

Accountability Agreement 2023/24

Part Two: Slough Borough Council and ESFA

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Part Two

Statement of Purpose

Slough Borough Council has overall responsibility for the delivery of the Education and Skills funding Agency (ESFA) funded provision for Community Learning and Adult Skills funding streams for Slough Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service ('the Service') supports residents from diverse backgrounds in both boroughs, who access courses in venues which are in their local communities. The Service provides learning opportunities that improve people's lives and outcomes, enable people to participate in their communities and support growth and prosperity within Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead. The overall aim of the Service is making the most effective contribution it can to national and local priorities.

Community Learning and Skills Service Mission and Vision

Mission: "Supporting residents through learning to improve their skills for employment and quality of life."

With a Vision to: "Deliver quality learning, advice and skills to residents to enable them to improve their opportunities for education and employment and to contribute to the success of the local economy and their quality of life."

Strategic Aims and Objectives

We will:

1. Work with priority sectors and emerging priorities for a skills system that works for all, and most importantly ensuring support to those furthest away from learning and work.
2. Enable a vibrant and sustainable economy to include the development of existing staff linked to skills gaps and upskilling for change.
3. Empower individuals to close the healthy life expectancy gap, by building on confidence of residents to be more capable, and live fulfilling and resilient independent lives.
4. Create strong, engaged, and inclusive communities making a positive contribution to local priorities.
5. Strengthen partnerships to deliver strategic priorities in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders including employers, DWP, Private, Voluntary, independent sectors, FE and higher education providers.

"I can't express enough how grateful I am to take this course with you and how valuable it was in finding my way." - Learner feedback.

Key Regional Profile, Plans and Priorities

The Service serves Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead in the East Berkshire area, reaching around 3,000 enrolments in each academic year.

Slough Profile

- 2021 total population of Slough is 158,300.
- Slough has the youngest average age (34 years) of any large town or city in the UK.
- It is one of the most ethnically diverse places in the UK and has attracted people from across the world for more than a century shaping it into a major trading area. 46.7% of Slough's population are from Asian ethnic groups and 36.0% are from White ethnic groups (Census data 2021).
- Slough has a poor healthy life expectancy compared to neighbouring areas. Healthy life expectancy for a male in Slough is 58 years compared to the South East Average of 63. The Healthy life expectancy for a female is 60 years compared to the South East of 64 years.
- The town remains very well connected with the full opening of the Elizabeth Line in 2022, being situated 25 miles west of central London with major transport routes and Heathrow the UK main international airport in close proximity.
- Its location has helped create an £8 billion economy, with around 7,500 businesses. It holds the highest concentration of UK headquarters for global companies outside of London and the second largest concentration of data centres in the world. This support Slough to have a higher job density than South East and England averages for Slough 90.2% compared to the South East 70% and England 78.5% (Census data 2021).
- In Slough there have been increases of 25% or more in the number of residents working in human health and social work activities, information and communication, education, and construction industries since 2011.
- However, Slough's business and connectedness has not brought prosperity to all its residents.
- While it has the second highest average workplace earnings after London, deprivation is high across much of the borough. Slough is more deprived than the England average on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). 71% of Slough's Lower-tier Super Output Areas (LSOAs) fall below the national average of the IMD. There are particularly severe pockets in Britwell, Chalvey, Wexham Lea, and Colnbrook with Poyle.
- Slough has a higher proportion of people claiming unemployment benefit than the South East and England averages. People claiming unemployment benefit (JSA & UC) in Slough 5%, compared to the South East 2.8% and England 3.8% (Census data 2021).
- The recent pandemic affected Slough particularly badly with increases in claims for unemployment related benefits and with an average rate of 89 in 1,000 persons aged 16-64 claiming unemployment support.
- There is a recognised need to increase the skills of local residents - particularly with NVQ3 qualifications and above - so Slough communities can be competitive and secure productive jobs.
- Despite comparatively low levels of skills, Slough has a range of excellent primary and secondary schools.
- In 2019, 57% of pupils achieved GCSE grade 5 or above in English and Maths, better than the national average of 43%, putting Slough consistently in the top 10 best performers in the country.
- However, A-level progress remains a priority. 12.3 percent achieved grades AAB or higher, below the national average of 14.1 percent.

