

Best Value Board

Terms of Reference

1.0 Context

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities used their Best Value powers to appoint Commissioners at Slough Borough Council on 1 December 2021. They directed the Commissioners to ensure that the Council prepared and implemented an improvement and recovery plan to address the best value failure identified at the Council by the external assurance reviews in summer 2021.

This was reiterated following the fifth report from Commissioners, dated 30 April 2024 and published on 22 October 2024 and restated in the renewed directions.

Clear governance, monitoring and assurance reporting arrangements need to be in place to ensure the Improvement and Recovery Plan is delivered and supports Slough to become a Best Value Council. The right structure of meetings therefore needs to be in place to allow Members, Commissioners and Officers to perform their roles in the programme delivery and assurance needed.

2.0 Purpose

The Board's purpose is to provide evidence to Commissioners of improvement and recovery progress, so that Commissioners in turn can give assurance to the Secretary of State. Through the Board, the Council will need to provide tangible evidence of progress against its recovery plan. This should include a risk register highlighting any delivery-based issues.

The Board will bring together the Council's improvement journey with that of Slough Children First, providing governance oversight for a future more integrated structure.

The Board will specifically cover the following:

- Progress in implementing the Improvement and Recovery Action Plan and all associated programmes, including the Finance Improvement Plan, Target Operating Model and wider transformation
- Risks and issues arising in the future delivery of improvement activity
- Benefits realisation, ensuring improvement activity makes a tangible difference
- Children's Improvement –Children's Social Care and SEND
- Promoting a corporate, Council wide commitment to delivering a Best Value Council

3.0 Status

The Board will act as a consultative forum, providing challenge and advice as appropriate. It will receive updates from the Corporate & Service Improvement Board and the Finance Board.

Commissioners will exercise the powers given to them by the Directions as and when necessary.

It is for the Council to take the actions required to deliver the recovery and improvement plan, using the policies and procedures it has in place.

4.0 Membership

Members are listed in the table below:

| Member's Name | Member's Role |
|------------------------|--|
| Gavin Jones | Lead Commissioner (Chair) |
| Alix Macfarlane | Programme Director - Communications and Engagement |
| Bal Toor | Director of HR and OD |
| Christopher Holme | Interim Director of Corporate Finance |
| David Coleman-Groom | Executive Director Adults' Services |
| Denise Murray | Finance Commissioner |
| Dexter Smith | Leader and Lead Member for Recovery & Improvement, Governance and HR |
| Ian O'Donnell | Executive Director, Corporate Resources (s151) |
| Jackie Wilson | Children's Social Care advisor |
| Jane Senior | Director of Commissioning |
| Lisa Keating | Director of Housing |
| Mark Hak Sanders | Director of Financial Management |
| Martin Chalmers | Director Digital, Data & Technology |
| Neil Hoskinson | Director of Education and Inclusion |
| Pat Hayes | Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment |
| Pavitar Mann (Cllr) | Leader of the Opposition |
| Peter Hopkins | Director, Property and Assets |
| Puja Bedi (Cllr) | Lead member for children's services and financial oversight |
| Robert Stedmond (Cllr) | Chair, Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee |
| Sarah Wilson | Assistant Director of Legal and Governance (HB Law) |
| Simon Baker | Chair, Slough Children First Board |

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|-------------------|---|
| Sonia Khan | Director of Strategy, Change and Resident Engagement |
| Sue Butcher | Executive Director, Children's Services, Chief Executive Slough Children's Services |
| Sukdave Ghuman | Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer |
| Tessa Lindfield | Director of Public Health & Public Protection |
| Wal Chahal (Cllr) | Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Transformation and council assets |
| Will Tuckley | Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services (Managing Director Commissioner) |

All members are requested to prioritise their attendance and notify the EA to the Commissioners when they are unable to attend. With the permission of the Chair, members may authorise an appropriate colleague to represent them if they are unable to attend a meeting.

Additional attendees invited to the Board are:

| Attendee's Name | Attendee's Role |
|-----------------|---|
| Mahria Arshad | Executive Assistant to Commissioners (Secretariat) |
| Helen Barugh | Chief of Staff to Commissioners |
| Lyuba Donskaya | Deputy Chief of Staff to Commissioners |

Guest attendance will be required as and when to present on key topics requiring decision or direction.

5.0 Meetings

The Best Value Board will be held four (4) times a year – dates will be pre-scheduled for 2025/26 and will be added when agreed.

Meetings will be held in person and will only be moved in exceptional circumstances and by agreement from the Chair.

Quorum would be attendance from half of the members listed in the table above (50% or 14) and must include the Chair (or an agreed Deputy) **and** a member of CLT **and** a Commissioner.

External guests may be invited to attend the Board as required.

6.0 Reporting and Administration

All papers will be held in "Best Value Board" section of the Transformation Teams Channel. They will be available from the Monday directly before the scheduled

Board meeting. Access can be requested through TransformationPMO@slough.gov.uk.

The EA to the Commissioners will manage the Secretariat functions for the meeting – when needed, cover will be provided from the Executive Support team.

It is the responsibility of each member to follow up on their actions and ensure these are completed by the required timescales.

The Board will not meet in public although the minutes will be published within the Commissioner's pages of the SBC website (www.slough.gov.uk/commissioners)

If there are any items that the Chair deems not suitable for publication, these will be minuted separately and not included in the published version.

Minutes for the previous version of this meeting as the Improvement & Recovery Board can be found on the Commissioners' section of the SBC website (www.slough.gov.uk/council/council-improvement/7).

7.0 Version Control

| Version | Author | Date | Changes |
|---------|-----------------|----------|--|
| 0.1 | Stephanie Clark | 24/03/25 | [Tabled at inaugural meeting] |
| 0.2 | Helen Barugh | 30/09/25 | Reflecting changes suggested at the July meeting plus sundry updates, to be taken to the October meeting |
| | | | |

Appendix 1

Dates to be added when agreed

| Date | Time |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Thursday 27 March 2025 | 14.00 – 15.30 |
| 30 July 2025 | 2.30 – 4.00 |
| 9 October 2025 | 11.00 – 12.30 |
| 8 January 2026 | |
| 2 April 2026 | |