

**Minutes of the Improvement and Recovery Board  
Thursday 23 February 2023 10am**

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Thursday 23 February 2023 at 10am  
Council Chambers, Ground Floor Observatory House / Microsoft Teams**

**Attendees:**

*Commissioners:*

Max Caller – Lead Commissioner (Chair)  
Margaret Lee – Finance Commissioner  
Gavin Jones – Commissioner (part attendance)

*Members:*

Cllr James Swindlehurst – Council Leader (Deputy Chair) and Lead for Council Recovery, Forward Strategy & Economic Development  
Cllr Dexter Smith – Leader of the Opposition  
Cllr Rob Anderson – Lead for Financial Oversight & Council Assets  
Cllr Zaffar Ajaib - Lead for Customer Services, Procurement and Performance  
Cllr Nazir Mohammed – Lead for Transport and the Local Environment  
Cllr Balvinder Bains – Lead for Public Protection, Regulation and Enforcement  
Cllr Sabia Akram – Lead for Leisure, Culture & Community Empowerment  
Cllr Christine Hulme – Lead for Children’s Services, Lifelong Learning and Skills  
Cllr Pavitar Mann – Lead for Housing and Planning

*Officers:*

Steve Mair – Director of Finance and S151 Officer  
Sarah Hayward – Operating Officer  
Stephen Taylor – Monitoring Officer  
Patrick Hayes – Executive Director Housing, property & Planning  
Richard West – Executive Director, Place & Communities  
Marc Gatsby – Executive Director, People - Adults

*Secretariat:*

Claire Willerton - Chief of Staff to the Commissioners  
Nasreen Brittain – Executive Assistant to the Commissioners (minutes)  
Dani O’Connor – PA to Leader (check job title) (presentation of slides)

*Apologies:*

Stephen Brown, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services,  
Cllr Natasa Pantelic – Lead for Social Care and Public Health,  
Adele Taylor – Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services and Section 151 Officer

## Minutes

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (*Max Caller*)

Max Caller welcomed colleagues and congratulated Sarah Hayward at being formally appointed as Operating Officer. Paul Moffat will attend for Cllr Hulme's segment. Commissioners reminded attendees that all papers and reports were required to be submitted on time and to standard.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Minutes and Actions of the November Improvement and Recovery Board

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting on 26 January 2023 were agreed. Action log reviewed and updated.

### 4. Commissioners Update (*Max Caller*)

4.1 Nothing specific to date.

### 5. Budget Review: Cabinet Members:

#### 5.1 Savings by Portfolio: *Margaret Lee*

5.1.1. Nothing to report at this time.

#### 5.2 Housing and Planning: *Cllr Pavitar Mann*

**5.2.1 Housing and Planning:** Saving target set of £100k to be made. It was important to note that the cost centre is self-funded. There was confidence in continuing to be able to achieve this. Savings would be met through staff restructure with an overall reduction in the number of posts. There were 18 vacancies, 7 currently filled by temporary staff. Reliance on temporary staff would need to be addressed. Salaries were being looked at to ensure there was a competitive offering while still being less costly than the temporary employee contracts. Operating with skeleton staff at the moment as not fulfilling all current vacancies.

- **Risks:**
- Reported risks were operating with minimum staffing levels, any further leavers would present a risk and would require the recruitment of more agency staff, thus increasing the cost.
- Another risk would be that if there were not enough budget to be able to do this, that would be a serious risk of the Local Planning Authority not fulfilling its legal and statutory requirements which could in turn lead to special measures enforced on the Council through poor performance. There would also be an increased reputational risk, additional Judicial Reviews, and potential financial penalties as a result.
- Margaret wanted to know what the mitigation on the risks was. Cllr Mann responded that they were looking to make temporary staff permanent, deleting posts and creating savings by the vacancies that would be left. Margaret asked if they were comfortable with the risks that remained. Were they confident they would be able to deliver what was needed with the reduced number of staff. Cllr Mann was confident they would.

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- Pat Hayes was aiming to get to a smaller but better paid service which could compete with the London market and bring more development in. He noted however, that planning couldn't be relentlessly cut. There would be enough budget left over, including paying staff more. Cllr Mann felt overall they had performed very well. Max asked whether the trends and statistics were dependant on levels of demand and what impact that would have. Every cabinet member and director faced the challenge going forwards as their budgets would be fixed and there would not be more budget available from Finance. Commissioners wanted to know whether there was a proper monitor on the trends. Pat Hayes to provide this trend information to Commissioners. Cllr Mann expressed confidence in the PPAs. Housing applications were down post Covid, so needed to be mindful of this. Officers were giving a lot of free advice relating to applications, this was going to be more stringently monitored as to what would trigger a more formal pre-application so that charges could be applied.

**Action: Pat Hayes**

**5.2.2 Housing:** commissioners understood there was a potential risk of additional spend in this area. Needed to know exactly where the council was and how it would manage this. Cllr Mann responded that housing was overspending at the moment. The new interim head of service was now in post. There were a number of vacant posts, which were affecting the processing of housing applications, this was also being addressed. There was now a plan in place to deal with homelessness which would be implemented. Osborne's contract management was not working and was a priority for Chris Stratford to resolve. Would be re-tendering the contract when it ended. Pat Hayes reported he would be putting mitigations in place to rapidly bring down the overspend. Needed to reduce reliance on hotels and B&Bs to bring the cost of the temporary housing down. Needed to develop more procurement to prevent other Boroughs from placing people in Slough. New head of service would be responsible for this. There was no head of allocations currently, an interim would be recruited in the meantime. IT service would be moved away from Housing as well so this area would be better managed going forward. HRA issues were cultural as well as budgetary. Now had 100% of complaints being dealt with at stage one. The number of historical complaints was still extremely high but was beginning to come down. The council was also in the process of re-procuring the contract, this would come with higher costs, however. Would have to look closely at the HRA budget. Pat Hayes felt it was important to note that all these changes would take time.

- Self-reporting was happening. Health and Safety was an area where the council was not doing what it was meant to. This now meant it was more open and transparent.
- Commissioners found the update very helpful and highlighted the issue with the IT direction. Needed to incorporate the activity it ran across the services. It was a total IT package that needed to be looked at in its entirety.
- HRA to be looked at in the next Finance Board.
- Would be useful to bring back a report once cabinet had seen the full action plan. Cllr Swindlehurst asked how Commissioners wanted HRA capital programme to be reported. Margaret responded that the capital programme should go to the Finance Board. On the IT system Margaret felt better questions needed to be asked as to where things sat, needed to be in line with where the right skills were. Cllr Ajaib

reflected there were some legacy issues that needed to be addressed so the IT system was one system rather than within different depts.