Windsor and Maidenhead Profile

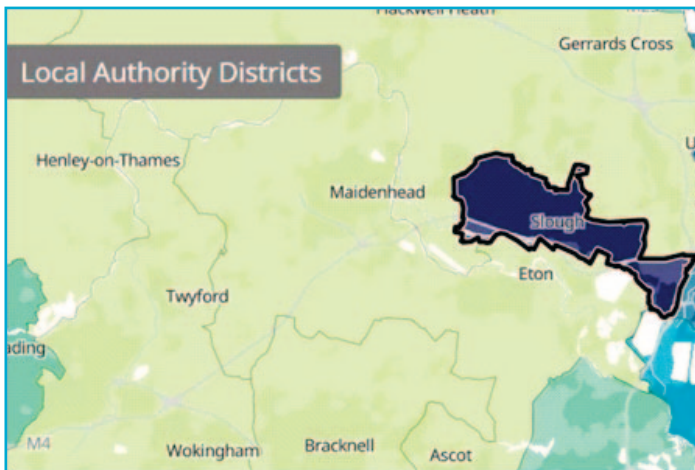
- Has a population of 153,900 (2021).
- 69% of residents identify as White British, 9% as Other White Groups, 13.1% of residents as Asian or Asian British, 1.5% as Black or Black British, 3.4% as Mixed or multiple ethnic groups and 2.1% residents as other ethnicities (Census data 2021).
- Windsor and Maidenhead is one of the most affluent areas in the UK. This affluence can cause stark inequalities and mean disadvantage is hidden. There is a substantial minority (around 5-10%) of households living in poverty (7.8% of children in households with absolute low income, 5.2% unemployment rate, over 5000 household's eligible for Universal Credit) with almost 9% of residents are in receipt of Universal Credit.
- Data suggest that rates of poverty may be higher among families with children and older people. Cost of living rises are likely to increase the numbers of people who struggle financially in the borough.
- The borough has numerous villages and smaller settlements, with a rich range of community groups, events, activities, and a vibrant voluntary and community sector.
- It is in the heart of the Thames Valley; the borough is rich in areas of natural beauty and green space.
- Disadvantage is clustered in particular neighbourhoods, but there are households facing challenges across the borough.
- Several schools in the borough have a proportion of children on Free School Meals that is over two or three times higher than the borough average in three out of 19 wards.
- Three neighbourhoods in RBWM are in the 20% most deprived in England for Older People as per the IDAOPI*. Two in Central Maidenhead St Marys, Belmont and one in Clewer and Dedworth East.
- RBWM is a highly skilled borough with lower-than-average unemployment.
- The river Thames flows through the borough for 25 miles, forming a significant landscape feature and wildlife corridor.
- It has a unique and long association with the Crown and the symbolic association with the Royal family has gifted the borough with a rich portfolio of heritage assets, attractions, and world class events.
- The borough hosts major tourist and visitor destinations, including historic Windsor Castle, Legoland Windsor and Windsor and Ascot Racecourses.
- The borough is situated less than 30 miles from the west of Central London and close to Heathrow Airport.
- The full opening of the new Elizabeth Line in 2022 has further strengthened the borough's regional, national, and international connections, bringing significant opportunities to attract investment and major regeneration and renewal which will accelerate over the coming years.
- The borough's location attracts businesses to invest in the borough which is an impressive range of local, national, and international businesses including Centrica and the residents take advantage of employment opportunities across the Thames Valley region.
- Resident's unemployed seeking work in RBWM is 2.7% which is lower than the national average of 3.9%.
- The west of the borough has more unemployment and low-income families and a lower qualification base than other parts of RBWM.
- COVID-19 pandemic affected the borough and continues to have deep and long-lasting impact on the Borough.

