

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 21st June 2021
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PORTFOLIO: Councillor Martin Carter
Cabinet Member for Customer Services & Corporate Support

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

PERFORMANCE & PROJECTS REPORT: QUARTER 4 2020/21

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Cabinet with the latest performance information for the 2020/21 financial year as measured by:

- The corporate balanced scorecard indicators during 2020/21.
- An update on the progress of the 28 projects on the portfolio, which are graded according to project magnitude as gold (12), silver (9) or bronze (7).
- An update on the progress of the current Manifesto commitments.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Cabinet is requested to note the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard, the progress status of the gold projects, and progress against the Manifesto commitments.

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

(a) Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The report supports the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy by detailing how the Council has performed against its priority outcome areas thereby enabling evidence-based decision-making on future plans.

SJWS Priorities:

- 1. Starting Well*
- 2. Integration (relating to Health & Social Care)*
- 3. Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods*
- 4. Workplace health*

This performance report documents progress against the Five-Year Plan, which is a holistic plan that aims to address the needs identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

(b) Five Year Plan Outcomes

The report supports each of the Five Year Plan outcomes by detailing how the Council has performed against its priority outcomes, as evidenced in the performance balanced scorecard and gold projects reporting. The outcomes are:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay
- Our residents will live in good quality homes
- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A
Human Rights	N/A	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A	N/A
Employment Issues	N/A	N/A
Equalities Issues	N/A	N/A
Community Support	N/A	N/A
Communications	N/A	N/A
Community Safety	N/A	N/A
Financial	N/A	N/A
Timetable for delivery	N/A	N/A
Project Capacity	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There is no statutory duty to report regularly to Cabinet on the Council’s performance, however as a best value authority under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Regular reporting of performance can assist the Council to demonstrate best value.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 sets out duties for local authorities in relation to equalities, including the public sector equality duty, which requires the Council to have due regard to equality issues when reviewing and changing services. Councils should also collect and review data on service provision to identify gaps in service and whether these impact on certain protected groups to a greater extent than others.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1. This is the quarter 4 report to Cabinet reporting on the 2020/21 financial year in respect of the performance position of the Council.
- 5.2. Please refer to the attached corporate performance report, which summarises progress against the Council's priorities in quarter 4 of the financial year 2020/21.

Corporate Balanced Scorecard

- 5.3. Due to the pandemic a number of underlying data sources have not been updated for a considerable time. This means that in four cases the indicator on the scorecard is not accurately capturing recent performance. The indicators impacted by a delay in external data source updates are:
 - Percentage attainment gap between all children and bottom 20% at Early Years Foundation Stage
 - Percentage attainment gap between all children and bottom 20% at Key Stage 2
 - Uptake of targeted health checks for people aged between 40-74
 - Number of people inactive
- 5.4. As consistent with the Q3 scorecard report the following indicators are either not reported against or do not include year-end targets:
 - Young people's happiness (not reported as no measure has been identified)
 - Business Rates in-year collection rate (no year-end target due to uncertainty caused by Covid-19)
 - Council Tax in-year collection rate (no year-end target due to uncertainty caused by Covid-19)
- 5.5. Overall, for Q4 the strategic performance picture remains variable, which is consistent with the position as reported at the end of Q3. There are some indicator-specific movements, which are detailed within this report.
- 5.6. Overall, 33% (7) of the 21 key performance indicators (KPIs) with agreed targets are performing either at or better than target. 43% (9) indicators are performing marginally worse than target, and 24% (5) indicators are performing below the red KPI threshold.
- 5.7. In relation to overall trend, performance has improved since last quarter for 35% (8) of the 23 KPIs, remained the same for 5% (1) and declined for 61% (14). Whilst Covid-19 is not the only factor impacting on performance, quarter 4 figures provide insight into the impact of Covid-19 in 2020/21 financial year.

