

Slough Borough Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	16 February 2026
Subject:	Transformation Plan Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Smith – Leader of the Council Councillor Chahal- Lead Member for Transformation
Chief Officer:	Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, Managing Director Commissioner
Contact Officer:	Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change and Transformation
Ward(s):	All
Key Decision:	YES
Exempt:	NO
Decision Subject To Call In:	YES
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Transformation Plan

1. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report provides an update on the development of Slough Borough Council's Transformation Programme, following approval of the Transformation Plan by Cabinet in November 2025. As highlighted in that report, further work was required to identify the full range of opportunities to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). That work has now progressed, and this report sets out the full three-year programme, the proposed transformation delivery model—including the commissioning of an external transformation partner—the resources required, and the associated governance and assurance framework.

The proposals span a three-year period and are aligned with the MTFS, the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) arrangements, and related capital investment. The proposals align the new operating model and transformation workstreams with the MTFS.

This alignment ensures that the exceptional financial support requested (capital and revenue) directly enable transformation activity such as structural changes, service redesign, as well as funding business-as-usual activity to ensure stability and continuity across recovery and improvement.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Approve the updated Transformation Plan summarised in Appendix 1
2. Approve the proposed transformation delivery model at 2.4
3. Approve procurement of a Transformation Partner(s) to deliver the role set out at 2.5, for a period of up to 3 years, within the overarching estimated transformation delivery budget of £15.6m, noting spend will only be committed within available budgetary limits, to provide assurance over the delivery of a multi-year savings plan of £38m, of which £25m is Transformation related.
4. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, Lead Cabinet Member for Transformation and the Executive Director for Corporate Resources (s151 Officer), to award a contract to a transformation partner(s) – working to the timeline set out at 2.6.

Reason

Since Government intervention began at Slough Borough Council, the Council has been working to address the failings and areas for improvement that were identified. One of the Council's key strategic challenges is recognising that, to sustain good services, it must operate more efficiently and deliver more with fewer resources. The Council continues to face significant financial distress, and has significant issues to address in service standards, particularly in Children's Social Care, SEND, Housing Management and Homelessness. This makes impactful transformation strategically essential.

Current Government directions, issued as part of the intervention, specifically require the development of a council-wide transformation programme and the definition and implementation of a revised Target Operating Model. The Transformation Plan adopted in November 2025 established a vision for what a transformed council should look like and outlined the steps required for successful implementation. While the plan set out the main transformational priorities, it also acknowledged that further work was necessary to broaden and deepen the transformation programme so it could deliver the required contribution to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) over a defined period.

This Transformation Plan Update seeks approval for a broader set of programmes aligned to the MTFS, together with the proposed transformation delivery model and

the procurement of a Transformation Implementation Partner or Partners. The proposed approach spans a three-year period, aligned with the MTFS.

Commissioner Review

“The Council has an ambitious programme for transformation, recovery and improvement, which requires significant changes in the way the organisation operates. Several large and complex programmes are expected to be developed and implemented over the medium term commencing 2026/27, and their delivery are crucial in improving service outcomes and the Council’s journey to longer term financial sustainability.

A change programme of this scale in the Council, requiring pace, rigour and strong governance, would not be considered possible without immediate targeted activity and significant external support.

Commissioners are content for this report to be considered.”

Background and Progress to Date

1. Report

Introductory paragraph

This report provides an update on the development of Slough Borough Council’s Transformation Programme, following approval of the Transformation Plan by Cabinet in November 2025. As highlighted in that report, further work was required to identify the full range of opportunities to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). That work has now progressed, and a three-year programme has been developed. This further work has itself confirmed that the Council does not have either the capacity or the capability to drive such a radical transformation programme. The only way it can overcome this is by investing in strategic partner and other specialist consultants who brings both capacity and capability. This requires a medium-term arrangement, to ensure that the three-year plans can be delivered, and that capacity and capability can be built in house over that time period.

This report sets out the full three-year programme and the proposed transformation delivery model This includes, as an imperative, the commissioning of an external transformation partner and sets out the resources required, and the associated governance and assurance framework. The proposals span a three-year period, and are aligned with the MTFS, the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) arrangements, and related capital investment. This alignment ensures stability and continuity across all activity needed to transform the Council, improving service standards and achieving financial sustainability.

