

# Transformation Board held on Thursday 29 August 2024 – Minutes

## **Present:**

### ***Attendees:***

### ***Commissioners:***

Ged Curran, Commissioner, Chair  
Denise Murray, Finance Commissioner  
Gavin Jones, Lead Commissioner

### ***Members:***

Cllr Dexter Smith, Leader, with responsibility for Improvement and Recovery  
Cllr Wal Chahal, Deputy Leader, and Lead for Financial Oversight and Council Assets  
Cllr Pavitar Mann, Leader of the Opposition

### ***Officers:***

Sue Butcher, Executive Director, Children's Services, Chief Executive Slough Children's Services  
Annabel Scholes, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial  
Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer  
David Coleman-Groom, Director Social Care, Adults  
Stephen Menzies, Interim Director Digital and Technology  
Sarah Wilson, Assistant Director, Legal & Governance, HB Law  
Dave McNamara, Interim Director of Financial Management  
Tessa Lindfield, Director, Public Health  
Allison Kennedy, Head of Customer Service

### ***Secretariat:***

Mandy Brown, Chief of Staff to the Commissioners  
MHCLG representative, (minutes)

### ***Also Present:***

Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement  
Andrew Merritt-Morling, Recovery Programme Manager  
Stephanie Clark, Recovery Programme Manager  
Bal Toor, Director of HR

### ***Not In Attendance:***

Will Tuckley, Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services  
Nasreen Brittain, Executive Assistant to Commissioners

## **Minutes**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 None.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 No declarations of interest expressed.

### **3. Minutes and Actions from Board held on 18 July 2024**

3.1 Minutes from the meeting held on 18 July 2024 were approved.

### **4. Recovery Plan Update (Sonia Khan)**

4.1 Sonia said we have been clear about the need to progress the recovery programme, outlining the necessary steps and defining what success looks like. We are working to understand and integrate best value guidance into the plan, engaging in management conversations. The current briefing is an iteration of the previous one. A leadership group has been established across the council to gather evidence about our current position and provide an informal update on progress, though it is not comprehensive. We have quickly learned what needs to be in place, what it means, and what actions are required. Alex McFarland has been brought in as an advisor by the LGA.

4.2 We will continue to work with peers to envision what the future could look like, setting out the context and priorities based on best value guidance. This will be measurable and focused on the impact for residents, aiming for sustainability and the ability to achieve more. By the end of the year, we plan to have a halfway point on the agenda, with a timeline in place to offer assurance for a November date. We aim to collaborate more across the council, emphasising recovery leadership and working on the financial improvement plan collaboratively.

4.3 The Council have initiated early conversations with the CLT to explore our regional and sub-regional stance. There are also significant economic opportunities to consider, including the potential for sharing best practice and collaborating on recovery and improvement efforts within the sub-region. The Council plans to engage with Berkshire leaders on transformation projects. The aim is to explore opportunities for collaborative work. Ged noted that reaching out and borrowing ideas from each other can be beneficial but it is worth considering whether this is a prime focus.

4.4 We are exploring opportunities to share services. We are having initial conversations about potential areas for collaboration with neighbouring authorities. We have several measures in place within our performance measurement framework, and our KPIs will focus on their specific improvements. We need to develop a comprehensive set of KPIs that reflect best value guidance and link them to trust and confidence, establishing a realistic trajectory for improvement. This will be a significant part of the recovery plan, and we need to test whether our current inputs are appropriate.

4.5 Denise encouraged thinking about the long-term vision for recovery and how to build capacity and utilise partners. Ged noted that there are multiple purposes of this work and audiences and suggested it would be useful to think about the communication strategy.

### **5. Target Operating Model Update (Sonia Khan & Andrew Merritt-Morling)**

5.1 There is a risk associated with the operation of the new model, as the council will be functioning based on practical application rather than just a set of principles. Decisions need to be made that align with our recovery efforts and enhance our financial stability. Society is changing, with different expectations and needs, and we must meet these expectations quietly and efficiently. What we need is a unified council approach that supports residents in becoming independent and empowered, reflecting what it means to live in Slough.

