

## SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report To:</b>	Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	30 June 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	Commissioning of the Budget Task and Finish Group for the 2026/27 Municipal Year
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Wilson, Monitoring Officer
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Amy O'Brien, Scrutiny and Governance Officer Natalie Carr, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix A – Scope of the Budget Task and Finish Group

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The report outlines the constitutional basis for the establishment of Task and Finish Groups, and the broad scope of the work of the Budget Task and Finish Group. It asks that CISC commissions the group, following a recommendation from the previous Budget Task and Finish Group, in their final report that was presented at the [April 2026 CISC meeting](#)

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- 2.1. Commission the Budget Task and Finish Group, as per the broad scope outlined in Appendix A.
- 2.2. Appoint a Chair from the 'Pool of Designated Chair' for the Task and Finish Group.

### 3. Report

- 3.1. According to Part 4.5, Section 5 of the Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules', the Committee may

'at any one time, commission up to three simultaneous Task and Finish Groups to carry out detailed examination of particular topics for reporting back to the Committee.'

- 3.2. Following a recommendation from the previous Budget Task and Finish Group, members asked that the topic be more thoroughly scoped, with input from officers and members. The scoping document (Appendix A) provides a broad scope for the work of the Group, that can and should be modified further once membership is agreed, to reflect the specific areas of importance identified by the Task and Finish Group members.
- 3.3. The scoping document is a starting point for the Group's work and may change throughout the process.
- 3.4. The Chair will be selected from the 'Task and Finish Group pool of Chairs'. The members of the Committee may include any member of the Council, including co-opted members of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee.

### **Commissioner Review**

This is a procedural report and no Commissioner review was required.

## **4. Other Implications**

### **Financial implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.
- 4.2 It should be noted that, should a member of the pool act as Chair of a task and finish group, then this qualifies for a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) (Part 6 of the Constitution) of £2,540 paid on a pro rata basis according to the length of time acting as Chair as measured from the date their Scrutiny Task & Finish Group was established until the date its report was received by the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee. Members can only receive one SRA so if Member already receives an SRA in 2026-27, they would not be entitled to any further allowance for chairing a Task & Finish Group. This is accommodated within the Members' allowance budget.

### **Other statutory implications**

- 4.3 There are no other specific statutory or legal implications arising from this report.

**CISC Scrutiny Topic Scoping Form**

<p><b>1. Purpose &amp; Problem Definition</b></p> <p><b>What is the issue, risk or opportunity this review seeks to address? Why now?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a concise description of the problem, trigger, or opportunity. Include any recent events, decisions, performance concerns, or resident feedback that make this timely.</i></p>	<p>Oversight and scrutiny of the Council’s 2027-28 Budget, and the financial management of the Council, focusing on key areas of risk and high-spend for the Council.</p>
<p><b>2. Strategic Alignment</b></p> <p><b>How does this topic link to corporate priorities, the improvement programme, statutory duties, or known performance challenges?</b></p> <p><i>Identify which strategic objectives this relates to and how scrutiny involvement supports organisational improvement.</i></p>	<p>Since the S114 in 2021, the Council is still under Commissioner intervention, with the latest letter pointing to continuing “complex and persistent financial challenges” and “significant financial difficulty”. It also noted that the Council needs an “MTFS that demonstrates how the Council will balance its future budget with appropriate levels of reserves to withstand financial shocks and a credible debt repayment strategy.</p> <p>Setting a balanced budget is a statutory responsibility for the Council and scrutiny is key in the oversight of the budget.</p>
<p><b>3. Evidence of Need</b></p> <p><b>What data, feedback, complaints, audit findings or external reports indicate that scrutiny involvement would add value?</b></p>	<p>Resulting from a recommendation from the CISC in April 2026 to recommission the group with further recommendations around a more vigorous scope, detailed topics of investigation, and more timely information sharing.</p>

<p><i>List the evidence base that shows the issue is real, material, and suitable for scrutiny.</i></p>	
<p><b>4. Scope &amp; Key Questions</b></p> <p><b>What are the 3–5 key questions scrutiny should answer? What is explicitly in scope and out of scope?</b></p> <p><i>Define the boundaries of the review clearly to avoid mission creep.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Key questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the budget provide sufficient assurance around the Council’s finances and MTFS?</li> <li>- Is the budget robust in the face of challenges?</li> <li>- How are high-spend areas mitigating the risk their services carry?</li> <li>- What are the key topics of interest for the Group to consider?</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>In scope:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific topics of high-spend and high-risk such as TA, Council Companies, ASC, Children’s</li> <li>- Review of savings proposals</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• <b>Out of scope:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-financial aspects of transformation programme, e.g. Customer front-door.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Expected Impact</b></p> <p><b>What improvements, outcomes or decisions could be influenced through scrutiny? How will we know the review has been successful?</b></p> <p><i>Describe the potential benefits, such as improved performance, better value for money, stronger governance, or improved resident experience.</i></p>	<p>Scrutiny will provide feedback, both formally at Committee, and informally in private sessions that officers and lead members will take into consideration when building and revising the budget and the MTFS.</p> <p>Success can be measured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the acceptance and implementation of the comments and recommendations provided. These may not be formally developed and agreed, as the recommendations may come about in private sessions for officers to consider but will still create impact.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the continued input of scrutiny in the budget setting process which reflects a culture of transparency and openness.</li> <li>- Better value for money for residents.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Stakeholders &amp; Evidence Sources</b></p> <p><b>Which officers, partners, service users or external experts should be involved? What evidence will be required?</b></p> <p><i>Identify who scrutiny needs to hear from and what information will be essential.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internal stakeholders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lead Members</li> <li>- S151 Officer and Finance Directors</li> <li>- Corporate Leadership Team and relevant Directors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>External stakeholders:</b> (Dependent on the specific topics investigated) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service users who might be impacted by certain savings</li> <li>- External auditors</li> <li>- Partnership groups/Stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Evidence sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget papers</li> <li>- Savings proposals</li> <li>- Service-level reports</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Methodology &amp; Timeframe</b></p> <p><b>What is the most appropriate method (task group, single-item committee session, site visit, evidence panel)? What is the realistic timeframe?</b></p> <p><i>Outline the proposed approach and any constraints.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suggested method</b></li> <li>• Task group set out over the period of main budget work (July 2026-February 2027)</li> </ul> <p><b>Proposed timeline:</b></p> <p>MTFS refresh – July Cabinet  Preparation work – July to Nov  Draft Budget scrutiny – Late November/Early December 2026  Final proposals scrutiny – January 2027  Specific topics – TBC</p>

Appendix A

	<p><b>Constraints:</b> Availability of data</p> <p><b>Risks:</b> Delay to the budget papers being available to members may limit their ability to properly engage with the information and contribute fully to the review. Imperative that timelines are realistic and clear to allow for sufficient planning and therefore impact.</p>
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