Options considered

Option A – In-house contracted individuals

Not considered suitable in an intervention environment; does not provide the expertise that a specialist external partner will bring. The Council has pursued this model previously and has not managed to recruit the right level of resource, to retain interim capacity in the medium term and to attract the range and diversity of skills and capabilities needed. **This option is not recommended.**

Option B – Single external delivery partner

Provides control but introduces dependency risks and may weaken service ownership. The Council has previously been too reliant on external resource for management of its transformation programmes, which has caused issues with cost overrun and lack of corporate oversight. **This option is not recommended.**

Option C – Framework of delivery partners with a main transformation partner and in-house capacity

Offers breadth of expertise but would require strong internal oversight and co-ordination and consistency in ways of working and culture;- the Council is not considered ready to work in this way; this was confirmed in the diagnostic by BCG published with November Cabinet report. **This option is not recommended.**

Option D – External delivery partner with some in-house co-ordination and delivery, and option to appoint specialist partners for specific projects

This model combines a lead Transformation Partner with in-house delivery and targeted specialist support. The partner provides programme direction, coordination, PMO capability, benchmarking, and assurance, while the Council delivers key enabling functions such as digital, HR, finance, culture change and procurement. Specialist expertise is commissioned only where needed. This balanced approach strengthens oversight, maintains Council ownership, supports MTFS delivery, and ensures effective implementation of recovery, service improvement and corporate transformation. **(Preferred Option)**

Option D **is recommended** as it provides the optimal balance of assurance, flexibility, service engagement and capability-building. It supports the Council's transformation ambitions over the three-year period, aligns with the hub-and-spoke delivery model, and offers the necessary external credibility required under intervention.

2. Background

2.1 Progress update

Over the past year the Council has taken significant steps to stabilise its position and establish a clearer, more disciplined approach to improvement, recovery and transformation:

- A small team was in place from July 2024 and supported the development of the Operating Model Principles which were adopted by Cabinet in November 2024, as well as starting initial discovery work in services.
- A full transformation team established in July 2025 to lead on work to identify and deliver opportunities to transform the front door and services – with a focus on adults, housing and children’s and customer services, underpinned by digital transformation. This team comprised of 11 people FTE working across these four service areas with additional digital and data task focused capacity.
- An external partner, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) was commissioned in June 2025 to develop how the Council should operate in a new operating model, building on the design principles adopted in November 2024.
- This work informed a Transformation Plan approved at Cabinet on 17th November 2025. As was stated in that report, more work was needed to identify the full range of opportunities to support the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Governance was launched, including the CLT Transformation Board, Design Authority, Central PMO and Transformation Member Oversight Board.
- Ernst & Young (EY) were appointed in October 2025 to further develop opportunities to support the MTFs process and identify potential further transformation opportunities to add to our plan as well as testing and validating business cases, with a particular focus on proposals contributing to 2026/27 savings.
- This work has progressed alongside active delivery of a number of in-flight transformation projects across Adults, Housing, Customer Experience and Children’s Services, underpinned by digital transformation.
- This report sets out the full three-year programme, that is now deeper and broader and delivers a significant level of financial benefits over a three-year period. The report sets out the proposed transformation delivery model including the commissioning of an external transformation partner and resources required and the governance and assurance framework. This is aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Target Operating Model.
- The proposed approach has been informed by ongoing engagement with Commissioners and is aligned with expectations around capacity, assurance and delivery discipline.

It is recognised that this progress does not go far enough, and therefore:

- The Design Authority will require strengthening and development to ensure that transformation of services aligns to the stated principles of an Enabling Council TOM.
- The CLT Transformation Board will need to operate consistently and robustly to ensure all services are fully and substantively engaged with the Transformation Programme, and that there is full accountability from Executive Directors to drive transformation across the Council and for the respective programmes they lead as SROs. Where programmes are cross cutting, an appropriate SRO will be identified, and required financial benefits will be split across directorates to avoid any risk of double counting.
- Performance Management will be closely tied to the delivery of programmes, with accountability to CLT and to Cabinet.
- The Council does not have either the capacity or the capability to drive such a radical transformation programme. The only way it can overcome this is by investing in strategic partner who brings both capacity and capability, and a proven methodology that reduces the risk of project drift. This requires a medium-term arrangement, to ensure that the three-year plans can be delivered, and that capacity and capability can be built in house over that time period.

