

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	15 April 2024
Subject:	2023-24 Q3 Corporate Performance Report
Lead Member:	Cllr Dexter Smith – Leader of the Council
Chief Officer:	Stephen Brown - Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Dave Hounsell - Group Manager
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	No
Exempt:	No
Decision Subject To Call In:	No
Appendices:	A - Corporate Performance Report – Dec-23

1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1. The Council was set a Direction to improve evidence-based decision-making. One mechanism to achieve evidence-based decision-making is to implement a robust, transparent, and regular corporate performance reporting cycle. This corporate performance reporting cycle is a key component of the council's Performance Management Approach.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Note and comment on the Council's current performance and mitigating actions as measured by the key performance indicators within the corporate management information report and scorecard; and
- Refer the report to full Council on 25th April 2024.

Commissioner Review

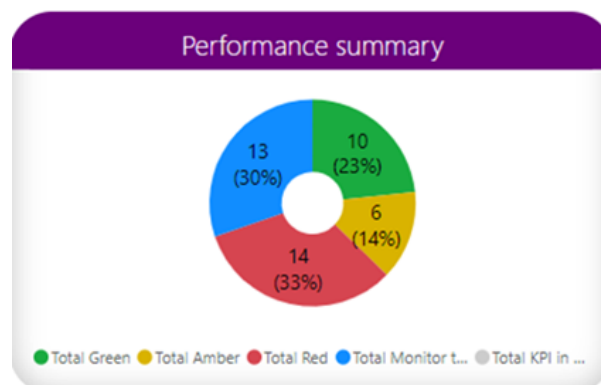
“Commissioners welcome this report and in particular the clarity around areas that are underperforming. We trust the Council will take ownership of its performance and seek to improve where the report highlights performance is below the required level.”

2. Report

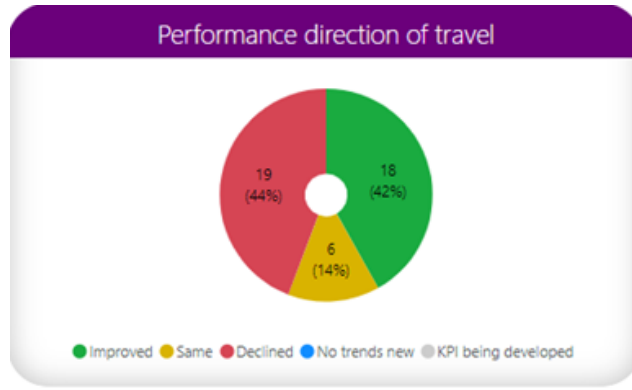
- 2.1. This is the quarter 3 report to Cabinet on the key performance indicators from the 2023/24 corporate management information scorecard aligned to the strategic priorities in the new Corporate Plan. This performance report aligns to reports on

risk, finance, and audit in the monthly corporate assurance model, reporting to CLT Assurance forum.

- 2.2. The corporate performance scorecard will be reviewed and amended in Q1 2024/25 to meet the corporate priorities of the Council. There will be an increased emphasis on linking performance trends to action tracking. They will also be reviewed to take account of the role of the Office of Local Government (Oflog). Oflog is committed to ensuring the [Local Authority Data Explorer](#) presents a rounded set of themes and metrics which best reflect the roles and responsibilities of local authorities and to benchmark local government performance.
- 2.3. The council is developing recovery success measures to drive the Phase 2 Recovery Plan. These are being developed through a learning network with Thurrock, Croydon, and Woking. They will be reviewed and approved at Cabinet and Improvement & Recovery Board by Q2 2024/25.
- 2.4. At present there are 31 published Best Value performance metrics in the OFLOG Data Explorer covering themes including waste management, planning, adult social care, roads, adult skills and corporate & finance, and some of the datasets reported are historic. However, it is expected over time that this dataset will be expanded to include new themes. In the meantime, the Council will make use of other performance datasets, including LG Inform and CIPFA benchmarking to ensure it has comparable performance data.
- 2.5. Overall, for Dec-23 the strategic performance picture remains variable. 23% (10) of the 43 key performance indicators (KPIs) are performing either at or better than target. 14% (6) indicators are performing marginally worse than target, and 33% (14) indicators are performing below the red KPI threshold. A further 30% (13) indicators are monitored for trends.



- 2.6. Compared to the previous month or similar period from last year, performance has improved for 37% (16) of the 43 KPIs, remained the same for 14% (6) and declined for 49% (21).