### **5.3 Public Protection, Regulation and Enforcement: *Cllr Balvinder Singh Bains***

#### **5.3.1 Overview: the services within this Cabinet portfolio sit within three directorates but predominantly the Place and Communities Directorate.**

- Consumer protection, trading standards and food safety
- Enforcement services
- Overall responsibility for licencing
- Coroner, crematorium, and registrar – part Corporate Services Directorate (Registrar)
- Building control/building regulations – Housing & Property Directorate
- Emergency planning – Corporate Services Directorate
- ASB, Community Safety, Crime reduction, prevent
- Relationship with the Police
- Fire Safety and relationship with the Fire Service

To avoid repetition, the budget profile for the Place and Communities directorate is set out in the overview of the Transport and the Local Environment portfolio. EIAs have been prepared and made available in respect of all proposals.

#### **5.3.2 Delivery Plans, Issues, Risks and Mitigations**

- Subject to cabinet approval on 27 February, the council will close the CCTV control room and will also stop the monitoring of public facing CCTV on or before 31 December 2023. This will avoid annualised costs of £630k and being an annualised budget saving of £104k. This will result in a discontinuation or displacement of 24/7 monitoring of public facing CCTV cameras to move to TVP. 24/7 response to calls from Careline to move to digital service provider(s). 24/7 response to fire alarms, security alarms and lift alarms to move to alternative providers including Saba for Car Parks. Review of recorded footage from SBC cameras at corporate buildings including depots, car parks and SBC housing communal areas to return to the host departments rather than be done centrally.

#### **5.3.3 Risks**

- A cost pressure of up to £473k will be incurred to pay for the service from 1 April 23 to Dec 23
- TVP are delayed in providing their alternative system for monitoring of public spaces in Slough
- Careline are delayed in moving to the planned alternative providers
- Delay in finding alternative providers for 24/7 response to alarms
- TUPE – staff will be at risk of redundancy either by SBC or TVP

#### **5.3.4 Mitigations**

- The one-off cost is to be mitigated by collaboration to bring handover dates forward, and a soft target of 1 Sept 23 is to be pursued, and if possible, sooner. Receivers of services will continue to be charged until handover is achieved
- The council will close the CCTV room on 31 Dec 23
- Redundancy (up to £285k) and decommissioning costs (c£30k) will be met from a restructuring provision set up through the capitalisation direction
- Any remaining in year pressure will be met by delay in appointing to vacant posts with the Place & Communities directorate or other in year savings within the directorate

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- Delete unneeded vacant AD post (£100k). Consolidation and reduction of work within the Place & Communities directorate means that we can operate with two Associate Director portfolios rather than three.
- The proposal will merge the post of the AD Place Regulation with the post of AD Community and rename it AD Community & Public Protection. There is no associated risk as this post has been removed from the staffing budget
- The AD Community portfolio is much smaller than proposed under Our Futures and has never been occupied. The AD Place Regulation portfolio has been reduced by moving Planning and Building Control to Housing & Property directorate.

**5.3.4..1** Max reflected that Commissioners had significant concerns about how the numbers added up and the impact of this on others. Particular concern was CCTV being returned to public services for **all** public buildings without a plan. Needed to have thought through each and every element more thoroughly. Another concern was with the numbers, there was a risk of spending money this year, rather than savings. Vacant posts that were in planning were now being used as part of a different control system. Now looking at a much smaller number of people to hold this. There was a control total on salaries which included the pay award, that cash limit had to cover any delays to this programme. Needed to ensure that the numbers fit the spending proposal. Margaret responded that the CCTV monitoring slide (pg17) reported a £104k saving, then later it was £27k, this was confusing and needed clarification. Monitoring would be returned to host departments, and Commissioners wanted to know whether these conversations been had with the relevant departments and were they clear on what they needed to do. Slide 18 talked about cost pressures but the mitigations didn't add up to £473k cost pressures. Cllr Bains reported that nine months' timeframe to achieve this, was an issue. Cllr Swindlehurst responded that the £26k was the parks element of this. Richard West confirmed it was £104k budget saving. There were a number of parts to that framework, £170k would be covered by the police if done in the nine month timeframe. It currently needed to operate 24/7. Adult social care colleagues were looking at June as a deadline for not needing to have CCTV in careline. If the council ran it for nine months, then £300k would have to come from somewhere else. Cameras were cleaned every fortnight, which was costly, and needed to be addressed. Maintenance contract also needed to be revised. Key was to try and close it earlier.

Cllr Bains reported the Police were willing to take over the CCTV within nine months and was hopeful it would be done in less time. Cllr Smith reported that AMPR cameras were used in the CCTV for fining people who were speeding and therefore came under the Council. Richard West would confirm whether this was a separate system.

**Action: Richard West**

- Cameras on the junctions to monitor traffic and light jumping will be picture cameras, they were currently no booby trap cameras in the boroughs.
- Margaret expressed a lack of confidence in the numbers and wanted Richard West to come back with more information on the value of the mitigation. Max shared these concerns. The policy was not incorrect, but the getting there needed to be reported

more clearly and precisely that's what seemed to be a big challenge. Commissioners felt there were too many moving parts.

**Action: Richard West**

- Leader reported that Careline now sat with Marc Gatsby, and he had given Commissioners reassurance that the savings would be made.
- Margaret concluded that she needed to feel confident that the budget savings could be made, and the mitigations could be delivered.

#### **5.4 Leisure, Culture and Community Empowerment: *Cllr Sabia Akram***

##### **5.4.1 Overview:**

Main area to concentrate savings on would be leisure. Currently there were four leisure centres in the borough. These have an income management fee of £1.589m for this year.