2.2 What the Operating Model and Transformation will mean for residents

The Council's strategic intent is to become an **enabling council** – one that is easier to deal with, more responsive, and focused on outcomes that matter to residents. This is guiding the workstreams that have been identified through the Transformation Programmes and is tested via the parameters that are used to oversee change by the Design Authority.

This means:

- Simpler and clearer routes to access help and services with a clear focus on resolving issues first time –e.g. through easier to use digital ways to do business and through an improved face to face offer.
- Supporting people to do things for themselves wherever possible with more digital and self-service options, alongside support for those who need it- e.g. through developing the front door in Adults Social Care
- Focusing on prevention and early help to reduce future problems and improve lives. E.g. through a redesigned Homelessness Service
- Better use of public money, with savings reinvested in sustaining core frontline services and priorities. E.g. Through improving processes in Housing and in Adults

This recognises that much more can be achieved by working together with residents and partners. Whilst most services will continue to be delivered by the Council, it will seek to work more collaboratively with residents, staff and partners to help design and implement more efficient and effective services. Where possible, residents will be supported to be able to live meaningful lives independently with reduced need to rely wholly on the Council. As a result, the operating model will also put more emphasis on prevention and early intervention. This will require the Council to build trust and work closely with local communities and partners.

This plan therefore focuses on the following goals:

- transforming resident and customer experience
- transforming outcomes and places
- preventing new demand and reducing existing demand
- achieving efficiency and financial sustainability

This delivery model supports that intent by ensuring a relentless focus on good design and implementation and delivery of intended benefits, including the financial benefits and resident experience.

2.3 Why This Delivery Model, and Why Now

The Council is now moving from a period of programme set-up and early delivery into a more complex phase of transformation on a larger scale. Over the next three years, the portfolio will include a combination of live delivery, further discovery, phased implementation and benefits realisation, all of which are closely linked to the MTFS.

The proposed model represents a deliberate step-change, providing stronger structure, assurance and scalability, while ensuring that services remain accountable for delivery and outcomes. The model also provides stability and continuity over a three year period, recognising the context of recovery, where more turnover of leadership will be anticipated at key review points.

As has been stated under 2.1 Progress Update, the approach to date has not gone far enough, and the Council does not have the capacity and capability to drive this large-scale programme without continued external support. The approach set out has been benchmarked against other Councils who have embarked on programmes of a similar scale and ambition, and this review confirms the need for a step change.

Accountability and ownership by CLT is critical- to drive transformation across the Council and for the respective programmes they lead as SROs. Where programmes are cross cutting, an appropriate SRO will be identified, and required financial benefits will be split across directorates to avoid any risk of double counting. Performance Management will be closely tied to the delivery of programmes.

Continuing with a purely ad-hoc or fragmented delivery approach would increase the risk of:

- Inconsistent design and delivery across services.
- Weak oversight of interdependencies, sequencing and benefits.
- Over-reliance on individual contractors rather than a sustainable system.
- Lack of continuity, which is compounded by the staff turnover, the political cycle, and the nature of the government intervention.
- Loss of potential savings from economies of scale
- Separate and piecemeal resources for improvement, recovery and transformation actions

The approach also recognises that successful transformation is not delivered through programme implementation alone. It requires adequate enabling support across: Digital, HR / Organisational Redesign, Culture Change, Communications and Engagement, Change support, Financial business partnering, Commercial and procurement. This enabling support will be closely tied to clear parameters for the Design Authority.

To resource the Transformation Delivery Model, the Council is estimating £15.6m revenue cost, (funded by £11m revenue, £2.7m reserves and £1.9m flexible use of capital receipts) for revenue investment in transformation, improvement and recovery from 2026/27-2028/29. This is to achieve a £25m net saving by the end of the MTFS period – and to balance the budget by 2028/29, assuming a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.69 based on the revenue funding element. As a benchmark, BCG and EY have recommended a range between 1.36 to 2.65 (benefit to cost ratio-BCR). When building in earmarked capital investment of £20m, the expected BCR is 0.8:1. The BCR is based on annual returns, e.g. for every £1m invested on a one-off basis £0.8m of annual recurring savings will be delivered, repaying the investment in the second year after implementation of each saving. In order to provide adequate contingency, transformation savings of £31.4m have been put forward, resulting in a c20% buffer built into the programme. A further £20m of capital investment has been earmarked for the Transformation Programme.