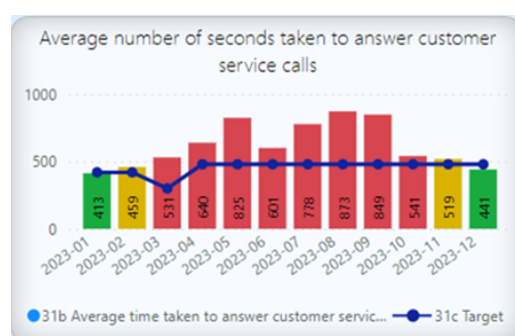
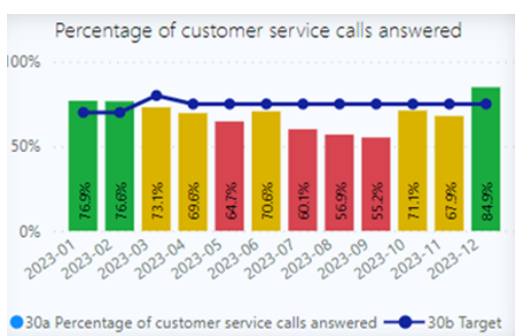
2.7. Appendix A of the corporate performance report summarises progress against the Council’s priorities as presented in December 2023. The report includes:

- Summary progress against the strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan.
- Areas for recognition, where the council can learn from promising practice - trends that indicate the council is on track for delivering its objectives (refer to pages 9 to 11).
- Areas of improvement – trends that indicate the council is improving although performance currently below agreed target (refer to pages 12 to 14).
- Areas that require a continued focus on improvement - trends that indicate the council is not on track for delivering its strategic objectives (refer to pages 15 to 19).

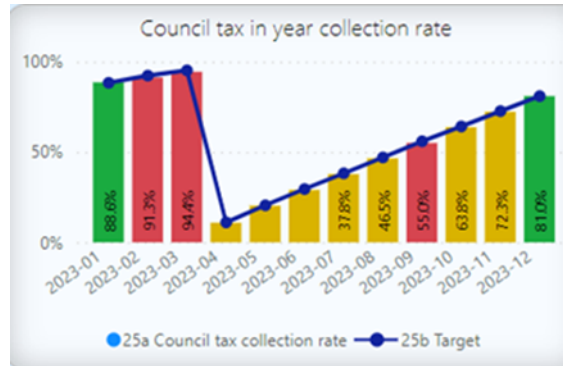
2.8. In Appendix A, pages 2 to 8 outline the performance trends against the 43 strategic KPIs, and the mitigating actions and action owners. Each action has an assigned Executive Director owner, who is accountable for the performance level, and who will assign responsibility for delivery to officers. Further, pages 22 to 29 include charts showing trends over time for each metric along with progress against target agreed.

2.9. Key areas of improvements:

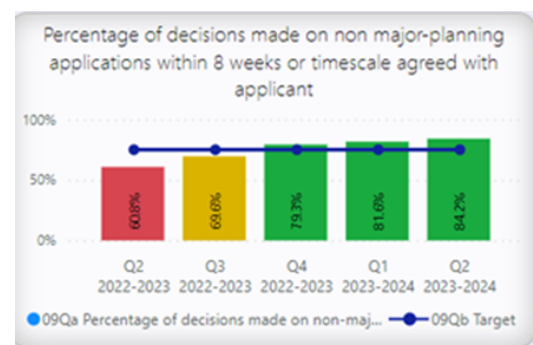
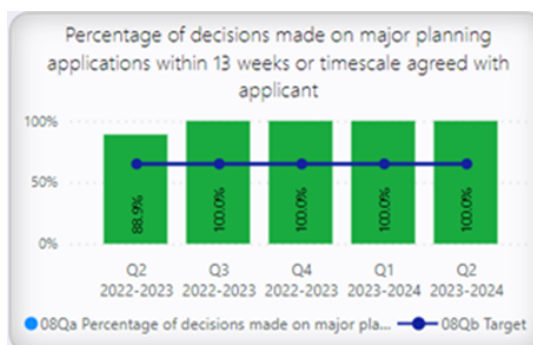
- An improvement in the percentage of customer service calls answered and call waiting times with performance exceeding target for the first time since Jan/Feb-23. Call centre wait times during Dec-23 reduced to 07 mins 21 seconds and calls answered increased at 84.9% (4,977). The Customer Services Improvement project team have been working on service improvements including telephone interactive voice response messages and video development for our website and digital channels.