Deprivation: Employment, education, health, and housing

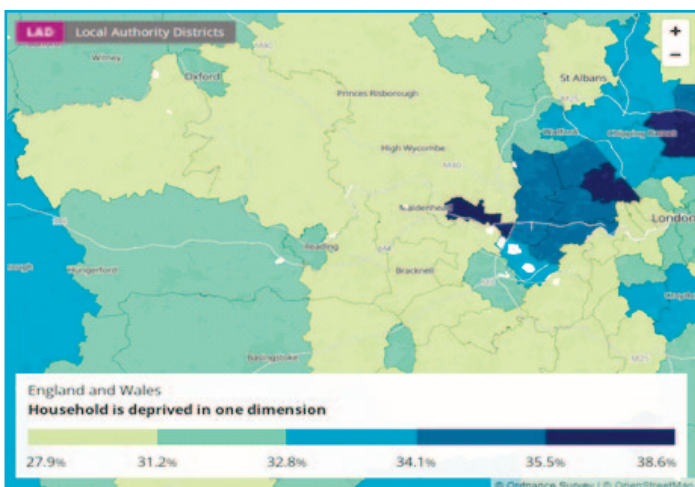
Following the recent Census 2021, data by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revealed the most impoverished areas of Berkshire are located.

The data maps show that Slough is shaded a lot darker than the rest of Berkshire, with the other boroughs presenting a lighter green - and smaller percentage in comparison. A total of 36.6 per cent of people in Slough are deprived in at least one dimension and in Windsor and Maidenhead 29.8 per cent of people. In Slough, Britwell and Northborough are the most deprived areas whilst in Maidenhead St Mary's, Oldfield and Belmont are key areas of need.

Data Map Slough



Data Map Windsor & Maidenhead



Health Inequalities

Health Measure	Slough	RBWM	South East
Healthy life expectancy (Male)	58.1	69.4	63.1
Healthy life expectancy (Female)	60.3	70.3	63.9
% Physically active adults (150+ minutes per week)	48.8%	70.8%	69.2%

- Slough has high levels of health inequalities within the South East Region and compared to its Windsor and Maidenhead neighbour. Although there still does remain pockets of inequality in RBWM. Inequality is clustered in particular neighbourhoods, although there are households or smaller groups experiencing challenges across the borough. Experiences of inequality differ between neighbourhoods and cohorts. Some of these groups are likely to be clustered in areas of deprivation others dispersed across the borough.
- Those aged 75+ are more likely to be disabled and to be living throughout RBWM, including in rural areas which may exacerbate the risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- Social housing estates, are often located in deprived neighbourhoods and can experience stigma and concentrations of anti-social behaviour.
- Younger residents in low paid employment, are more likely to live in private rental properties, and struggle with rising costs, mental health and accessing assets of the borough e.g. green spaces.

The Planning Approach

The Service's annual planning cycle commences in September and finishes in July for the academic year.

The Service analyses national, regional, and local priorities, considering the direction of government policy, regional analyses and information produced by the local chamber of commerce, Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Job Centres and, the corporate strategies for both Slough Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Strong, multi-layered governance, together with local engagement from external stakeholders are two things that are intrinsically linked with the Service's strategy and planning. Closer links with stakeholders has given the service better insight into the 'local wants and needs'.

Steps to Planning

1. The Service's management team begin the planning process by considering the over-arching direction of travel for the next academic year
2. An analysis of Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead data is conducted to provide in-depth information of local needs.
3. The Service's annual plan is written and sent for approval by the Service's Shared Service Management Committee (with cross-borough internal and external representation).
4. The annual plan is then taken to elected members for further challenge, and finally to the Council's Cabinet for approval.

Planning for success

Good research of local data and strong partnerships are built in partnership with other teams in both Councils, including with council leaders, and other key stakeholders, for example, the Council for Voluntary Services, and community engagement teams.

Berkshire LEP

The Service works with the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnerships LEP and its Lead Manager to consult on its service plan. Through regular contact, the Service works with the Skills Leads and the local Windsor Forest and College Group; this ensures that the Service's provision aligns with local needs, and actively supports local council initiatives, such as the drive to improve skills and wellbeing in both Slough and, Windsor and Maidenhead.

