like for all parts of the community – for place and people
Lots of goodwill	Consider and articulate what a 21 <sup>st</sup> Century council will look like

	for slough to build unity around a common purpose
Strong asset base and economy	Establish a more fundamental equilibrium between the Council's ambition for people and place, and communicate this.
Slough is great in a crisis	Progress the emerging transformation agenda and invest more time in rooting this in culture change.
Leadership speaks compellingly about the future of Slough	Develop governance from "basic control" to good

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## Principle E

- ***Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it***

In October 2018 the Council appointed Josie Wragg as permanent Chief Executive

There is an appraisal system that covers all officers that identified appropriate and targeted training. There is also a Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure that was updated in 2018 and this is available to all staff on the Council's intranet.

A full training programme for new and existing members continued to be delivered during 2018/19 to support the vision of the council. This training included training/briefings regarding:

- GDPR.
- Safeguarding Adults
- The Overview and Scrutiny process
- Crime & Disorder
- Charing skills for Chairs and Vice Chairs

- Acting as a Trustee for New sub-Committee
- Equalities, Human Rights and Cohesion

In 2018 the council launched the Slough Academy. The Slough Academy is the Council's new approach to growing and developing our staff to help build a stable and successful workforce that will serve our residents in the best possible way.

There are policies and procedures in place to ensure that Members and staff are protected against conflicts of interests

- **Council subsidiaries and other entities**

The Council is an equal partner with a private sector developer in Slough Urban Renewal, a Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV), which is incorporated as a limited liability partnership, for regeneration projects within the Council's area. Through this partnership the Council has developed a new cultural centre and library in the town, new leisure facilities, modernised school buildings and carried out new housing developments. The Council is also in the process of constructing a new hotel development within the town through this LABV and plans are underway to develop the site of the former Thames Valley University into a major mixed use development. This partnership was competitively procured under OJEU arrangements. The rolling 5 year business plan of the LABV is approved by the Council annually.

The Council has also incorporated two housing subsidiary companies, James Elliman Homes Limited, which provides homes for letting at affordable rents for persons not able to access housing at market rent and Herschel Homes Limited, which is intended to develop new homes for letting at market rents. Both companies are wholly owned by the Council and are local authority controlled companies within the Local authorities (Companies) Order 1995. The directors are appointed by the Council who operate under the terms of appointment agreements with the Council and within the scope of shareholder agreements between the companies and the Council.

The Council has also incorporated a new asset management company, Slough Asset Management Limited, which is also wholly owned by the Council and a local authority controlled company. This is intended to be used as a vehicle for holding strategic investment properties acquired by the Council as part of its investment strategy. This company is controlled by the Council's

Strategic Acquisitions Board (SAB) comprising of Leader Members, the Section 151 Officer and specialist asset management officers to manage the council's portfolio of investment properties as part of its investment strategy

The Council is also the holder of the entire issued share capital of Ground Rent Estates 5 Limited, a company incorporated under the Companies Acts under number 05997934. This company is the owner of Nova House, a private residential block of flats within the town with serious fire risk deficiencies. The company was acquired by the Council for a nominal sum in order to enable the Council to address these deficiencies in the most effective way having regard to its statutory duties as a regulator of private housing in its area.

The Council's children's services are provided on behalf of the Council by Slough Children's Services Trust, a company limited by guarantee incorporated pursuant to ministerial order. The service is provided under a service provision agreement lasting until 2021. The services provision agreement is due for review in 2019/20 and the Council will be conducting an options appraisal for future provision of these services. The children's service now has an OFSTED rating of "requires improvement to be Good".

The Council's customer services, IT services and revenues and benefits services are provided under a major contract with an outsourced provider, Arvato Public Sector Services Limited. The Council have exercised an early termination provision within the contract in order to promote its transformation plans and will be bringing the provision of those services back in house with effect from 1 November 2019.

The Council's housing stock is maintained, improved and developed under a major outsourced contract with Osborne for a 7 year term which commenced on 1 December 2017.

The Council commissions a range of services from organisations in the voluntary and community sector. These are primarily provided through a voluntary service contract with Slough Prevention Alliance Community Engagement (SPACE) a consortium of voluntary and community organisations.

The Council is also a major partner in the Frimley Health and Care System involving the NHS, local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups providing integrated care and health services across 750,000 residents.

## Principle F

- *Managing Risk and Performance*

The Council's Risk Management Strategy sets out the Council's approach to identifying; prioritising and controlling risks. There is a Corporate Risk Register and individual Risk registers for each Directorate. Corporate Risks are reviewed by the Risk Management Board – chaired by the Section 151 Officer on a monthly basis and it is expected that Directorate risk registers are reviewed on a monthly basis.