- All four leisure centres were now fully open. In return for operating the four leisure centres, Everyone Active budgeted to pay a management fee of £1,589m in 2023/24. No frontline staff are funded by SBC. Two Active Slough Officers and project work was externally funded. £90k from Public Health Grant and £45k from Sport England grant. Re-launch of GP Referral Scheme linking Active Slough Officers to work of Community Development/Social Prescribers so memberships can be increased. GPs prescribe physical activity and Active Slough Officers deliver a 12-week support programme via Everyone Active sites. Developing a new Street Games programme with forty places for young people diverted from crime and disorder and funded by an external grant of £39k to support delivery.
- **Culture:** Norden Farm venture. Once Norden farm funding ends, the council wanted to be in a position where we could go to a different provider for another venture. Most of the population have had no engagement with the arts and leisure offering, which needed to change. Slough Museum have a presence in The Curve plus new storage and display facility on Slough Trading Estate (SEGRO). No frontline staff funded by SBC.
- **Community:** Two Community Development Officer posts funded via Primary Care Network with secured agreement from Better Care Fund to fund these posts to March 2025. No frontline staff funded by SBC. Over £85k in grant funding has been secured for voluntary and community groups.
- **Asylum:** Income from government in the form of a grant worth £765,000 has been received to support asylum seekers and refugees, including those from Ukraine and Afghanistan. SBC acting as a coordination point to manage and disperse these grants to the services which have incurred costs including education, housing, community services, and social care. Activity has been absorbed into core teams so there was no reliance on the general fund. No frontline staff funded by SBC. Needed to be mindful that Slough was a very attractive place for diverse populations because of the ethnic diversity, relatively cheap housing and strong community and faith networks in the borough. A direct saving of £20k has already been made and came from a grant from sport England.

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- **Risk:** the grants available reduce over time.
- **Mitigations:** who else could be providing these services? e.g. NHS etc. Did the Council need to be the delivery arm for some of these services. Also needed to understand the Council's data better.
- Margaret posed a question on the asylum bill, and the £167k allocation from government. Richard West reported SBC was the coordination point for spending the money. Haven't had a lot of activity to deal with and have been able to absorb it within the current team, so no legacy costs. There were costs that could be incurred but he didn't have good sight of that at the moment. Richard didn't know what this was costing the Council, but it was being worked out. Margaret felt this was a cost that needed to be known and the reason for this was that a lot of Authorities were complaining about the cost of asylum to them vs the grant they receive. Cllr Swindlehurst reported that public health partners, the NHS and GPs were feeling the cost acutely, but that had not been felt by the Council to date. The Council wanted to write to the Home Office regarding costs, but Margaret felt that was not going to be possible if the costs were not known beforehand.
- Cllr Hulme reported there was a cost of staff, which was split across several areas. Schools were complaints were regarding capacity to take the children in. The scale of the problem was now clearer. There had been reliance on the voluntary sector, for example for clothes and toys. Needed to have a strategic meeting to decide who was paying for what and for that to be in the correct budget.
- Max felt the leisure contract would be renegotiated again. There were concerns over general risks to the whole sector which was under pressure from high energy bills and the viability of remaining opening in the future. What would happen to the services and what was the mitigation? Richard West responded that the expectation was that everyone would pay the full management fee. Energy costs and chemical costs and supply of the same. £1m has been paid this year, the budget was £1.5m, however. If the £1.5m wasn't achieved, then the Council would be in difficulties. Max was concerned that there were no staff. Monthly monitoring was not enough, needed to be closer to things, rather than at arm's length. This was therefore a bigger risk than was being portrayed. He also felt it needed to be a much higher priority for Richard West as ED. The total budget needed to be met in a controlled way, and Commissioners were concerned that this would not happen in this area. The mitigation also needed to be clearer. Cllr Swindlehurst felt the contractual obligations did not change. Mitigation was how did the council respond if they paid less than the contractually agreed amount. The buildings were also much more energy efficient as they were built in 2018.

## **5.5 Transport and the Local Environment: Cllr Mohammed Nazir**

### **5.5.1 Overview:**

All of the services within this Cabinet portfolio sit within Place & Communities directorate.

- Public Transport & Active Travel
- Council Fleet management & Future Transport Planning

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- Taxi & Minicab Licensing
- Cycling and walking Strategies and Plans
- Relationships with Bus and Rail Operators
- Surface Access to Heathrow Airport
- Highway Maintenance/Street-works & Street-lighting
- Parks, Open Spaces and Allotments
- Grounds Maintenance & Public Realm Standards
- Air Quality, Climate Change & Flood Protection
- Waste Management/Refuse Collection/Recycling
- Energy Efficiency & Decarbonisation
  
- On 1 August 2022 the directorate was split into Place & Community and Housing & Property and the new ED for Housing & Property started in October 2022. The combined directorate at 31 December 2022 had a net budget of £12.663m comprised of a gross expenditure budget of £43.839m and a gross income budget of £31.176m. It had a 2022/23 savings target of £7.543m
  
- After the split, the Place & Communities directorate had a net budget of £18.925m comprised of a gross expenditure budget of £35.629m and a gross income budget of £16.704m. It had a 2022/23 savings target of £4.551m and the current projected achievement against this target was £4.031m.
  
- The 2022/23 forecast out-turn for Place & Communities directorate was £19.482m, forecasting an overspend of £0.557m against a budget of £18.925m.
  
- The directorate was proposing total savings of £3.778m in 2023/24 of which £3.178m were within this Cabinet portfolio.

**5.5.2 Delivery Plans: waste management, controlled parking zones, street lighting and parkways**

- **Waste Management:** end of June saving of £424k per year. Estimate that the 1500 flats and multiple houses may be moved to fortnightly collections. Savings are on target. Chalvey HWRC Management fee is £40k. RBWM have agreed to pay a contribution to the costs of managing the Chalvey HWRC in addition to a contribution towards the costs of waste disposal. An independent survey was carried out in November/December 2023 to evaluate the proportion of users who are resident in RBWM. This has determined, subject to agreement of the calculation by RBWM, that a fee of at least £40k is due for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the invoice for which will be raised in April 23. Improve Trade Waste Business by £10k. Anticipate an increase in profit as the DSO Trade Waste Service increases the number and value of Commercial Waste customers. Council is on track to deliver this saving based on current growth rates. Green waste collection charges of £700k are on target. July 2022 cabinet agreed to charge £50 per annum to collect green waste. If the council achieved 14,000 subscribers, this would equal £700k. To date there were 5,000 subscribers, but it was expected there would be a step change in this number once the grass cutting season started in March supported by a communications campaign to promote the scheme borough-wide.
  
- **Key Risks in the waste management proposals:**



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- Have we modelled sufficient resource to collect fortnightly waste and recycling
- Will we get the cooperation of the workforce
- Will we get the public to put the right material in the grey bin and in the red bin
- Will residents put the right bin out on the right week
- Will we get enough subscribers to the green waste service (>14,000)
- Will we get too many subscribers to the green waste service (>14,000)
- Will we continue to achieve profitable growth in our trade waste business
- Will RBWM pay a contribution to the costs of managing our Chalvey HWRC
- Margaret – question: will others charge Slough for their services. It was confirmed there is already an agreement/payment with others.