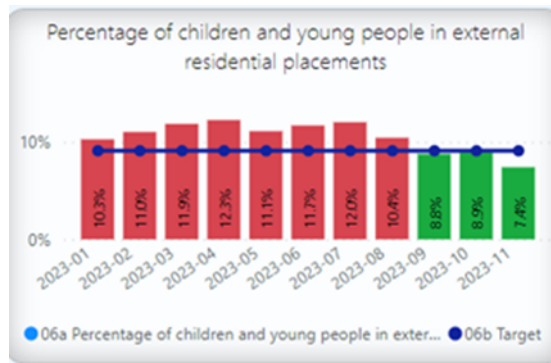
- An improvement in the in-year council tax collection rate, at 81.0% for Dec-23 the rate is 0.86% ahead of the collection rate achieved this time last year and for the first time since Jan-23 above the revised in-year target of 80.95%. To improve collection rates, the team are implementing additional technology that will automate high volume, low value tasks, which will free up resources to focus on collection.



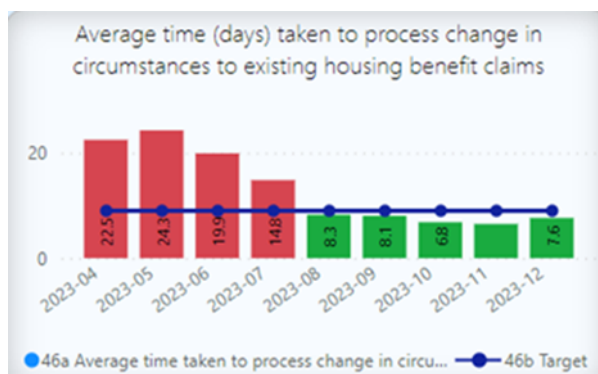
- Major and non-major planning applications decisions made within timescale during 2023/24 Q2 remain consistently high. Performance trends actively monitored at management meetings focussing on identifying service improvements actions to issue decisions within timescale including regularly reviewing applications with officers, timely site visits to assess planning applications and where necessary seek amendments to developments early in the process. Slough planning service ranked in the top quartile nationally.



- An improvement in the number and proportion of children in external residential placements with 7.4% (16 children) during Nov-23 and lower than target of 9.1%. This is the lowest rate over the last 12 months, with the rate at its peak during Apr-23 at 12.3% (31 children). We have also seen cost reductions for children who continue to be placed in these types of placements. External Placement Panel review all children in external placements, targeting those specifically in residential care, identifying those that specifically can be placed in fostering placements.

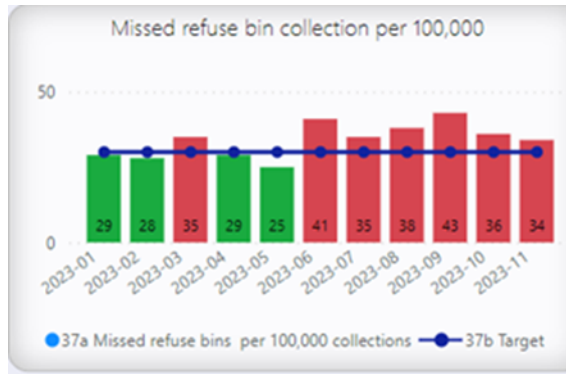


- A slight increase in the average time taken to process change in circumstances to existing housing benefit claims due to fewer processing days and with staff taking leave during Dec-23. At 7.64 days during Dec-23, this remains below target of 9 days for the last 5 months however increased by 1.14 days from the previous month. The year-to-date average processing time for changes of 13.71 days is reduction of 0.72 days from the previous month. The Council has made a significant investment in automation, a detailed improvement plan is in place which will remedy existing issues and help to improve processing times to an acceptable and sustainable level by the end of the financial year.

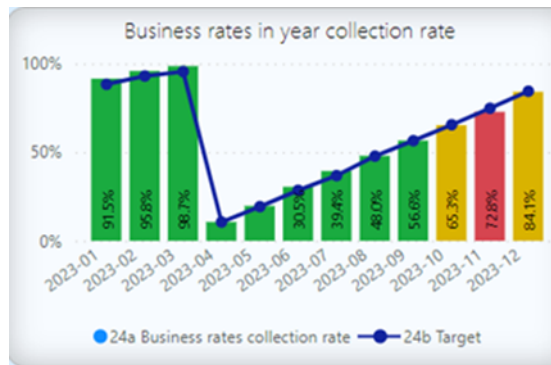


2.10. Key areas of improvement although performance below agreed target:

- An improvement in missed refuse bin collection rate over the last two months from 43 missed per 100,000 during Sept-23 to 34 during Nov-23 however performance remains above target of 30. Guidance on the council's website on how to prevent a rejected bin collection due to overloading or contamination. Online form available to report a missed bin collection. An oversight & variation log created to tackle persistent problems or repeat occurrences. This is shared weekly with team to highlight hotspots and problem areas and for confirmation that the appropriate action has been completed.