The relatively lower BCR is recommended because investment will be required to cover corporate and service recovery and improvement activity as well as transformation, noting the only permanent resource is one Head of Programmes and Change. To be effectively deployed, Executive Directors will also need to pool departmental resources (including external improvement support) into one integrated resource plan.

This assumes accountability and ownership is with CLT, as outlined above, and that Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) are identified Executive Directors who are accountable to CLT and Cabinet for delivery of their respective programmes. Where

programmes are cross cutting, an appropriate SRO will be identified, and required financial benefits will be split across directorates to avoid any risk of double counting. Performance Management will be closely tied to the delivery of programmes.

2.4 Overview of model

The recommended model is a **balanced hub and spoke approach**:

- **The hub** sits at the corporate centre and provides direction, coordination, assurance and benefits management.
- **The spokes** sit within services (or for cross cutting across clearly identified services) and directorates, where delivery happens and outcomes are owned.

A **single lead Transformation Partner** will work across both the hub and spokes: supporting direction and coordination, building PMO capability, benchmarking and assurance and implementation of transformation programmes.

Supporting specialist partners may be used, by exception, where specific expertise is required (for example digital, commissioning or complex service redesign).

The model comprises of the following components:

Direction, co-ordination and PMO

- Programme direction- cohesion and alignment with corporate strategy and operating model, providing critical friend and challenge based on benchmarking
- Programme co-ordination across programmes – common issues, sequencing, consistency of design approach
- PMO- maintain a single, corporate view of the transformation portfolio, track progress, risks, dependencies and benefits, provide objective reporting to CLT, Members and Commissioners and operate stage-gate and assurance processes, including alignment with the Design Authority.
- Procurement / Clienting of external partner/s: The importance of strong and appropriate clienting needs to be designed in and costed and is included above as a key workstream that requires resourcing, both in terms of corporate clienting and at service level. Specifically, the Transformation Director provided through the lead partner requires clear clienting to ensure strong mandate, independence and accountability. The Council must set explicit objectives, reporting lines and escalation routes, with regular performance management led internally, not by the partner. Effective onboarding, access to services and structured knowledge transfer are essential to avoid dependence and ensure cultural alignment. Key risks to manage will include blurred accountability, over-reliance on the external postholder, conflict of interest, resistance to challenge and turnover. These

should be mitigated through clear governance, separation of assurance and delivery, robust contractual controls, and internal capability building. There will be a dedicated SRO responsible for clienting to ensure decisions can be made quickly, conflicts can be resolved and the programme maintains momentum.

The proposed transformation delivery model provides a controlled, flexible and value-for-money approach to improvement and transformation. It strengthens oversight and assurance, supports delivery of MTFs savings, and improves outcomes for residents, while retaining Council ownership and accountability. The separation between delivery support and assurance is a key control within the model. The Council will, however, retain agility and flexibility over the 4 components to adapt as required to new information, changing circumstances and required pace. Transferring knowledge about how to deliver impactful transformation and improvement over the three years will be key.

Implementation

- Implementation of defined programmes of recovery, service improvement and transformation
- Implementation of defined programme of corporate improvement to establish new operating model
- Council led delivery of enabling support to ensure change happens: Digital, HR / Organisational redesign, Culture change, Communication and Engagement, Change support, financial analysis / partner, Commercial / procurement and Companies.

This model balances control with ownership, ensuring the Council retains decision-making authority while drawing on external capacity and insight.

The indicative revenue budget is show below. This will be refined as the programme develops alongside the procurement, but is provided to illustrate the range of resources required to deliver and enable the programme. As the Council is seeking to engage a Transformation Partner, prospective providers will be invited to respond to how they could meet a specification that covers:

- the core direction and co-ordination role
- capacity building the PMO
- delivery of some of the improvement and transformation activity
- delivery of some of the corporate improvement
- capacity building of the Council in relation to enabling support.