- **Key Mitigations in the waste management proposals:**

- Resource estimates for alternate fortnightly collections based on reductions achieved by other local authorities
- The Unions and workforce will have input into the make-up of the rounds and, in addition, issues over who works with whom and who loads and who drives will be talked through and ironed out. A programme of meetings to take place, starting in March 2023, along with a FAQ process to answer questions and to provide clarity.
- “Route riders” will accompany each crew in the early weeks of the new service to observe activity and behaviour. This knowledge will be used to manage issues and to re-blend rounds as and where needed.
- A publicity and promotion campaign has been commissioned from an experienced external provider to ensure that residents know what is required of them and why. A kick off meeting took place on 8 February 2023 and are awaiting initial proposals to review.
- Residents will keep the same day of the week as now for their alternate fortnightly collections so, if a Monday collection. If they lose track of what bin to put out which week then they can put both out, but only the correct one will be emptied.
- An A to Z has been produced confirming that collection day will stay the same and listing which of Week A or Week B will be waste and which will be recycling. This is being finessed to even out numbers between patches and will be published at the end of February.
- 14,000 green waste subscribers is the target number. If the council were to get significantly less than the collection resource could be reduced commensurately. If the number is much higher, then can increase the collection resource commensurately. There is also the opportunity to increase prices on 1 December 2023.
- The trade waste service was reported as small and fragile. It would be continuously monitored and if it became insufficiently profitable, then it could be discontinued with customers subcontracted or sold to a competitor.
- If RBWM didn't make a contribution to the costs of managing Chalvey HWRC then SBC could choose to exclude their residents from using the site.

**5.5.2..1** Max reflected that the number one risk to waste management was fly tipping. Needed to see how this would be managed. People could decide not to pay, particularly after the Council Tax increases in April 2023. Commissioners wanted to know more about the risk monitoring and enforcement. Cllr Nazir responded that Slough already had a lot of fly tipping activity. There were notices warning residents they would be fined for doing so. There were plans this would be monitored more closely going forwards, however. However, statistics showed fly tipping had not increased when this had been introduced in other Authorities. Richard West considered the biggest risk was that residents would put their green waste into the grey bins.

- **Delivery Plans Parking/Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs):**

- Subject to approval by cabinet on 27 February 2023, and also on future statutory public consultation for each location, we will use CPZs as our default method of controlling on street parking across the borough with a rolling programme of implementations over the forthcoming years.

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- Parking Engineers have been employed and have commenced preliminary designs on new CPZ's. There will be 4 in the year 2023/24 and 3 to 4 each year thereafter.
- A detailed mobilisation plan and a detailed communications plan will be produced for each new CPZ location.
- It is estimated that £200k of additional income will be achieved in 2023/24 through the sale of Parking Permits for these new CPZs together with fines where parking regulations are contravened in these new CPZs.
- **PL-2324-22 Increased charges for (existing) Parking Permits - £48k (Owner: Richard West) (On target):**
- There will be an increase in fee for Parking Permits in existing Controlled Parking Zones (the same charges will apply to future CPZs but the new income in this savings proposal is based on existing CPZs). Permit charges will increase as follows:-
  - 1st permit £45 to £75
  - 2nd permit £90 to £125
  - 3rd permit £125 to £250
- A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be advertised in February and the Order Made in March to enable the new fees to be charged from 1<sup>st</sup> April.

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- **Risks and mitigations to CPZs:**
- **Risks:**
  - Delays to the implementation of the schemes.
  - Existing permit holders may not pay but can issue penalty notices if that happens. Will enough residents and businesses buy parking permits at the new prices.
- **Mitigations:**
  - Have employed dedicated officers to design and implement CPZ schemes and the programme would be monitored through strong project management.
  - There was strong demand from residents to find parking close to their homes and this had been/would be tested in consultations.
  - If people didn't buy permits but parked in CPZs anyway then Penalty Charge Notices would be issued generating income
- **Delivery Plans Street lighting: dim street and park lighting £25k:**
  - A Significant Decision was made on 30 January 2023 to allow a trial to dim streetlights and park lights. The following activities will now take place: -
    - 5.5.2..1 Consultation with key stakeholders including TVP, Councillors, Community Groups: February 2023 ongoing
    - 5.5.2..2 Select & agree trial areas: February 2023
    - 5.5.2..3 Commence Trial on dimming regime: Feb-April 2023
    - 5.5.2..4 Analyse data and share/consult with stakeholders: April/May
    - 5.5.2..5 Cabinet Report on new lighting policy and dimming regime: June 2023
    - 5.5.2..6 The figure of £25k was a notional figure. While if less electricity is used then the council will be charged less. The price of electricity was currently an unknown and was fluctuating +/- 30% compared to prices prior to the conflict in Ukraine.
    - 5.5.2..7 The trial would need to demonstrate that dimming lights did not see an increase in crime.
- **Risks:**
  - This may not be acceptable to residents, in which case would not recruit. Max wanted to know where the money within the budget was being held. Richard West reported that there was a 500k pot that was reserved for all the mitigations. The saving was a notional £25k in 2023/24. Would hold back recruitment into vacant posts until £25k had been accrued as a buffer.
    - 5.5.2..1 Commissioners agreed with the principle but were adding up the total number of things that were charged and would have to be held across all the services. They concluded it was a very brave proposal. Cllr Nazir felt more confident now than in previous years that the proposal was achievable, but the mitigation was not. Didn't know what these vacancies were for and therefore couldn't see what the impact was going to be. The concern was that if all the vacancies were being held then the Authority couldn't move ahead until it recruited good people. This risk needed to be monitored very carefully. Cllr Swindlehurst said the council would break even on the green waste programme. When the spring came, it was anticipated more revenue, which would contribute to the budget.
- **Street-Works Section 50 licences - £35k:**
  - The fee for a Section 50 Licence was to increase to come in line with charges made by neighbouring authorities. It was anticipated that revenue would increase by £35k through a combination of increased demand and an increased unit rate charged. The service had issued a higher-than-expected number of licences in 2022/23 and this was projected to continue.
  - The increase in the Section 50 fee was taken to the Licencing Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and approved. New fees would now be implemented from 1 April 2023.
- **Street-Works (temporary) road closure fees - £65k:**
  - Areas in Slough were regularly used for Filming or other commercial events and where this required a Temporary Road Closure (TRO), our fee per TRO would be increased so that it fully reflected the costs of carrying them out. It was anticipated that revenue would increase by £65k through a combination of increased demand and an increased unit rate charge.
  - The increase in Road Closure fees was taken to Licencing Committee on 6 Feb 2023 and approved. New fees would now be implemented from 1 April 2023.

