



Improvement and Recovery Plan

2025-2026

Executive summary

Purpose and direction

The council is changing and improving. We are working together with people and communities across Slough to shape the future for our place and our council. We are committed to making financially sustainable decisions to meet the needs of the borough.

At the heart of this plan is a vision for an economically productive and prosperous town that is more vibrant and fun as a place to live and as a destination to visit. Our Improvement and Recovery Plan 2025-2026 sets out improvement arrangements for two years, running through to late 2026. Success measures have been established within the plan to keep activity on track and raise performance.

We aim to do more than improve. We plan to create an efficient, effective and economical council with a sustainable future. A crucial element of this phase is the development and implementation of an operating model, designed to recognise residents' needs and deliver well within the resources available.

We recognise there is much work to be done in rebuilding trust in the council and showing we are putting people first. The situation we are dealing with has been years in the making and so it will take years to resolve. To take us forward positively, the plan shows how we will operate as one council with absolute commitment at political and officer level.

The plan also recognises there are two intervention processes underway at Slough. The council's children's social care functions have been delivered under the statutory intervention of the Department for Education (DfE) since 2014, when the council was directed to set up an independent company, Slough Children's First (SCF), to deliver its children's services. The DfE determines when services can return to the council, which is the ultimate aim.

The wider council improvement and recovery started in late 2021. Government intervention began after it was found the council had failed to meet its Best Value Duty and was under performing in key areas. This updated plan focuses on the recent directions laid out by government to become a Best Value Council. At the same time, the plan considers the interventions relating to children's services to ensure a longer-term approach to corporate improvement, the development of a new operating model, and achieving sustainability across the organisation.

All improvement actions are designed to carefully align with key council plans, including the corporate plan, transformation plan and medium-term financial plan, to deliver a strategic approach to meeting the Best Value Duties.

The full IRP can be read on our website and will be uploaded soon. Go to www.slough.gov.uk.



Priorities and best value themes

We are committed to becoming a Best Value Council as defined by the government standards designed to raise the standards in local government with continuous improvement and transformation.

This means we will share a clear vision about how to meet the needs of the different yet interconnected needs of our communities in a bold and confident way.

The council is changing from within to build a culture that is inclusive to all and outward looking. The council leadership will demonstrate an approach that invites feedback and encourages high performance. At all times, the council will be resident focused and have an approach where continuous improvement is expected and delivered.

The seven best value themes are: Leadership, governance, culture, use of resources, service delivery, partnerships and community engagement, and continuous improvement.



The plan sets out how our council will work towards best value with a focus on better governance, leadership and a positive organisational culture, financial improvements and effective risk management. This also involves building data, systems and capacity to improve, recover, and transform.

The council aims to become smaller and more flexible, be more accessible, get things right first time, have a resident first approach, and be inclusive, with a focus on doing the basics well and consistently right across all services.

The main development priorities laid out in the IRP are:

- Vision and evidence based decision-making
- Political leadership and governance
- A high performing workforce and culture
- Financial improvement
- Communications, partnerships and engagement

Key to success are two factors:

- Changing the way we work to meet rising demand and respond to extremely challenging resourcing constraints is the focus of the operating model. The operating model will reshape the council to ensure efficient, effective and economic delivery of core services and priorities
- Financial sustainability is essential to the council being resilient and stable in years to come. Major work is underway to tackle past issues and provide robust measures for the future.

Delivering in these five areas will provide a holistic response to drive the necessary change. At all times, the needs of people and the borough will be forefront.

Vision and evidence based decision-making	• We will have a long-term vision for the borough, with an ambitious approach backed by evidence to drive change • We will take a leading role in developing economic growth, communities and local democracy
Political leadership and governance	• We will build a well-run council with good processes, leadership and behaviours • We will be a council where the corporate and political leads work well together • We will change the way we work to always be efficient and effective, with a focus on residents and making sure people can contact us
A high performing workforce and culture	• We will model effective leadership behaviours and have a teamwork approach • We are committed to development of staff in an inclusive workplace with a positive culture • We will provide council staff and managers with the tools needed to deliver in their roles for the borough
Financial improvement	• We will ensure our council is financially well managed with checks, assessments and audits to meet industry standards and regulations • We will live within our means and be open about our finances
Communications, partnerships and engagement	• We will work with and listen to residents, communities and partners make Slough better place for all • We will work hard to rebuild trust in the council and our services • We will have a 'One Slough' approach
Supporting programmes	
Complaints handling	• We will listen to feedback and do all we can to make things right when they go wrong
Improving the digital and technical capacity	• We will provide easy to use digital services for residents • We will improve the use of digital technology across the organisation and modernise outdated systems in line with industry standards and regulations
Strategic commissioning	• We will improve our commissioning processes and how we manage contracts
Risk maturity	• We will have a high-quality approach to risk management • We will meet industry standards and regulations



Council priorities

The purpose of the dedicated improvement plan is to define, refine and track the change needed to succeed for the borough.

The Improvement Recovery Plan does not stand alone. All the improvement activity underway has a people, resident and place focus. All the elements of the plan will be engaged on with residents as the activity develops to ensure a borough-wide and constructive approach that delivers for Slough. The way the council checks the decisions made and makes sure everything is being done to high standards has also been refreshed as part of the process.

The improvement plan aligns with the three core council priorities in the corporate plan.

A borough for children and young people to thrive

- Providing quality services for vulnerable children and those with SEND
- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people
- Tackling high rates of child obesity
- Increasing children and young people's participation in decisions and in shaping the future of Slough
- Working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing
- Supporting residents to be as independent as possible, whilst providing quality services for the most vulnerable adults
- Improving community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour
- Affordable, safe and healthy homes - improving the quality of council housing stock and the private rented sector

A town where residents can live healthier, safer and more independent lives

- Working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing
- Supporting residents to be as independent as possible, whilst providing quality services for the most vulnerable adults
- Improving community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour

A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough

- Affordable, safe and healthy homes - improving the quality of council housing stock and the private rented sector
- Improving air quality, promoting active travel and sustainable forms of transport, and taking action to prevent or minimise the impact of climate change
- Providing clean, quality public spaces and working with developers to deliver a modern town centre
- Engaging with businesses to create new employment opportunities



Improvement and Recovery Plan 2025-2026: Executive summary