The figure below show the current risks that are on the Corporate Risk Register and the residual risk rating



Cabinet receives reports that have been to various other Boards and committees these include :

- The Corporate Balance Scorecard together with progress on the council’s major projects is reported to Cabinet and to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. This report also provides data on the progress made against election pledges.
- The Statutory Equalities Report that includes the Gender Pay Gap report.
- The Capital and Revenue monitoring report

### Principle G

- *Implementing good practices and transparency reporting, and accountability*

### Improvements

The 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement identified various areas for improvement

<b>Issues Reported in 2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19 Action taken</b>	<b>Is this still an Issue for 2019/20</b>
Safeguarding services and Safeguarding outcomes for children and young people (including risk assessments).	The Council’s Children’s Services have in recent years been provided under independent trust arrangements mandated by ministerial order following findings of inadequacy following past inspections. The last inspection has found considerable improvements such that the service has progressed to “requires improvement to be good”. The Council will now be moving to consider options for the future of the service. The Council have also completed a complete review of its children’s safeguarding arrangements. There is now in place a grouping of service	Yes but considerable improvements have been made and robust arrangements put in place..

	leads from all areas with safeguarding responsibilities which meets regularly to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. The findings of this group are regularly considered by the Council's Management Team.	
Contract Management	The Council have now completed the re-procurement of all of its major long term contracts covering maintenance of its housing stock, highways and public realm and management of its corporate buildings portfolio and it has brought back in house its environmental services functions. A corollary of this has been better contracts and arrangements which address the deficiencies of past procurements. The Council has also taken steps to effect early termination of its major revenues and benefits, customer services and ICT services contract to bring these services back in house. The Council has started to embark on developing a commercialisation strategy to improve the Council's business acumen and obtain better value. Part of this strategy will be to consider improving the quality of the Council's contract management proficiencies. It is intended that these activities will be overseen by a committee of the Council's cabinet.	Yes but action is being taken to address this issue
Continued Economic Instability and Turbulence at a national level	Failure to deliver a balanced budget remains on the Corporate risk Register for 2018/19. The Council is acute to the potential for economic instability and turbulence at a national level, exacerbated by the uncertainties of Brexit. The Council participates in national and regional planning arrangements and it monitors the changing situation and the Council's preparedness to deal with contingencies at weekly meetings of the Council Management Team. The Council has Medium Term Financial Strategy and a Treasury Management strategy in place which are reviewed regularly. The Council is on plan to deliver balanced budgets over the next three years.	Yes, but it is being monitored and managed.
Managing a mixed economy workforce.	The Council now has in place an Enterprise Resource Planning system, Agresso, which is beginning to yield more reliable and robust data to	Yes but improvements

	serve as a management tool to enable the Council's Management Team to address such matters as gender pay gap reporting and produce strategies to address such matters.	are being made.
Partnership and Governance Arrangements	The Council's major Partnership arrangement is the LABV which is the delivery vehicle for the Town's major regeneration projects. The governance arrangements are set out in a formal partnership agreement. Due to the scale and importance of this arrangement, however, as part of the Council's internal audit plan, the internal auditors are in the process of carrying out an audit of the working of these arrangements the outcome of which will be reviewed by the Council's Management Team.	Yes and an internal auditor's audit is underway.
Procurement	This continues to be an area requiring improvement. Internal Auditors' recommendations are being progressively implemented and external support has been commissioned to revise the Council's Procurement Strategy and Procurement Operating Procedures, Arrangements are also in progress to revise the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to update and simplify the rules and to make them more effective	Yes but arrangements are being put into place to effect improvements.
Schools Environment	In 2018/19 Slough children and young people have achieved excellent results and are out-performing both national averages and statistical neighbours. The Council are continuing an ambitious multi-million pound investment in school building. The Council continue to make improvements in internal controls and have worked with schools to help them adopt best practice in in safeguarding and keeping children and young people safe.	No.
Business Continuity	The Council has engaged external resources to support the Council's Business Continuity and Response Manager. Business Impact Analyses for service areas have mostly been completed and will be followed up by detailed Business Recovery Plans for all areas to provide robust arrangements to secure business continuity following any disruptive events.	Yes but arrangements are in place to ensure business continuity in the event of