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- **Highways maintenance works reduced - £100k**
- The current run rate for emergency works allowed the council to remove £50k from the Principal Road Maintenance budget and £50k from the Non-Principal Roads budget.
- **Key Risks for Highway Maintenance works:**
- A4 safer roads £1.5m. This is a fully grant funded project by the DfT to reduce casualties on the A4. The project has already commenced with the reduction in the speed limit, which is due to be implemented following Cabinet approval. The design for the remaining part of the project will be brought back to Cabinet for approval in July.
- **Risk:** The biggest risk of reduction to the speed limit has been dealt with already through the consultation with approval to proceed in consultation with the Lead Member for Transport. The design and implementation will involve traffic signal changes, resurfacing and removal of street furniture.
- **Mitigation:** These are low risk but will be managed through regular programme meetings.
- **5.5.2..1** Margaret wanted to know what 'on target' meant, as slippage was inevitable. Given high inflation, if there were slippage, will the prices go up. Margaret very concerned about slippage and the impact that could have. Richard West felt they were in a much better place now than where they started and had more confidence in the progress made and the processes.
- Max felt SBC was not effective in reporting physical and financial progress from the financial plan. It needed to have a better view of where things in the physical programme were. Commissioners needed to see more of this and use the original Audit Commission Review.
- **EV Taxi Network £157k – not started yet:**
- Funded by grant and S106 funding to increase the number of EV charging facilities across the network to encourage use by taxis. Original scheme was taxis only and EV charging points on taxi ranks by 2025. This programme was paused as part of the capital programme review. No money has been spent on this to date.
- **Risk:** Insufficient appetite from taxi operators to convert to EV.
- **Mitigation:** Officers to work with taxi operators and the Licencing Committee to determine locations and appetite. If this can't be resolved then the money can be returned.
- **Car Club £100k – not started yet:**
- Facilitating the opportunity for commercial operators to hire out cars for short periods to residents and visitors to reduce car parking pressure in town centre locations. This programme was paused as part of the capital programme, it now contains only S106 funds which would need to be returned if the Council did not implement it.
- **Risk:** Appetite for take up
- **Mitigation:** Officers and the procurement team to soft market test locations the industry leaders (Zip, Hertz, and Enterprise) are interested in and then tender to those sites.
- **A4 Cycleway £10.2m - On target:**
- This is fully grant funded by the DfT and has been approved by Cabinet with a follow up design to return in July. The Council has taken on a design engineer to complete the detailed design and to put together the relevant tender documents.
- **Risk:** Costs associated with utility diversions and contract prices.
- **Mitigation:** Value engineering has formed the initial stages of the project to avoid delays and rising costs rather than altering the design at the end to suit the budget. This design process will be reviewed on a fortnightly basis.
- **Capital Grant scheme £1.94m On target:**
- This is directly linked to and includes the Revenue Grant Swap.
- **Risk:** Noncompliance with grant funding requirements.
- **Mitigation:** A training session with finance to explain how the new grant process will be implemented. Transport and Highways officers have already been briefed with the remaining officers at the DSO and Parks set for late February.

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- **Reading Archives £188k On target:**
- This is Council funded and will provide an extension to the Reading Archives building. The Council is contributing together with the other five LAs in Berkshire to increase the capacity for holding records/documents. The works are due to start in Autumn 2023 and will be managed by West Berkshire Council. The Council will then receive invoices aligned to the agreement (£188k 2023/24, £55k in 24/25 and £11k in 25/26).
- **Risk:** Escalating costs
- **Mitigation:** The current programme has included an additional contingency due to the rise in costs over the last 12 months.
  
- **DSO Replacement Fleet £500k Procurement underway:**
- This programme is to replace vehicles currently hired through Enterprise. Cabinet report being prepared for April to seek authority to proceed in securing vehicles for the DSO.
- **Risk:** Costs continue to escalate
- **Mitigation:** The programme will need to flex to avoid buying and leasing vehicles at much higher costs. There is flexibility in the fleet to do this and furthermore the number of vehicles and specification are being reduced to keep within budget.
  
- **Farnham Road £2.82m + £222k from P102 On target:**
- This is fully grant funded and will be spread over two financial years. The first meeting with the DfT has been held and will be followed by quarterly meetings over the next 2 years. The scheme is a public realm project but deals with ASB matters and issues affecting business and improvements to the highway. Officers will seek to undertake upgrade works through the grant to reduce future revenue maintenance charges. Concept designs have been undertaken with the next stage being consultation with the Lead Member and ward councillors before setting up a working group with businesses and residents.
- **Risk:** Residents and businesses having different opinions and priorities and no consensus leading to delays.
- **Mitigation:** Initial engagement with councillors and businesses has been undertaken and comments/correspondence with residents already included in the objectives of the scheme.
  
- **PMO support On target**
- The PMO has been engaged to support the following projects:
  - A4 Safer Roads
  - A4 Cycleway
  - Sponge City
  - Farnham Road
- An additional £50k/year has been allocated from the DfT to project manage the schemes and this will be allocated to the PMO to recruit the relevant officer (interviews end of Feb). A group of officers supported by the PMO will project plan and manage the various schemes to avoid the delays encountered over the past 12-18 months.

## **5.6 Adult and Social Care and Public Health: Mark Gatsby (on behalf of Cllr Pantelic)**

### **5.6.1 Overview:**

- The Adults Directorate, consisting of Adults Social Care Operations, People Strategy and Commissioning, and Public Health, has a 2023/24 budget of a net £23.080m, comprised of a gross controlled expenditure budget of £55.389m and a gross income budget of £32.309m, including £11.683m Better Care Fund / Improved BCF and Public Health Grant £7.851m
- The Directorate has an allocated savings target of £5.6m for 23/24 with 16 proposals being put forward to achieve this.
- All of the proposals have been reviewed by the 'People' Scrutiny Panel.
- Equality Impact Assessments have been prepared and made available in respect of these proposals, and of these, three are assessed to have equalities impacts which required a full assessment to be undertaken.

### **5.6.2 Proposal 1- Reablement Efficiencies - £0.650m**

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- Restructure the service to better align staffing resource to service requirements, thus increasing productivity and throughput of clients re-abled. Re-abled people require less homecare.

**5.6.3 Proposal 2 - Accommodation with Support - £0.652m**

- Through owning their own tenancies, clients will be maintaining their independence to a greater extent, but also have the capability to claim housing benefits to cover the hotel costs, which is charged for in residential care.

**5.6.4 Proposal 3 - Joint Funding - £0.330m**

- Residents with complex needs, in some circumstances, should have the package relating to their health needs funded by partners in Health. A Joint Funding Protocol has been developed and implemented to achieve this.