5.8. Key changes this quarter:

- During quarter 4 we saw an increase in the number of street cleanliness inspections carried out as well as an improvement in the average inspection score of 2.91 and the average grade remaining at a grade B. A reduction in staff with COVID absences enabled a full service to be deployed across the board. As a result we had the manpower to keep on top of litter within the Borough.
- Slough's total crime rate per 1,000 population for quarter 3 improved from 28.5 in Q2 to 27.7 in Q3 however it remains higher than the Most Similar Group (MSG) and national averages. A reduction in the crimes rates is likely to be a result of national lockdown restrictions in place during Q3. The most prevalent offence subgroup for Slough for Q3 of the 2020/2021 financial year was 'violence without injury'.

In addition to the above, Appendix C details the published Police UK crime data as shown on the Berkshire Data Observatory

<https://slough.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/crime-and-community-safety/>.

This shows that the overall crime rate at the end of Q4 was similar to the crime rate observed at the end of each Lockdown. There is not yet a measurable upward or downward shift in the rate of crime or type of crime in Slough as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. There crime rate continues to be higher in Slough than the South East and England. The highest relative level for a category of crime is that of Violence and Sexual Offences, which is 43.5 per 1000 compared to 29.9 per 1,000 for South East and 29.7 per 1,000 for England.

- The number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) licences shows a steady increase from previous quarter from 244 to 267 properties. The enforcement of the requirement for all HMOs to be licensed requires proactive, unannounced visits to properties with unknown occupants so naturally the housing regulation team's activity in this area has been severely restricted by the Covid19 lockdown. Nonetheless we have managed to steadily increase the number of mandatory licensed HMOs by writing to landlords and reminding them of the requirement to licence. We have initiated prosecution proceedings against one landlord that failed to licence their property; though those proceedings are yet to be concluded. We have also issued financial penalties to another two landlords for failing to licence their properties. As restrictions are now being eased and officers that are currently shielding move closer to returning to work it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of licence applications in 2021/22 as the officers begin to accelerate their enforcement activity.
- The average journey time from the Heart of Slough to M4 J6 during evening peak time (Mon-Fri 16:30-18:30) as at the end of Mar-21 was 6 minutes 22 seconds. This is an improvement from the previous quarter (at the end of Dec-20) of 6 minutes 31 seconds.

5.9. Key areas for review this quarter:

- Since Covid-19 lockdown began we have seen a large increase in the unemployment rate. Slough's claimant rate for March of 8.9% comprises of

8,450 people of which 1,250 aged 16-24 (a rate of 11.6%) and 2,135 aged 50+ (a rate of 9.3%). The rate remains above the national and South East of England average and is the 6th highest rate for 16-64 out of the 63 largest cities and towns. Despite its past strong economic performance, Slough is one of the top 10 places hardest hit economically by Covid. Since end of March, 5,630 more people in Slough are claiming benefits due to unemployment which includes 855 more young people (16-24) and 1,425 more older people (50+). At the end of Feb there were 13,200 claims from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ('on furlough') and 7,200 claims totalling £18.2m for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

- There has been a reduction in the number of adults managing their care and support via a direct payment from 595 in Q3 to 583 in Q4 and as such this remains below the in-year target of 650. This is mainly down to pressures to pandemic response. Despite these challenges the overall number of people opting to take a direct payment within the year increased from 847 in Q4 2019/20 to 856 in Q4 2020/21. Improvement measures are underway to reach target for 2021-22. We continue to make direct payments easier to manage using pre-payment card, managed direct payment accounts and providing in-house support for the recruitment of Personal Assistants.
- There was a slight reduction in the number of net additional permanent dwellings successfully completed from 503 in 2019/20 to 501 in 2020/21. In addition, there are over 1,000 homes still under construction and over 2,500 new homes that have planning consent but construction has yet to start. Covid-19 may have slowed down progress on these which could impact completions over the next few years.
- At the end of quarter 4 we achieved a business collection rate of 90.0% of the expected in-year total, collecting £68.4m. The collection rate is 5.8% below the same time last year. The net collectable debt is much lower due to the large amount of reliefs that have been applied due to Covid-19; nearly £31m in reliefs were granted during 2020-21. Due to ongoing Covid-19 challenges many of the businesses for whom we have agreed to defer instalments or spread the instalments have struggled to make the payments before the end of the financial year. We fully expect that there will be a similar situation in 2021-22 but will be working with the businesses to help them make the payments. Business rate collection is a priority, but we need to be aware that many businesses are struggling and may need time to recover to a situation where they are able to pay accumulated business rates or they may not survive.
- At the end of quarter 4 we achieved a council tax collection rate of 92.7% of the expected in-year total, collecting £66.1m. The collection rate is 3.4% below the same time last year mainly due to the impact of Covid on the income of our residents as many were furloughed or lost work during this time. Recovery activity restarted in November, taking into consideration the circumstances of our residents, many of the debts have extended payment arrangements to support our residents and it may take sometime for many of residents to be able to clear these arrears. We will continue to collect this debt while being firm but fair in our collection methods and identifying vulnerabilities as necessary.