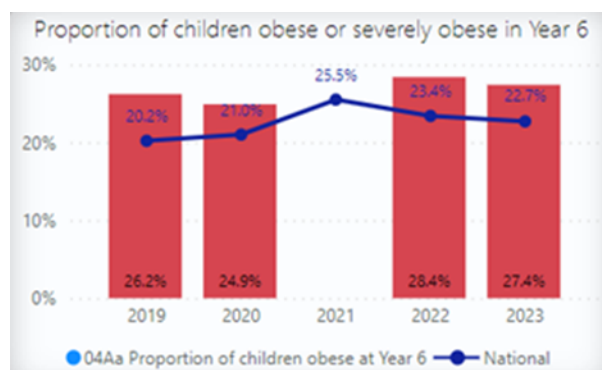


- An improvement in the business rate in-year collection rate with the gap between collection rate and in-year target reducing. The business rate in-year collection rate of 84.10% for Dec-23 is 0.30% below the in-year target of 84.40% and 0.16% lower than the collection rate achieved this time last year. The council continues to take appropriate recovery action on those businesses that do not keep their payments up to date.



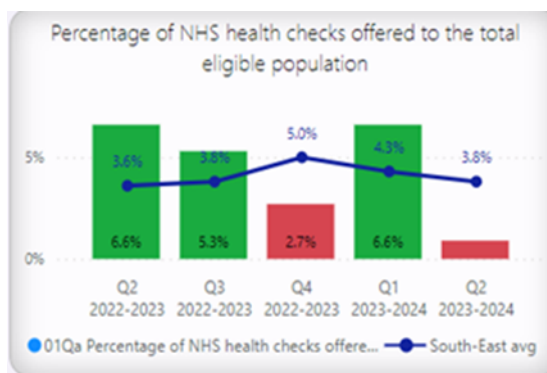
2.11. Key areas that require a continued focus on improvement:

- Over a quarter of children aged 10 to 11 years measured as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) classified as obese or severely obese. In 2022/23, 27.4% (635) of children aged 10 to 11 years classified as obese (including severely obese), no significant change from the previous year of 28.4% (660) and significantly worse than the national average of 22.7% and South-East region average of 19.4%. Children and Young People (CYP) weight management service will be removed from current integrated wellness service. Public Health Officer for CYP now in post (started in Dec-23) and will lead on a whole systems approach to weight management and healthy eating for CYP. A work plan to be developed by the end of Jan-24.

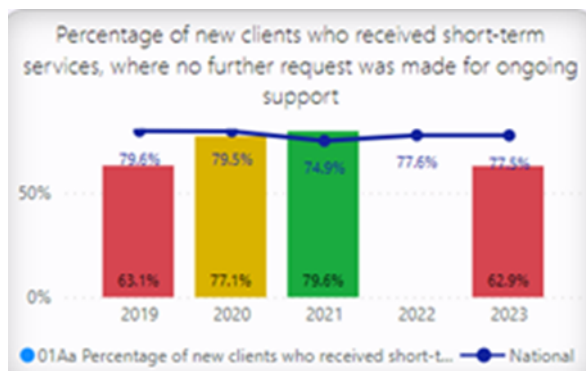


- A reduction in eligible population offered an NHS health check in Slough, a reduction from 6.6% (2,565) during Q1 to 0.9% (355) during Q2 and below the national average of 5.6% and South-East average of 3.8%. Rate likely to improve once late reporting taken into account as it has done in previous quarters.

Improvements actions include 1:1 visits of GP practices delivering NHS health checks in Slough to understand barriers and opportunities to improve delivery. Use of data from performance dashboards to map health checks offered at GP practice level to contribute to improvements and share best practise using universal offer combined with a more targeted approach. Liaising with Solutions4Health to better understand their health check offer and exploring opportunities to supplement GP offer and encourage outreach.