Other council teams

The Service actively networks across council teams to engage with their clients and provide tailored courses: the Library Services, Adult Social Care teams, Children's Services, Economic Development, Community Engagement & Development teams, Children Centres and Public Health. This ensures that our programmes are responsive to local priorities.

Local employers

Working with cross Borough Economic Development teams the Service is able to forge working relationships with a wide range of employers; this informs our developmental work, for example, the implementation of the new construction and green skills programme in the current academic year.

Job Centre Plus (JCP)

The Service has an excellent relationship with the local Job Centre Plus (JCP) through jointly working together in the same location and tailoring the provision of courses accordingly. JCP collaborate with the Service on identifying and delivering courses to meet the skills needs in the boroughs, and agreeing priorities that influence the delivery of our courses.

Berkshire LSIP Plans and Emerging Priorities for the Service

The Berkshire Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are three-year reviews of and plans for skills to meet the current and future needs of businesses.

Working with employers, education and training providers and other local partners LSIP identify priorities for change to ensure post-16 technical education and training better prepares employees for the modern workplace. Employers actively shape their future workforce.

Scope and Purpose

LSIP-Objectives that will be supported by this agreement:

Local businesses will influence change in the local education and training offered. LSIP engaged with over 500 employers.

LSIP will help to identify priorities for change in local education and the training offer.

Develop long-lasting systems and structures to strengthen the collaboration between local business and training providers, to provide better skills solutions for the future.

Berkshire Priority Sectors

LSIP initially identified the sectors through an interrogation of previous skills research and insights, including the Local Skills Report (2022) and have evolved through work to date.

<p>New or different Qualifications. Expansion of Training courses.</p>	<p>Sector Priorities according to the LSIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment difficulties in the following job roles: skills and labour shortages (entry level and mid-level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Construction and Built Environment o Health and Life Sciences, o Care o Transport & Logistics, o Digital (ICT) o Transferable Employability; o Business & Administration; o Leadership & Management; o Skills for a Net Zero Economy o Digitalisation • Existing Staff - skills gaps and upskilling
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- Through adult education and skills support the targeting of target health inequalities and promote wellbeing (in Slough).
- To support better positioning of adults to meet the employment opportunities (in Slough).

Implementation

- Ensure innovative high quality course planning and delivery which engages learners and where appropriate supports them to progress and achieve.
- Ensure all learners make progress against their individual starting points.
- Ensure learning takes place within a safe and supportive environment.
- Continue to develop the service’s holistic approach to initial assessment to ensure the individual needs of learners are met.
- Support tutors to achieve through a comprehensive mentoring process which is informed by a holistic view of teaching, learning and assessment, which is supported by effective CPD activities.
- Deliver an impartial IAG service which supports all learners to progress and where appropriate works intensively with learners to move them nearer or into work.

The Strategic Priorities of the Service

Intent

- Move people closer or into work.
- Deliver activities which support people’s physical and mental wellbeing.
- Support parents to support their children to achieve in school and to be safe and healthy.
- Support a thriving cultural offer of activities to local residents.
- Ensure that suitable progression opportunities are available to all learners.
- Ensure the service contributes to national and local priorities by ensuring that all courses can be directly linked to specific evidenced priorities.
- Ensure increasing social justice for all through targeting those with the most needs
- Better positioning adults to meet the employment opportunities (in Slough).
- To improve people’s chances of career progression through the acquisition of skills and qualifications (in Slough).

Impact

- Learners achieve well and progress into work or meaningful further learning.
- Vibrant offer of personal development courses, with increasing numbers of learners actively engaged in cultural and community activities.
- Learners who report a positive physical and mental health outcome as a result of their attendance on a course.
- Parents who report increased knowledge and confidence in how to support their children to achieve, be safe and healthy.
- Schools and Children’s Centres, as a result of family learning activities, report increased engagement of parents and a positive impact on children’s achievement, health and well-being.
- Learners report positive wider outcomes as a result of their attendance on a course.
- Learners report that they have enjoyed their courses and would recommend the Service activities to their family and friends.
- Learners reporting greater skills and employment opportunities to improve their life chances and lives.