Activity	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	£	£	£	£
Direction, co-ordination, PMO				
Transformation Partner – core role Programme direction-cohesion and alignment with corporate strategy and operating model, providing critical friend and challenge based on benchmarking Programme co-ordination across programmes	930,000	930,000	260,000	2,120,000
Corporate PMO-assurance that programme is achieving agreed benefits in line with corporate strategy, MTFS and operating model and clienting	220,000	220,000	73,333	513,333
Implementation				
Programmes of recovery, service improvement and transformation: implementation	3,500,000	3,500,000	1,000,000	8,000,000
Implementation of corporate improvement to establish new operating model- digital, finance, estates and procurement	1,213,165	975,000	860,000	3,048,165
Corporate support to enable transformation				
Finance business partnering	115,000	115,000	38,333	268,333
HR & change support & culture change	616,000	616,000	-	1,232,000
Commercial / procurement/companies	70,000	70,000	70,000	210,000
Communications and engagement	80,000	80,000	80,000	240,000
Total	6,744,165	6,506,000	2,381,667	15,631,832

For this revenue element, the Council's EFS request and MTFS assumes £11m of general fund revenue funding over three years, supported by £2.7m in the

Transformation reserve, amounting to £13.7m. Up to a further £2.7m is available as part of the Council's flexible use of capital receipts strategy, of which £1.9m is assumed in the above. The remainder will be held as a contingency. It should be noted that the capital receipts must be generated and delivered in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Debt Reduction Strategy prior to committing spend against this element.

The proposed funding is therefore:

- £11.0m transformation budget programmed across the MTFs
- £2.7m transformation reserve.
- £1.9m flexible use of capital receipts
- £15.6m total.

The final year of the proposed programme shows a smaller level of investment – at c. 1/3rd of the previous years. This is because the significant activity to deliver financial benefits as set out in the MTFs should be nearing completion by that point. This is consistent with the EFS request where it was assumed investment would be front-loaded.

Ongoing transformation is likely to be necessary, but will be subject to its own cost benefit analysis and business cases as the MTFs develops beyond 2028/29. Additionally, the Council would plan to develop base-budget capacity for improvement towards the end of the MTFs, to ensure that we remain resourced for the ongoing requirement to transform. Not itemised above is the £20m investment earmarked within the Council's proposed capital programme. This will be subject to its own set of business cases, but includes capacity, for example, to meet £4.6m investment in IT & Digital required to deliver automation, improvement and modernise the delivery of digital services to residents. A further £2m of investment in the NEC Housing system is set out in the HRA Capital Programme.

2.5 Role of the Transformation Delivery Partner

The core focus of the specification for the external partner will be:

Ongoing role:

- Programme direction- cohesion and alignment with corporate strategy and operating model, providing critical friend, validation and challenge based on benchmarking
- Programme co-ordination across programmes, sequencing and dependency management.
- Establish the capacity and capability needed to deliver transformation and continuous improvement sustainably into the future- this will include building the PMO, portfolio and project management and transformation capacity and

capability, including developing the digital tools that enable programme management and PMO functions to operate in smarter ways.

- Support benefits realisation, including alignment to the MTF5 to ensure that the required level of savings are delivered.
- Identify stretch opportunities and next steps on current proposals
- Implementation of some of the recovery, service improvement and transformation and corporate improvement to establish new operating model

For the partner to make an impact it will be necessary for the partner to challenge the corporate leadership team about their approach, pace and impact. The Transformation Delivery Partner will be expected to provide named senior level support as a Transformation Director and this person will be expected to work with CLT and elected members throughout the process. This approach will be kept under review, and it may be that the Council reaches a point of maturity whereby a Transformation Director could be appointed as a permanent employee. The Transformation Delivery Partner is intended to support the Council's system, not replace it and the Council will need to ensure it has effective clienting arrangements in place.

For a programme of this scale and ambition, periodic assurance will be required at key review points, to provide objective subject specialist expertise to ensure that the programmes are achieving the intended benefits.

The partner will not:

- Set Council policy or strategic priorities.
- Replace Executive Directors' accountability for outcomes.
- Take ownership of services or delivery decisions.
- Commission / sub contract work without explicit consent. All delivery will operate within Council governance, standards and ways of working.

2.6 Procurement Approach and Next Steps

Subject to Cabinet approval, the Council will procure a **lead Transformation Delivery Partner** through a compliant route (for example a framework or competitive process). The appointment will be:

- Time-limited (anticipated up to three years).
- Contract management and performance-managed, with clear contractual outcomes and break points.
- Focused primarily on coordination, assurance and capability rather than wholesale delivery.