**5.6.5 Proposal 4 - Practice and Process Development - £0.810m**

- Improved practice within operations to maximise opportunity of decreasing the cost of future demand and ensuring that alternative provision and lower costs are utilised for new clients entering the service.

**5.6.6 Proposal 5 - Mental Health - £0.500m**

- Focused review of service packages and decision-making to deliver financial savings. A review of packages and block contracts will be undertaken with the expectation of reducing costs in line with the comparators seen from other boroughs. Data cleanse exercise to ensure packages that can be, are reduced or closed where appropriate.

**5.6.7 Proposal 6 – Transitions Management - £0.400m**

- Increasing proactive working, including working with our young people earlier, and the effectiveness of transitions through better management, visibility, and co-working, and developing a more strengths-based approach to transitions. Joint working to avoid expensive out of area residential college placements for young people with complex needs.

**5.6.8 Proposal 7 - Diverting Demand - £0.270m**

- Reducing the number of new packages starting through more effective diverting demand into preventative services and VCS, by delivering improvements to the strengths-based and asset-based approach to conversations with citizens. Includes approach to Re-model Front door.

**5.6.9 Proposal 8 – Review of Hospital Discharge / 6 week review - £0.350m**

- This proposes a diagnostic-style review of the 6-week post hospital review process, to measure and improve efficacy and effectiveness of these reviews, with a focus on the plan to get people home from care settings quicker, increase independence and reduce care packages as swiftly as safe to do so.

**5.6.10 Proposal 9 - Financial Assessments - £0.150m**

- This is a stretch target of an existing 2022/23 proposal, with additional income expected.

**5.6.11 Proposal 10 - Direct Payment recoupment- £0.200m**

- Increased focus on reviewing direct payment packages and identifying further potential recoupment resulting in savings. This is a stretch target following efficient delivery against 22/23 target.

**5.6.12 Proposal 11 - Levying the Office of Public Guardian (OPG) determined charge rate of 3.5% + annual fee- £0.100m**

- An options appraisal has identified the opportunity to leverage the largest financial efficiency from our utilisation of posts and impact of management of Deputyship / Appointeeship within the council. Going forward this will be led by Finance Dept.

**5.6.13 Proposal 12 – Further cost reductions, efficiencies, and vacancy factors - £0.200m**

- Detailed analysis of budgets and scrutiny of existing vacancies to identify further budget efficiencies or opportunities for improved productivity.

**5.6.14 Proposal 13 - Align and Integrate ASC and PH with NHS/E Berks LAs - £0.250m**

- There is an opportunity to greater align and integrate eligible Adult Social Care, Commissioning and Public Health services with the NHS by streamlining and reducing duplicate functions across an integrated

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system. Additionally, explore opportunity to mobilise the Public Health budget to improve prevention provision in the borough.

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**5.6.15 Proposal 14 - Better use of DFG & Equipment - £0.100m**

- By providing greater focus on more efficient and greater utilisation of equipment instead of the provision of formal support, we intend to implement a strategy to reduce expenditure on care purchasing - links to front door practice, diverting demand and a new approach to allocating DFG for stair lift installation.

**5.6.16 Proposal 15 - Assistive Technology - £0.420m**

- Slough has yet to design its Assistive Technology offer. Many Local Authorities have been developing this area for several years and have benefitted from the reduced spend in domiciliary care that specific application of Assistive Technology brings. Will be exploring sensors, cameras, tracking, auto off functions, reminders, and intuitive alarms. Increased utilisation of Assistive Technology results in reduced care purchasing costs.

**5.6.17 Proposal 16 - Review of contractual and funding arrangements for care home placements - £0.206m**

- Opportunities to reduce the impact of voids in block contract are being explored
- **Risk:**
  - the human resource available to deliver against each of the workstreams in the programme is insufficient to yield full benefit
  - challenges posed by national social care challenges could require the programme to redirect focus
  - increase costs of living impact scale of efficiency when moving clients from high cost residential to supported living placements
  - demand is Diverted from the Front Door but volume increases
  - inflation rate included in budget allocation is sufficient to meet Provider uplifts
  - critical incident in NHS acute environments necessitates additional spend within the system
  - unsuccessful negotiations lead to Providers exiting the market
  - overall demand increases beyond forecast (volume and complexity)
- **Mitigation:**
  - Ensure resource has been allocated through internal teams and supported externally when required. Business cases to be developed as required for invest to save opportunities. Liaise with internal PMO.
  - Ensure SBC continues to monitor central government updates with regards to social care reform, and Adults Social Care Regulatory Inspection. Continue to monitor activity in the social care market.
  - Uplift calculator tool developed for providers. Uplifts in Care Home provision likely to be different to those where care is provided in a person's own home. (Hotel Costs) – Fair Cost of Care exercise is underway.
  - All contact via Front Door is monitored. It will still be recorded however; Strength Based Conversations will take place as conversation one and much sooner than via contact centre arrangements.
  - Individual provider negotiations – engagement of consistent approach through procurement colleagues
  - Spend to be identified through any NHS monies eligible for carry forward into 2023/24
  - Clear communication regarding future commissioning intentions – early identification of high-risk providers and alternative options
  - Review approach to risk stratification and prioritisation

**5.6.18 Mental health:** making sure the council is not continuing to pay for packages that are no longer required. Need to improve the monitoring of cases to make sure that packages don't continue to be paid for when the patient has been discharged.

**5.6.19 Data cleansing:** an opportunity for packages that are no longer required, do not come into the budget.

**5.6.20 Transitions management:** working with Sue Butcher on this. Costly residential college arrangements are not working, so will look to find local partners for provisions locally and less expensively.

**5.6.21 Diverting demand:** how social workers with people. 40% of people that said they needed help at the front door, didn't need it at all. So front door policy is being redesigned to make it more effective.

**5.6.22 Hospital discharge process review:** after hospital discharge, patients are funded for an amount of time, but this isn't reviewed correctly so that will need to be changed.