Our contribution to national, regional and local priorities

CLaSS Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Priorities impacted and reason for objective Please also see list below
<p>An environment that helps residents live more independent, healthier and safer lives.</p>	<p>48% of learners are from the 20% most deprived wards in Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead and face many barriers with attendance to courses.</p> <p>Providing quality course delivery for the most vulnerable adults to achieve their wellbeing and learning goals.</p> <p>We will improve digital inclusion in Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead, increasing digital skills confidence of 500 adult residents in key disadvantaged cohorts.</p> <p>We will further support the integration of ethnic minority communities in both boroughs (including those from Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Syria Iran, Iraq and the Ukraine), through the delivery of a comprehensive and targeted programme of skills to 200 learners, including English as a second language ESOL and employability skills.</p> <p>We will increase the number of learners who progress to further learning from adult skills learners' destination will increase towards 75% from 70%.</p> <p>All delivery will include embedding staying safe digitally and in day-to-day life within the curriculum.</p> <p>Courses will be planned to increase physical activity (direct and commissioned delivery)</p> <p>Embedding health and wellbeing themes into all course delivery.</p>	<p>Census 2021; ONS, NOMIS, OHID, IMD</p> <p>Working with partners to target health inequalities and promote wellbeing in Slough - life expectancy for male and females is 10 years less than neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>Supporting residents to be as independent as possible, whilst providing quality services for the most vulnerable adults (Slough)</p> <p>This supports the national priority Digital & Technology sector, as well as the national core transferable skills. Regionally it contributes to the Digital, Creative & ICT sector.</p> <p>56% of Slough population born in the UK</p> <p>78.3% of RBWM population born in the UK compared to 82% in UK.</p> <p>52% of the Slough population report "very good" health which is lower than England average.</p> <p>Higher proportion for "poor life satisfaction" and "feeling worthwhile" than England average.</p> <p>A decrease in the proportion of adults who feel lonely always, often, or some of the time from 21.24%, by supporting an active community and voluntary sector (RBWM Corporate plan - currently being updated.</p>

CLaSS Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Priorities impacted and reason for objective Please also see list below
<p>Where families and individuals are empowered to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.</p>	<p>Continuously improve the delivery of an ambitious and coherently planned curriculum to allow all learners to succeed in their learning and life. The curriculum is sequenced and planned well towards cumulative knowledge and skills development for future learning and employment to progress learners into their next steps.</p> <p>We will improve the outcomes for our current 785 skills learners to achieve their goals and make a clear difference to their lives with regard to wellbeing and work opportunities.</p> <p>National and local skills agendas help to determine the courses and levels that are delivered to meet local resident's skills gaps and employer shortages in the local areas.</p> <p>Achievements to increase on skills courses from 77% to 80% across all curriculum. To support those residents in Slough with no qualifications at 20% and in RBWM 12.6% (where there are pockets of inequalities) compared to the national average of 18%.</p> <p>Adult skills learners' destination will continue to increase towards 80% reporting.</p> <p>To keep pass rates consistently good from 94% to 96% across the curriculum.</p> <p>Continue to robustly track retention on courses - to increase by up to 5%.</p> <p>Supporting parents and families to tackle health inequalities including high levels of child obesity (Slough).</p>	<p>It underpins all national, regional, and local priorities by upskilling people from ethnic minority communities, enabling them to secure employment and integrate into their local community.</p> <p>LSIP reports; Corporate plans for Slough and RBWM- both being updated. Slough Skills strategy and RBWM Skills strategy - being developed for both Boroughs; DWP local priorities for 50+, long term ill health and in work progression.</p> <p>The Service end of year data; LSIP, Corporate plans for Slough, RBWM - both being updated.</p> <p>LSIP reports; Corporate plans for Slough and RBWM - being updated. Slough Skills strategy and RBWM Skills strategy - being developed.</p>