Specialist partners may be commissioned separately where required, under Council direction, and in line with scheme of financial delegations.

Next Steps and Timeline

February - March

- Cabinet approval of delivery model and procurement approach.
- Finalisation of procurement route, specification and three-year phasing of programmes.

March- April

- Launch procurement; confirmation of governance and ways of working.

May

- Appointment of partner (subject to procurement outcome) and mobilisation of priority discovery activity.

2.7 Continuity of Existing Transformation Delivery

Existing transformation resources and interim contractors will **continue to deliver in-flight programmes** under current governance arrangements.

These programmes are primarily focused on:

- Delivery of agreed savings and improvements in 2026/27.
- Maintaining momentum and confidence during mobilisation of the future delivery model.

Where appropriate, affordable and where value for money is determined, **existing roles will be extended for a defined period** to ensure continuity and a managed transition into new arrangements.

There is a clear and intentional separation between:

- **Live projects already in delivery**, and
- **Future transformation programmes** that will move into discovery and delivery over the next three years.

2.8 Governance and Oversight

The current governance and assurance arrangements that underpin this delivery model are illustrated in table 1 below. As has been highlighted above, these current arrangements will need to be enhanced and developed further so that they are fit for purpose to meet the needs of a complex and multi-faceted programme of transformation. The role for the Transformation Partner will include a requirement to develop the capacity and capability of the Council to manage impactful transformation programmes and continuous improvement.

Governance will be updated to take account of introduction of an external partner and the additional level of assurance needed commensurate to scope and size of programme

The current arrangements show how:

- Members set strategic direction and provide democratic oversight. There is no proposal to change this.
- CLT owns outcomes, priorities and delivery accountability.
- The Corporate PMO provides portfolio oversight, assurance and reporting.
- The Design Authority provides early, independent assurance on strategic fit, design and alignment.
- Delivery Partners operate under Council direction.
- Services lead delivery and realise benefits for residents.

This integrated governance model ensures transparency, accountability and confidence across Members, officers and Commissioners. Decision making about the adoption of a programme remains with Cabinet and formal decision-making on service changes will be made by Cabinet or officers in accordance with constitutional requirements.

To be effective, the Corporate PMO will need to be appropriately sized and resourced, commensurate with the scale, pace and risk profile of the transformation portfolio. This ensures proportionate assurance and value-for-money oversight without becoming a bottleneck to delivery.