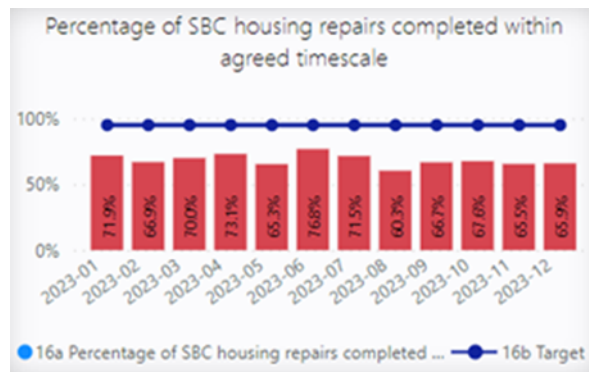


- 62.9% of new ASC clients during 2022/23 received short-term services where no further request was made for ongoing support. A reduction from the previous year of 79.6%, ranking Slough in the bottom quartile nationally. Reablement service increased the flow of service users entering reablement. This includes service users with complex needs where targeted goal-based therapy interventions can benefit, increase independence, and reduce dependency on direct care provision. We routinely consider people we're aware will require on-going support but at the reduced level through our interventions. This approach enables us to rehabilitate those with complex needs, significant changes in presentation to improve their quality of life, functional abilities and to adjust the level of care needs post reablement.



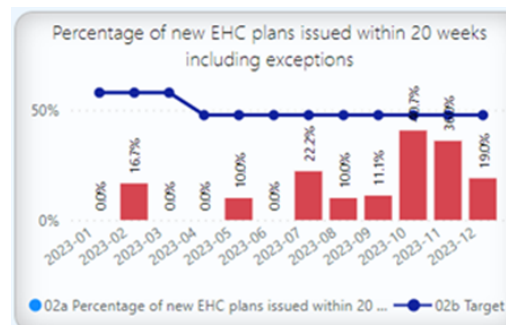
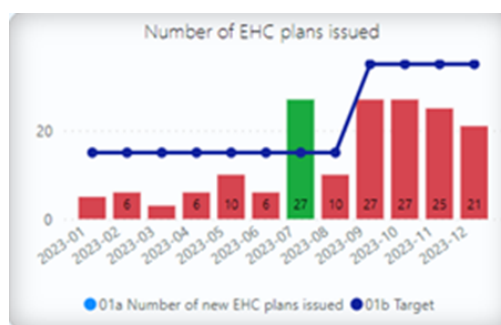
- A reduction in the number of housing repairs completed on time during De-23 with over 2,570 responsive repairs to action. Housing repairs completed within timescale at 66% (1,184) remains a major issue for responsive repairs service and well below target of 95%. The high number of damp & mould

cases continues to impact the service as well as an increase in repairs due to persistent bad weather, high levels of sickness during December and staff on leave during the festive holidays. Regular management meetings scheduled with senior management to discuss critical issues including complaints. Proposals in discussion to introduce a new approach to working smarter to reduce response times.



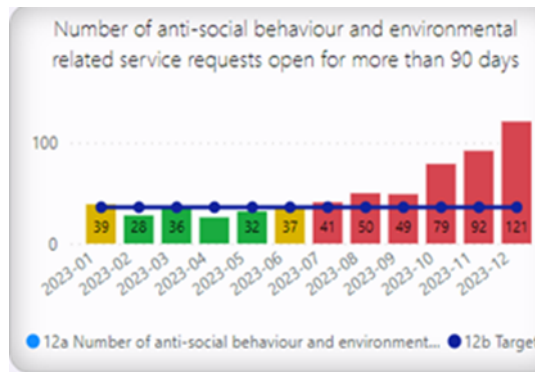
- A reduction in the number of EHC plans completed within timescale, with 21 EHC Plans finalised in the month, of which 19.0% (4) finalised within the statutory 20 weeks' timeframe with rate remaining below target. Over 160 children waiting for a late running EHC needs assessment. The rate was impacted with fewer working days during Dec-23 and interim staff taking 2 weeks leave.

SEN Team actively reducing backlog of late running EHC needs assessments. Draft EHC plans quality assured within the new assessment framework prior to issuing. Business Support Officers (BSO) allocated to maintain clear records of panel decisions and to ensure improved coordination of advice requests and to inform high quality decision letters. Case officers to access decisions from single location to provide improved communication of decisions to stakeholders. All SEND 0-25 Officers involved in weekly training developing quality of EHC plan writing, including writing effective and appropriate outcomes. Training in place from DfE to develop quality of PFA outcomes. Live case tracker embedded to ensure clarity and consistency of process recording to run concurrently with Capita One system allowing for clearer accountability and cross validation of data. All 'legacy' outstanding Educational Psychologist (EP) assessment requests now allocated by Personal Education Plans (PEP).