Voids Management	The Council have now entered into a new long term contract with Osborne for the management and development of its housing stock and this is now underway. The procurement specifically sought to deal with this issue and it s now being managed by the new contractor.	contingencies. Yes but it is improving.
Health and Safety	The major focus of the Council has been the compliance of its housing stock, corporate buildings and buildings owned by third parties which are used to accommodate Council clients and customers with Health & safety standards with respect to such matters as legionella, asbestos and fire safety. A dedicated team has been and is continuing to work through examining this portfolio for compliance on these issues to enable the Council's management team to obtain assurance in this area.	Yes but progress is being made.
Adult Safeguarding	The Council is now working more effectively to promote the safety of Slough residents. This means safeguarding adults from abuse, neglect and criminal activities including exploitation. The Council's work is informed by local intelligence, national research and experience. Partners have worked together to approach the current and emerging challenges to the safety of residents. As a result of negotiation and engagement of partner agencies during 2018/19 the Council are developing a framework to support partners to work together to promote the safety of Slough residents.	No
Implementation of previous Internal Audit actions	The Council have progressed further with their process of recommendation tracking to ensure that recommendations made by Internal Auditors are implemented. The recommendations are discussed at Directorate Management meetings monitored at monthly meetings of the Council's Risk and Audit Board. The progress is reported quarterly to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. The robustness of the implementation of audit recommendations has continued to improve	Yes but improvement is progressing.

## 2017/18 External Audit Recommendations

The 2017/18 External Audit Report identified some significant deficiencies. These are listed below:

Issue	Management Response
<b>Quality of Working Papers</b>	<p>This is underway, areas and specific working papers that need further improvement have been identified.</p> <p>Additional support and training will be provided to individuals, with more emphasis on ensuring working papers are sufficient to provide more relevant information.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b>            Additional external support was engaged during the year to work through improvements with finance staff on working paper requirements</p>
<b>Critical review of the draft financial statements</b>	<p>Processes are being put in place to ensure that a more rigorous review is undertaken before the draft set of accounts are given to the auditors.</p> <p>Issues previously identified will be addressed and are unlikely to occur again.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b>            Management have engaged one of their existing external advisors to undertake an overall review of the draft accounts prior to completion</p>
<b>Mapping of debtors and</b>	<p>Debtors and creditors are already in the process of being looked at. A review of the mapping used to create the working papers and the mapping to create the</p>

<b>creditors</b>	<p>links into the Annual Statement is currently underway.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> This is ongoing, however changes to the accounting note requirements will make this process easier</p>
<b>Bank reconciliations</b>	<p>Bank reconciliations are already in the process of being looked at.</p> <p>New processes are being instigated to ensure that reconciliations are more appropriate and support the working papers clearer.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> The main bank account reconciliations process has been reviewed and updated during the year to make it clearer. Significant work has been undertaken to clear historic balances, which remains ongoing.</p>
<b>Maintenance of the fixed asset register</b>	<p>Steps have already been taken and a full and complete review of the Fixed Asset register is underway, which has incorporated both Asset Management and Cipfa Fixed Asset team.</p> <p>Further discussions have already been held with our valuers to ensure that lessons learnt from this audit can be implemented.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Further discussions have already been held with our valuers to ensure that lessons learnt from this audit can be implemented.</p>

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<b>Password Security</b>	Plans already scheduled to implement in conjunction with Milestone 7 upgrade in January 2019.
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<b>User Access</b>	This issues has now been implemented
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<b>Review of source data provided to the valuers</b>	A robust review to be carried out on information provided to the valuer, as part of valuation instructions, to ensure that source data on land and buildings is as accurate and complete.
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## Review of Effectiveness

### Internal Audit

The Council uses a number of ways to review the effectiveness of the governance arrangements. One of the key statements is the annual report and the opinion of the Head of internal audit. During 2018/19 the Head of Internal Audit has issued 33 assurance reports of which 23 (70%), were deemed a “positive assurance”. Of the 8 that received a negative assurance two areas were provided with “no assurance”. These were:

- Council Buy Backs, and
- Debtors

The other six areas that received negative assurance were:

- Contract Procedural Rules
- Temporary Accommodation Strategy

- School Reviews – Claycots
- Health & Safety
- Conflicts of interest
- Creditors

The Head of internal Audit's opinion for 2018/19 is ***“The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective”***

#### External Audit

Grant Thornton are currently undertaking the statutory audit of the 2018/19 statement of accounts

Other areas that contribute to monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Council are:

- The Risk Management Board
- The annual assurance statements produced by Service Leads
- The work of
  - the Audit and Corporate Governance committee;
  - the Standards Sub-Committee;
  - Internal Audit;
  - Overview and scrutiny Committee.

#### **Conclusion**

The Council operates by seeking all appropriate professional advice and seeks to have regard to all appropriate guidance and in a prudent way and is satisfied that appropriate governance arrangements are in place, however it is committed to always maintaining and where possible improving these arrangements, in particular by addressing issues identified by Internal and external Audit as requiring improvement

**James Swindlehurst**  
**Leader Slough Borough Council**

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**Josie Wragg**  
**Chief Executive, Slough Borough Council**

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