Governance | single change portfolio

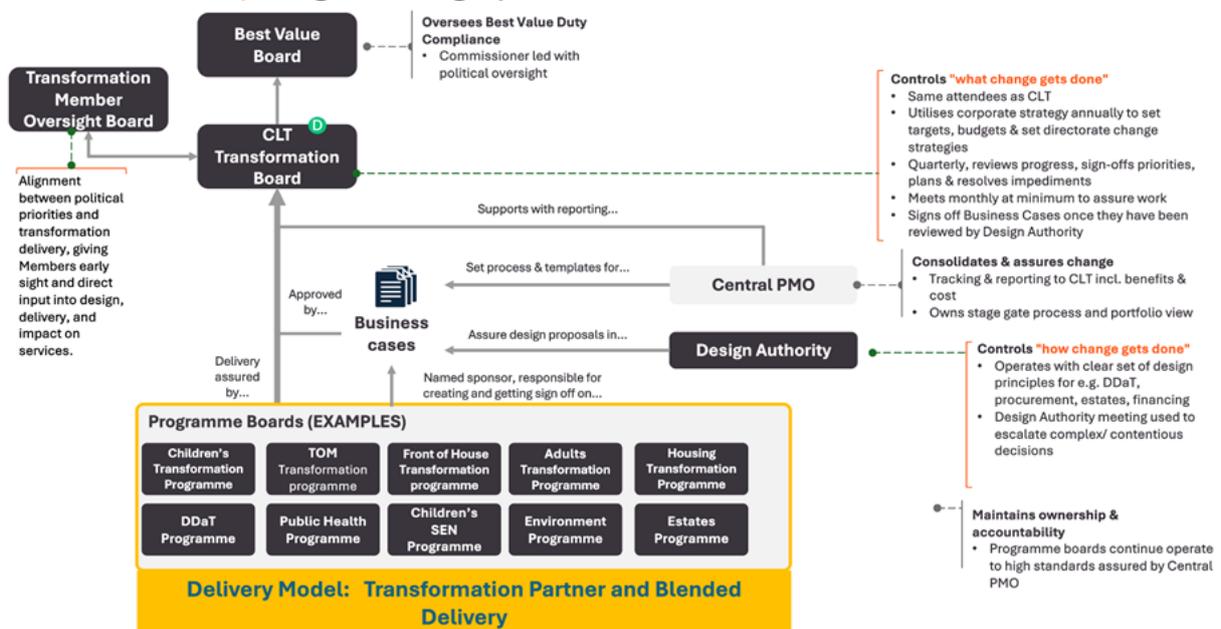


Table 1: Current Governance

Notes:

Programme boards are currently illustrative and will be updated

3. Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 The financial implications of the report are set out in section 2.4, in terms of the indicative resourcing required and how it will be funded. Adequate resourcing is required to deliver £25m of permanent / recurring financial benefits to support the MTFs - consisting of a full target of £31.4m offset by c£6m of contingency. The resourcing is also key to delivering non-financial outcomes of transformation in service recovery and improvement.

Delivery of the transformation programme and associated savings is vital to the overall success of the MTFs. The investment and associated returns will be closely monitored by dedicated resources within Finance as well through the governance set out elsewhere in this report.

3.2 *Legal implications*

3.2.1 On 1 December 2021 the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities made statutory directions requiring the Council to take prescribed actions and that certain functions be exercised from this date by appointed Commissioners, acting jointly or severally. The directions were extended on 1 September 2022 and on 20 November 2024. The directions are made under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 due to the Council having failed to comply with its best value duty. The general duty of best value is set out in section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 and requires local authorities to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. This requires consideration of overall value, including economic, environmental, and social value, when reviewing service provision. There is also a duty to consult when deciding how to fulfil the best value duty.

3.2.2 The Council must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 (or previous legislation if a compliant framework is used) to procure a delivery partner. The Council must also comply with its Contract Procedure Rules and internal governance to ensure value for money when contracting with suppliers.

3.3 Risk management implications

Key Risks and Mitigations

Transformation at this scale carries inherent risk. The proposed delivery model has been designed specifically to manage and mitigate these risks through strong governance, phasing and assurance.

Risk	Mitigation
The External Partner is not cliented well and does not have the intended impact.	Set clear expectations. Establish clear accountability with Executive Directors for delivery of benefits and align with performance management. Build collective buy in from Executive Directors, by ensuring broad CLT engagement in the procurement process. Establish robust and dynamic contract management processes to ensure pace from outset. Ensure an adequate level of clienting capacity and strategy and operational levels- with a named SRO who has adequate support to fulfil this role. Establish more advanced and enhanced governance. Involve Lead Members and Scrutiny as appropriate.
Transformation partner- Blurred accountability and over-reliance on externally provided officers.	Clear role definition, governance, separation of assurance, structured knowledge transfer, and strong clienting with named SRO to client contract and adequate resourcing of clienting at operational and strategic level (in corporate centre and at service level) and performance management by the Council. Clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities to ensure that strategic decision-making remains with the Council.
Delivery partner lacks alignment or control	Clear contract scope, strong clienting, PMO and Design Authority oversight, defined outcomes and break points
Poor return on investment	Benefits tied to the MTFs, named owners, regular CLT and Finance assurance, external benchmarking
Dependency on external providers	Time-limited engagement, blended model, skills transfer and Council ownership of decisions
Capacity pressures in services including to client the partner	Three-year phasing, prioritisation of programmes, flexible resourcing Council led delivery of enabling support to ensure change happens: Digital, HR / Organisational redesign, Culture change, Communication and Engagement, Change support, financial analysis / partner, Commercial / procurement and Companies.