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- 5.6.23 Care charges:** these are being chased from those residents who owe the Council money for care provisions that have not been paid for.
- 5.6.24 Direct payment recoupment:** preferred method is to give people cash payment via DPs. We pay a 10% surplus on monies not spent. OPG will be moved to finance from adult social care (see slide)
- 5.6.25 Better use of DFG:** quicker equipment gets to people, the sooner we can stop the care package to support them, savings can be made.
- 5.6.26 Assisted technology:** the move of the CCTV has been a catalyst for change. More recipients of care packages could benefit from assisted technology programmes. Using the model from Hampshire Authority.
- 5.6.27 Review of contractual arrangements:** these are being looked at. There are voids and each one is worth £900 per week. Need to unlock these voids to release the monies. There is value here.
- 5.6.28** Max commented that over last 15 months, service has come forward with people coming to it being told that they are going to go, and wanted to know whether that was true or not. If so, is it because the skills have been acquired and would these people be going or not? Marc Gadsby responded these people would indeed be going and reassured Commissioners that while some faces remained, behaviours and attitudes had changed.
- 5.6.29** Sarah Hayward submitted a late document "Savings Review – Strategic Commissioning" in which she reported reduced costs with a target annual saving of £750k. Commissioners wanted to ensure there was no double counting as these numbers were different to those presented earlier in the meeting.
- 5.6.30** Further Commissioner concerns were around pay, contract inflation and the NHS. The NHS were loading cost pressures onto local authorities. How would the line be held with the 4.8%. This needed to be more effectively discussed in this risks element of the report. Marc responded that innovation and diversifying would be crucial, would also need to be agile throughout the year as could not afford inflationary increases due to the need to remain within the 4.8% budget. There was a willing workforce to go into the area of domiciliary care. There were challenges around recruiting the professionals, however. A significant amount of funding for social care came from the NHS. Needed to ensure all sources of income were used and there was agility throughout the year. Needed to recognise that the council could provide the same service as three years ago.
- 5.6.31** Margaret congratulated Marc Gadsby on his proposals and the work carried out. An excellent set of savings. Proposal 9 talked about it being a stretched target. Margaret asked if there was financial reassessment so that benefits increased? Marc responded that these are currently being dwarfed by the cost of living costs. There were residents who inherited money and then came out of the threshold to qualify. Key thing to do was review the packages more closely and regularly. Cllr Anderson commented he was comforted with the portfolio approach. The elderly in the Borough were traditionally viewed as poor, but that did need to be reviewed more regularly as circumstances changed for individuals. Cllr Swindlehurst commented that the life expectancy gap has been reduced in Slough. The challenge was to increase that life expectancy and the quality of life for the population. Increasing life expectancy would reduce the cost to the Council. Cllr Nazir commented that the population did not move away from the borough, particularly those from the South Asia.

## **5.7 Children's, Life-Long Learning and Skills: Cllr Christine Hulme**

- 5.7.1 Overview:** SEND service review. Consultation of children's centres was taking place.
- 5.7.2 Community learning and skills:**
- Community Learning and Skills Service - improved service delivery from "requires improvement" to "good" in 2022
  - Most recent Self-Assessment for Ofsted maintains a "good" rating.
  - Service is 100% funded from ESFA grant (Education Skills Funding Agency) inc. Corporate Management and cost of our buildings
  - Enrolments onto Slough functional skills courses provided by Class have increased by 80% from 2019/20
  - Retention rates and pass rates on these courses are both over 99%
  - £245k Multiply grant received and by March 2023 £124k of numeracy courses will be commissioned.

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- £50k Department of Work and Pensions grant secured to support Future Skills co-ordination.
- Invited to re-bid for Individual Placement Support Fund which will fund programmes to support residents who are unemployed or under employed due to mental illness.
- Creative Academy is 100% self-funded through fees and has an 80% success rate for graduates (those finding employment or further training in the arts sector).

**5.7.3 Library Services:**

- Maintained library service from 4 library buildings
- Revenue budget reduced **from £1.554m** in 2021/22 **to £0.682m** for 2023/24 - **an £872k saving**
- The number of library visits was about half the number pre-Covid but was steadily increasing.
- Library self-service rates have increased to 93% (from 87% in 21/22)
- New library memberships were growing towards pre-Covid levels (pro-rata April 22 to March 23 6,447)
- Cost/head for Summer Reading Challenge had been driven down from £3.82 per child (2019) to £1.70 per child (2022)
- Publications budget reduced to £90k – Slough was now equal bottom of the CIPFA most similar councils rather than top
- Arts Council saw The Curve as a Flagship in the South-East, and this was key to their funding for wider initiatives in Slough
- Would want to maintain the buildings. People needed to have something outside of work. Could broaden the use of the library service and would have a review of this in July at Cabinet. There had been a reduction in staff which had led to some savings. Needed to ensure buildings could remain open, were safe and residents could get the information they needed. Libraries to be made more useful to the overall running of the services in the council.

**5.7.4 2023-24 Library Service Model - £276k Delivered (subject to cabinet approval)**

- Subject to Cabinet approval on 27 February 2023, a reduced number of library staff, together with a commitment from other services to locate staff within library buildings, will support a predominantly self-service library service from 4 library buildings for a total of 141 hrs per week (was 151). Staff from other Council services working within or adjacent to Library areas within buildings will assist the small number of borrowers who are unable to use the self-service kiosks or who are unable to access digital services using the publicly available IT if/when Library staff are not present.
- The saving would be achieved by deleting vacant posts from the library establishment so reducing the staffing budget by £273k on 1 April 2023.

**5.7.5 Delivery plans, risks, and mitigations:**

- The cohort of remaining library staff is 13.4fte which could impact on opening hours if we have a large amount of sick or resignations and/or don't manage holiday well. Staffing has been reduced over the past 5 years as follows: -
  - 2019/20 Pre Our Futures = 35.46 fte
  - 2020/21 Our Futures model = 26.03 fte
  - 2021/22 after 1st set of savings = 19.12 fte
  - 2022/23 establishment staffing = 16.42 fte
  - 2023/24 proposed operating model = 13.4 fte
- A lot of staff management needed. Need to be able to recruit volunteers to assist and complement the current staff, not replace staff themselves. Hours would be reduced so that the library could function within its new budget. Max reflected that self-service, and self-access arrangements has extended the use of the library. Required staff to be in the building however, though not necessarily a Librarian. Max had seen people using private security or volunteers who sit at the door in other places. Access was done via a smart card so it could be monitored. This has cut the costs significantly, while increasing the hours and use of the library itself.
- **Risks:**
- The cohort of remaining library staff is 13.4fte which could impact on opening hours if we have a large amount of sick or resignations and/or don't manage holiday well. Staffing has been reduced over the past 5 years as follows: -
  - 2019/20 Pre Our Futures = 35.46 fte
  - 2020/21 Our Futures model = 26.03 fte

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- 2021/22 after 1st set of savings = 19.12 fte
- 2022/23 establishment staffing = 16.42 fte
- 2023/24 proposed operating model = 13.4 fte
- **Mitigation:**
- Strong management of the staffing rota. The operating model only needs a small number of front-line staff, and “other non-front line” library staff can be used to cover where we have absences.
- A pool of 6 general all year-round volunteers and a pool of 20 Summer Reading Challenge Volunteers has been established to provide additional resilience. Provision has been put in place to sustain and replenish this cohort and, in addition, SCVS have a volunteer cohort and we will work collaboratively with them to attract more volunteers into the library service.
- Recruitment processes are now well rehearsed and so will enable a quick response to recruit new staff should we have resignations.
- Ongoing review with opportunity to further reduce hours and/or close buildings if needed. Formal review in July 2023 Cabinet Paper assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the new model.