CLaSS Strategic Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills	Priorities impacted and reason for objective Please also see list below
A skills system working for all.	<p>We will grow our successful skills programme in key priority sectors to provide sustainable employment and support for employers and the economy.</p> <p>We will further develop the Service's strong skills offer so that it links into providing progression into further learning and employment for adult learners from the start of the 2023-24 academic year into key employment sectors in both Boroughs.</p> <p>Support the national, regional (LEP) and local (Council) priority training programmes in priority subject areas such as, Health, Digital and Technology. Contributes to the regional priority in the Digital, Creative and ICT sector as set out by the Berkshire LSIP.</p> <p>Engaging with businesses to create new employment opportunities for Slough families and routes to upskill.</p> <p>Engaging with businesses to create new employment opportunities for Slough families and routes to upskill minimise the impact of climate change. (Slough).</p>	<p>Supports the national, regional (LEP) and local (Council) priorities in priority subject areas such as, Health, Digital & Technology.</p> <p>Contributes to the regional priority in the Digital, Creative & ICT sector as set out by the Berkshire LSIP.</p> <p>LSIP reports; Corporate plans for Slough and RBWM - being updated. Slough Skills strategy and RBWM Skills strategy - being developed.</p>
A greener, more resilient future.	<p>We will recruit a cohort of 350 learners in 2023/24 (300 in 2022/23) and give them the skills and knowledge needed to progress onto the new greener skills qualifications via a combination of qualifications and non-qualification provision.</p>	<p>Contributes to the regional priority in the Skills for a Net Zero Economy sector as set out by the Berkshire LSIP.</p>
Better opportunities for children and young people to thrive.	<p>We will deliver 300 qualifications (201 in 2021/22) in subjects that enhance the level of specialist skills available to those working with children and young people, including, teaching assistants, understanding autism, mental health, anxiety etc.</p>	<p>LSIP reports; Corporate plans for Slough and RBWM - being updated. Slough Skills strategy and RBWM Skills strategy - being developed.</p>

Slough's Strategic Plans which are relevant to this agreement

- Slough Corporate Plan 2022-2025*
- Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025
- School Effectiveness Strategy
- Local Skills Improvement Plans LSIP*
- Slough Joint Well Being Strategy
- Slough Regeneration Framework
- Slough Cultural Strategy
- Slough Anti-Poverty Strategy 2023-2028*
- Slough Skills Strategy*

Key Local Priorities relevant to this agreement:

The council's priorities for 2022-25 are:

- An environment that helps residents live more independent, healthier and safer lives
- A borough for children and young people to thrive
- Infrastructure that reflects the uniqueness of Slough's places and a new vision for the town centre.

Other key local priorities relevant to this agreement are:

- Creating secure and productive jobs
- A skills system working for all
- Regeneration and infrastructure unlocking growth
- Enterprise and scale-up ecosystem
- Inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods.

*currently being reviewed and/or developed

RBWM Key Strategic Plans which are relevant to this agreement

- RBWM Corporate Plan 2021-2026*
- Inequalities Project*
- Public Health Outcomes Framework
- Achieving for Children - Business Plan
- Local Skills Improvement Plan - LSIP*
- Residence Survey 2022
- Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy
- Community Partnership Strategy
- RBWM Skills Strategy*

*currently being reviewed and/or developed

Key Local Priorities relevant to this agreement:

The RBWM Council Plan has six strategic priorities three of which are particularly relevant to this agreement:

- 1) Promote health and wellbeing, and focus on reducing inequalities, across all areas.
- 2) Where families and individuals are empowered to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.
- 3) Make the most effective use of resources - delivering the best value for money.

Other key local priorities relevant in this agreement are:

- Supporting a healthy population
- Prevention and early intervention
- Supporting children and parents with mental health issues
- Promoting social justice through maximising life chances particularly in relation to education and employment
- Ensuring the educational achievement of all children.

Website Hyperlink

Location of Accountability Agreement on Slough Borough Council website:
www.slough.gov.uk/community-learning-skills/community-learning-policies

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