	<p>Ensure adequate resourcing of the client function at strategic and operational levels; nominate a senior SRO; establish clear contract KPIs, reporting and escalation routes; ensure Finance, PMO and Design Authority oversight; require knowledge transfer to reduce long-term dependency.</p>
<p>There is a risk that introducing a strategic partner could be perceived by Members, staff residents as distancing the Council from communities, or lead to less ongoing engagement with residents on transformation, or less authentic engagement,</p>	<p>Ensure all resident engagement activity is clearly branded and led by the Council, and follows the Council's resident engagement framework adopted in October 2025 and involve staff, residents and Members in how they want to be engaged.</p> <p>Communicate transparently that the Council remains accountable for decisions, with the partner providing technical expertise only.</p> <p>Use the partner's capacity to enhance—not replace—frontline conversations, e.g. through innovative practice, enabling deeper and more frequent Council-resident dialogue.</p> <p>Track resident sentiment and feedback- as recommended in cumulative equality impact assessment</p>
<p>Loss of confidence if early impact is not visible</p>	<p>Clear distinction between live delivery and future pipeline; early sharing of discovery outputs and financial milestones</p>

3.4 *Environmental implications*

There are no direct environmental impacts as a result of this decision. Any specific environmental impacts pertaining to specific Transformation workstreams will be identified and analysed as part of detailed business case development.

3.5 *Equality implications*

The Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

At the heart of the Enabling Council operating model concept are positive features designed to better meet the diverse needs of Slough's communities in a way that is consistent and fair:

- Much more can be achieved by working together with residents, staff and partners, **but more trust will need to be built with communities and partners.**
- To make the most of limited resources, **services need to support staff and people to do things for themselves more and digital tools are key to the transformation needed.**
- **This shift to digital needs to be balanced with a more helpful and supportive face to face offer for those who need it.**
- There needs to be **more of a focus on working across the whole system and the Council to develop preventative work and improve life chances** and to tackle social and economic inequality.
- The Council **needs to be proactive in shaping the place and regeneration opportunities** and in connecting communities with economic opportunity.
- **The need to deliver better services because** performance often falls behind statistical neighbours that are in a comparable financial position.

The Transformation Programme has been included as part of the 26/27 Budget papers, and the proposals that will require detailed equality impact assessments have been identified. At every stage, SROs for programmes will be required to

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded within the Design Authority parameters.
- All major proposals will also undergo an equality impact assessment (EIA) as well as a cumulative impact assessment where relevant.

This is for any programme, whether delivered by the Council or by an external partner, and the responsibility will remain with the Council SRO. Impacts on protected groups will be monitored throughout the programme to ensure proposals advance equality of opportunity and do not disproportionately disadvantage any group.

Equality, diversity and inclusion will be a key consideration in the specification for any external partner, particularly with regard to the positive benefits intended from an Enabling Council. Prospective bidders to demonstrate how they will support the Council to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, including ensuring accessible digital options, assisted digital support, inclusive engagement and co-design with residents and staff, as well as adopting an inclusive approach to leadership and demonstrating an understanding of Slough's diverse communities.

3.6 Corporate Parenting Implications

The Transformation Plan includes proposals that impact on children in care and care experienced children. Proposals are designed to have positive benefits with regards to promoting greater independence, improved stability for care leavers and improved life chances. It is recognised that children in care and care leavers can be impacted positively and negatively by a range of changes in the way the Council operates and in what services are delivered. Moreover, care experienced people are viewed as a protected group in Slough. The principles will be used to inform business cases and engagement plans.

3.7 *Procurement implications*

The procurement route for the Council to procure a three-year transformation partner will either be an open tender or via a framework, the decision for which route will be utilised will be decided once the detailed specification has been drafted and the three-year phasing of the programme finalised.

The procurement is likely to take between 6-8 weeks depending on the route taken, the route chosen will be the one that provides the council with a range of suppliers able to deliver the service as required whilst ensuring the Council receives value for money.

The tender will be evaluated based on a combination of quality and price, will be presented back to Cabinet as part of the contract award report.

3.8 Workforce implications

The Transformation Plan identifies specific shifts needed to culture and workforce, identifying the need to change the culture of the Council and identifying how savings could be achieved through workforce wide measures, in relation for example to the use of interim staff. The Transformation Programme will include proposals that have significant implications for the workforce. Appropriate engagement will be needed with staff with regard to the operating model and transformation plan overall and on specific proposals that impact on specific teams.

3.9 Property implications

The Transformation Programme will include proposals that have significant implications for the management of existing contracts and for future procurement. Appropriate process will be followed.

4. Background Papers

None