

Appendix B: Data Improvement Plan supporting the Corporate Performance Scorecard

This report sets out the first phase of a data improvement plan linked to performance reporting. This is for the collection and assurance of key performance measures from the corporate balanced scorecard informing the corporate performance reporting framework.

The aim is to complete the review by the end of financial year 2024-25. The work is intended to provide a level of “check and challenge” into the collection and calculation of the key metrics feeding into the corporate balanced scorecard.

1.	<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Slough Borough Council is committed to improving the data quality and assurance of the directorate metrics submitted to the CEO Strategy & Insight Team. There are presently forty-seven performance metrics that are regularly reported from directorates either on a monthly, quarterly, school term or annual basis.</p> <p>The first phase of the proposed Data Improvement Plan is to review the corporate performance measures, which are presented quarterly to Cabinet.</p> <p>The metrics form the basis from evidence-based decision making through the council’s corporate governance. The expectation is that the measures should provide sufficiently robust levels of evidence and insight and provide a good level of accountability and scrutiny of performance in each of the council’s directorates.</p> <p>Our ambition is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve trust and confidence in the Council’s corporate performance framework, • enable improvements in corporate oversight and evidence-based decision making, which improve service delivery to Slough residents, • implement new mechanisms and controls for the collection and assurance of performance information which derive from directorate business systems, <p>To work towards this, we need to prioritise improvements in the process for the collection and assurance of performance information, which increase transparency and confidence in the council’s performance function.</p> <p>The initial phase of the proposed work necessitates the collection of information from the directorates. The work is intended to provide a level of “check and challenge” into the collection of information. The first phase of work will be initiated, structured, and led by the CEO Strategy & Insight team and will require the following information:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A confirmation of the methodology used for each directorate’s set of corporate performance measures. • A declaration of the data source used for each directorate metric, i.e., the business system report, spreadsheet, application tracker used. • A confidence rating in the quality of data supporting each metric, • A declaration on whether the source data supporting each metric is maintained in single or multiple recording systems. • A confirmation on the reporting cycle, benchmarking, and target in use for each metric. • A nomination for the collection of this information, which will ordinarily be the data officer that provides the corporate performance measure, • A confirmation that the information returned for your domain, will be reviewed, and agreed by the executive director. • A narrative on the status of data quality in each directorate, the challenges encountered and plans for improvement. <p>The first phase of this work will involve a simple data collection exercise against the corporate performance measures.</p> <p>Slough Borough Council are committed to improving systems and processes which enhance assurance and reliability of key information, and this is a new Government Direction as part of Slough’s extension of the intervention: “Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking.” The paper is provided for discussion and agreement of Phase 1 of a Data Improvement Plan, and invites discussion on subsequent phases of this work.</p>
2.	Recommendation or Decision required
	The first phase of the data improvement plan was approved at November 2024 Assurance CLT.
3	Background to Phase 1 of the Data Improvement Plan.
3.1	<p>Data Improvement Plan (Phase 1)</p> <p>The collection of additional information from directorates is expected to represent only an initial stage in Slough Borough Council’s data improvement journey.</p> <p>There is recognition that high quality corporate performance information derives at source from robust systems processes and operational practice at directorate-level. It should be recognised that reliable consistent, and accurate corporate performance information derives from the ground up.</p> <p>It is expected in the development of a council data improvement plan, that there may also be emergent or recurrent themes which relate to the council’s IT infrastructure and support for core directorate business systems. There may also be factors which relate to the governance of business systems, and in training practitioners and recording practice. There might also be themes regarding the legacy impact on data of business systems upgrades, the</p>

	<p>introduction of new systems forms/ modules, or maintenance of the council's data warehouse.</p> <p>In the collection of information at Phase 1 the CEO Strategy & Insight team are requesting a narrative of the challenges experienced at directorate-level. The first step in this process is the collection of the oversight of these challenges, and it may be that data officers responsible for the provision and the calculation of the corporate performance metrics, could provide a level of insight into those challenges.</p> <p>At this point in the process, the narrative compiled will operate as a form of stock-take for challenges experienced at directorate level, for the thirty performance measures which form the core of the council's performance reporting suite. The information in the grid will provide detail on the data sources supporting the current Slough Borough Council performance reporting suite.</p> <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of the officer and/or senior manager to complete the information grid attached to this paper. • A statement of the challenges experienced at directorate-level, to inform the necessary next steps in the plan. • A review of the information compiled by the executive director.
5.	<p>Background Papers</p> <p>Fifth Slough Borough Council, Commissioners Report Directions made under the Local Government Act 1999 (20 November 2024) "Improving the systems and processes to enable better and evidence-based decision making, including enhancing the data and insight functions, undertaking benchmarking."</p> <p>Fourth Slough Borough Council, Commissioners Report, Transformation section, February 2024: "Work has been undertaken to help the organisation become much more evidence led in its decision making. The development of a data repository is to be welcomed and there is evidence of it being used albeit patchily. There is some way to go before reports to committees and to officer working groups could claim to use data appropriately consistently and effectively."</p>