- There has been an increase in the number of homeless referrals received during the pandemic. Households in temporary accommodation increased from 355 households at the end of Q3 to 414 households at the end of Q4 representing a 16.5% increase in 3 months. Although there has been a freeze on evictions through the courts, there has been a significant number of referrals of single homeless households in response to the government's 'get everyone in' campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There has been an increase in the number of service requests that took 90 or more days to close, from 144 in Q3 to 301 in Q4. This increase follows a previous decrease from Q2 to Q3 as a result of restrictions easing during that period. During Covid-19 there has been a delay in investigating noise recording as the specialist IT equipment can only be used within the office. This has led to cases remaining open for longer periods whilst officers are asked to work remotely. During lockdowns home visits could not be carried out therefore many of these cases remain pending whilst we wait being able to carry out visits again. Officers were only able to progress cases where they can be dealt with remotely or where residents have provided us with useful information/ evidence. Work has resumed to install noise recorders to monitor and close cases where necessary. Officers are now able to carry out visits to properly assess cases, action and close as necessary.

Project Portfolio

5.10. Progress continues on all major schemes and projects. Across all projects on the portfolio, 50% were rated overall as Green (14 projects), 43% were rated overall as Amber (12 projects) and 7% were rated overall as Red (2 projects).

5.11. Two projects completed this quarter:

- Slough Academy Phases 2 and 3 and
- Corporate Grip and Governance (Our Futures)

5.12. Key achievements this quarter:

- SUR (Nova House): Revised planning amendment completed.

5.13. Key issues to be aware of:

- Fleet Challenge: Works to install the new charging stations at 25 Windsor Road delayed as the installation of the power supply has not yet been completed by the District Network Operator SSE.
- Capita One Hosting Education Modules: Project on hold due to IT infrastructure.

Manifesto Pledges

5.14. Due to the postponement of the local elections, no new Manifesto pledges were released for 2020/21. During 2020/21, due to the Covid-19 response, there were impacts on the delivery of some of the existing Manifesto pledges.

5.15. There were 43 Manifesto pledges across the key areas from 2019/20, which we continue to track during 2020/21.

5.16. 23 pledges are complete. At the end of Q3, 40% (17 pledges) were rated overall as Green (achieving or on schedule) and 7% (3 pledges) were rated overall as Amber (signifying as working towards). None of the pledges were rated overall as Red.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

None. The report will be reviewed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13th July 2021.

7. **Conclusion**

This paper sets out the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard, the progress status of the gold projects, and progress against the Manifesto commitments. The Council has seen areas of strong performance through Q4 of 2020/21, with some other areas requiring review, learning and improvement. Areas to celebrate and areas for improvement will be reflected on and considered as part of operational delivery decisions taken in Q1 2021/22. A further report highlighting performance in Q1 2021/22 will be received by Cabinet in September 2021.

8. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' - Corporate Performance Report Q4 2020/21
- 'B' - Manifesto Commitments Q4 2020/21
- 'C' - Crime and Community Safety Trends Q4 2020/21

9. **Background Papers**

Please email programme.managementoffice@slough.gov.uk for a copy of Project Highlight reports for this reporting period.