**5.7.6 Overview: the people – children’s directorate:**

- The People – Children Directorate has a 2022/23 budget (as at period 6 / September 2022) of a net £8.091m, comprised of a gross controlled expenditure budget of £16.065m and a gross income budget of £7.974m. This excluded DSG and Slough Children First. Also £7.273m of gross expenditure and £6.042m of gross income related to the schools PFI project and was therefore ringfenced.
- As part of the budget for 2022/23, the directorate set a savings target of £1.109m. The current projected achievement against this target was £0.832m (75%)
- The forecast outturn for 2022/23 as at period 6 was an overspend of £0.035m
- The directorate was proposing £0.805m of savings towards the Council’s overall target for 2023/24 for review by the Scrutiny Committee, with a further £0.258m in 2024/25, totalling £1.063m across the two years
- **2023/24 Budget Savings Proposals homes to school transport - £0.800m:**
- As part of a drive to ensure the efficient and economic delivery of services, Children’s Services identified savings of £0.800m over two years in their Home to School Transport (HTST). Assistance offered in addition to savings committed previously. This would be achieved through a number of workstreams designed to align with the recently approved policy and achieve more efficiencies
- Home to School Transport had seen little progress since approval from cabinet. Needed to have a good project management person running this and someone who would be accountable for it. Much of this would not be implemented until September, however. Needed to review HCPs, same type still needed, or could they use something else? Currently have almost 8,000 users of the service, which was high.
- **Staff Restructure - £0.263m (23/24: £0.210m; 24/25: £0.053m)**
- The current structure was not fit for purpose. A draft restructure had since been proposed and sense checked by the LGA.
- **Delivery – Option One:**
- **Eligibility** - The Home to School Travel Assistance Policy was approved at Cabinet in October 2022 to ensure that only those children and young people who were eligible received H2S transport.
- **Revised Appeals Panel:** A new, Associate Director and Group Manager Appeals Panel is now in place replacing the previous member led panel. This decision, supported by the leader and lead member, was made to strengthen decision making and ensure that it aligns with the policy. Decisions not aligned with the policy have significant financial consequences.
- **Route Maximisation and Efficiency:** The transport team was being supported to introduce route optimisation software. It was also considering how to maximise the internal council fleet of minibuses and source ‘as and when’ drivers including council employees e.g., facilities officers. Sole pupil transport was being reviewed to see where transport could be shared and where it was required it would be reviewed on an annual basis. A more robust approach to the application of policy in this was required.
- **Working with Schools:** Discussions were taking place with some schools to establish if they could take on some transportation. The head teacher of one special school had expressed an initial interest but costs would need to be agreed. Procurement work was also taking place to ensure best value contracts with local transport firms.

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- **Risks:**
  - Rising demand for Home to School Transport - (rise in requests for Education Health and Care Plans). Mitigation is through the delivery actions. Rising costs for suppliers e.g. fuel, inflation leading to higher prices for services.
  
  - **Delivery – Option two Restructure:**
  - The current structure was not fit for purpose. A draft restructure had been designed with the aim of better meeting service demands. It was costed with finance colleagues. There were no planned redundancies.
  
  - Max felt the contract sum was crucial. Sue Butcher would need time to get this done, but after that was completed, SCF would have to come to cabinet on a regular basis to report so they could be held to account by the council as it was a wholly owned subsidiary. Margaret reflected that children’s services must improve. It had been in special measures for long enough and time had now come to improve it to provide a better services for the children in Slough. Then the company could also come back in-house. s
  
  - **Risks:**
  - **Timescale:** The restructure needed cabinet approval. As pre-election period is imminent this would not be until June 2023, post elections. This would then be followed by a three-month consultation period.
  - Staff morale during the restructuring process
  
  - **Mitigation:**
  - There should be no financial impact as there were vacancies in the current structure which would not be filled.
  - Staff communication plan to be put in place
  - How Children’s Services assured itself that it was on track with these savings, would need to be done by managing and monitoring the workstreams. Margaret urged the council to speak with other authorities who had changed their service provision to get advice and guidance on how to do it, what the pitfalls were and how to communicate the changes as they would certainly be contested and unpopular with residents.
- 5.7.7** Commissioners were looking forward to a coherent business plan that could be endorsed by the Commissioners and the council. Sue Butcher felt the plan had started from the wrong place and would be bringing a new view. The top team recruitments had made a significant difference to the council, which would be of huge benefit. Commissioners felt much more confident now than a year ago. Staffing was still a concern, however. In financial terms SBC was in a better place. Commissioners noted this had been a very worthwhile exercise. Commissioners thanked everyone. Margaret noted it was important that budgets were monitored as well monitoring of the risks; and thinking about mitigating them. Cllr Swindlehurst had tasked officers with identifying savings for next year to try and bring some forward where possible. There was a £3m contingency for emergency use only which could serve as a further level of mitigation if it were needed, for example for staffing. Operationally, the next step was to work within the savings budget so that the council did not have an overspend 10 months down the line. Margaret reported the Commissioners were still concerned about children’s services. The council needed to get behind Sue Butcher to assist her with delivering this. Needed to pay a lot of attention to it, taking on the role of ‘corporate parent’ to help design the business case.
- 5.7.8** Sue Butcher updated that the DfE SEND Board took place today 23 February. The OFSTED inspection report would include corporate parenting for SCS. Needed to push forward the passion that was demonstrated by people like Cllr Hulme.
- 5.7.9** Cllr Anderson reflected this had been the most collegiate budget that the council had produced. Cabinet colleagues had taken ownership of their budgets, which was good, and Cllr Anderson thanked the cabinet members for their hard work. On behalf of the Commissioners, Max also thanked everyone, particularly the members for their work.

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**6. Update from the Finance Board on 5 January 2023: *Margaret Lee***

5.8 No update at today's meeting.

**7. AOB**

7.1 None.

**The meeting closed at 13.10pm**

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