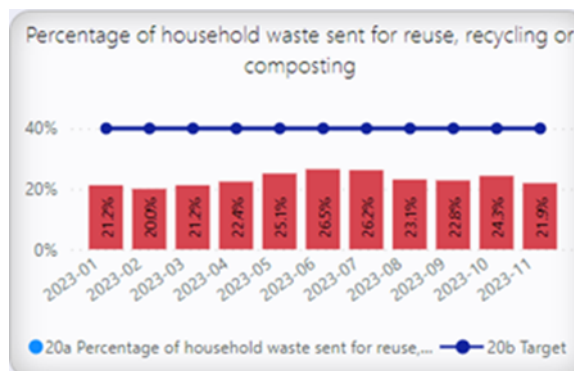


- The number of anti-social behaviour and environmental related service requests open for more than 90 days on the increase since Apr-23. We have seen an increase in housing regulation investigations which can take months

to resolve. All cases reviewed each month and appropriate action taken. Teams continue to work with Communications and Direct Services Operations (DSO) team to target hotspots for household fly-tipping and are building legal cases for enforcement. Noise nuisance cases can take 4 or 5 months to resolve. Complex cases require investigation and officers to take formal legal action, cases closed at the completion of formal action. This is not necessarily a negative as it's about reaching the right outcome and as our enforcement teams take a more robust stance, we may see an increase in the number of cases taking longer than 90 days.



- Compared to similar period last year, a decrease in the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting and remains well below the 40% target. Recycling rates cyclically decline during the winter months due to a reduction in green waste, however the rate in Slough remains low in all seasons. Slough increased the types of plastic that are recyclable. Residents can now recycle loose plastic in their red recycling bins. This should reduce the number of bins rejected due to contamination resulting in an increase in recyclables.



3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1. Financial implications

- The key performance indicators from the corporate management information scorecard are aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan articulates a commitment to delivering financial prudence and demonstrating Best Value for residents, any monies needed to achieve improved performance must be funded within the council revenue budgets.

- A separate finance report is presented to Cabinet quarterly that shows the financial performance of Slough Borough Council but clearly links with information in this report. Separate commentary is provided on business rate and council tax collection rates. Failure to collect in line with in-year collection fund assumptions has adverse implications for the following year's revenue budget.

3.2. *Legal implications*

- Whilst there is no statutory duty to report regularly to Cabinet on the Council's performance, 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.
- The Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 was approved by Audit and Corporate Governance Committee in July 2023. This included a number of actions, including an action to improve the systems in place for managing performance. This stated that the Council must ensure basic systems and controls are in place to ensure that performance is managed, and risk appropriately identified, reported and monitored. Performance data should measure the quality of services for users, use of resources and value for money. Performance indicators should be set drawing on sector wide data sets from various organisations including the Local Government Association and CIPFA.
- The Government has published draft best value guidance which identifies seven best value themes. Under the theme of Service Delivery, local authority data is one of the means to identify whether services are being delivered efficiently and effectively and services should be benchmarked against comparable authorities. Performance should be regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered. Under the theme of Continuous Improvement, frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of improvement plans is identified as a characteristic of a well-functioning authority. Under the theme of Governance, it is recommended that performance management information measures actual outcomes effectively and is frequently interrogated to allow under performance to be addressed.

3.3. *Risk management implications*

- Mitigating actions are in place for strategic performance indicators where key performance trends require action. These actions are proposed by the responsible manager, and updates are monitored at the monthly CLT Assurance forum.
- The monthly CLT Assurance forum considers finance, risk, and performance to ensure that the leadership team receive a rounded picture on the health of the organisation, to inform improvement actions.

3.4. *Environmental implications*

- Strategic performance indicators aligned to priority 3 of the corporate plan retains and expands upon environmental commitments under the following strategic objective *'reducing Slough's carbon footprint, promoting active travel and sustainable*

forms of transport, and taking action to prevent or minimise the impact of climate change’.

3.5. *Equality implications*

- 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 the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In relation to equality of opportunity, the legislation requires the Council to consider the need to remove or reduce disadvantage, meet the needs of people with protected characteristics and encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life and other activities. Performance data can assist the Council to identify gaps in service and consider what action is required to address this.

4. Background Papers

None