5.2 It's essential to stick to a strong corporate plan. The operating model has evolved over time, and we need clearer accountability for statutory duties, ensuring that the delivery plan aligns with both

the corporate and service plans. Our focus should be on preventative work, shaping places, and attracting investment. While the operating model has risks of becoming inward-looking, we need staff in the right place at the right time, with clarity in their roles, using data and insights to guide our actions. Consistent approaches are crucial, and digitisation should be prioritised as outlined in the digital protocol, looking at digital solutions first. Empowering people to be well-informed is key, and our approach to preventative work should recognise that it doesn't mean offering something to everyone but acknowledging barriers to accessibility. There is an opportunity to have a session with lead members and directors to make this approach more professional.

5.3 In April and May, we developed various concepts and outlined what the Target Operating Model (TOM) looks like for Slough. Approval to proceed was given on May 15th, and we hosted a number of workshops introducing several key themes. These themes were set out through the CLT, indicating that there would be various phases of work, with phase 1 focused on setting foundational blocks in place. We recognized that we would start delivering some of this work from April 1st. The themes identified key areas where the most significant structural changes could be made, particularly in resident access. The introduction of the new procurement act began laying the foundations for the one council approach. There was some discussion on potential for a service area pilot to learn lessons and scale up. These six themes are not only part of phase 1 but also need to be integrated into the recovery plan going forward.

5.4 There is an overlap between the themes and the recovery plan, so it's crucial to ensure we have a unified approach and make it clear. For success, we must not decouple the operating model from improvement and recovery efforts. We also need to focus on areas where we lack maturity. We've been mapping our reach, noting the relational work between the council and specific teams. To make the most of this, we need to understand and utilise it effectively. It's important to understand our current position for each theme and focus on the economy. This needs to be aligned with the medium-term financial plan as we move into the second phase of work, which involves using the operating model. This information will not be made public until November.

5.5 Gavin commented that today's observation is too complicated to assimilate, despite containing good information. As you develop it, you need to simplify the complexity. Are you going to be, for example, a technology early adopter, insight-led, or known for maximising public contributions? There needs to be further consideration on how fundamental communities are to the operating model. More work is needed on the Member dimension, which plays an important role in defining what a good council model looks like in Slough.

5.6 Gavin asked how transformational SBC planned to be.

5.7 Denise referenced the importance of showing benefits to customers and reinforced the importance of key principles. It was also noted that there could be more docys on estates and assets.

5.8 There was some discussion around risks. The Leader emphasised the importance of relevance of the model and impact on resident experience.

5.9 Ged questioned whether there was time for pilots. Ged said the fundamental issue is how to design a model that meets needs and resources. It was noted that there can be a number of reasons that TOM's can fail; they take a long time, can be expensive and there is a need for rigour of programme management. Ged noted the difficult timetable and questioned resourcing need.

5.10 Sonia said the themes were "discovery themes" and they need to take back and review as well as being clear on what is transformation and what is recovery.

## **6 *Communications update including Equality Peer Review (Sonia Khan)***

6.1 Alex McFarland is working on three main objectives: first, taking a strategic approach to objectives, focusing on collaboration, and developing the operating model while refreshing the council's narrative. Second developing a systematic approach to working with partners and residents using data. Third, examining the communication function and its link to the operating model.

## **7. Programme Update (Stephanie Clark)**

7.1 The focus is on ensuring that the benefits within the workstreams are properly aligned with best value themes and objectives. During the recent people forum, there was a discussion about embedding culture across these workstreams. There was some discussion about approach to RAG ratings and risk assessments. The team explained that risk ratings are separate to the overall RAG ratings, and an overarching risk register is needed. The overall status rating is based on the top statuses reflected in the dashboard. It's important to review all benefits to ensure they are properly aligned, making the programme more coherent. Benefits RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings are taken from the SROs (Senior Responsible Owners).

7.2 Gavin encouraged further thinking on how the Council are pitching culture change.

## **8. Forward Plan – next Board:**

8.1 Consider the work we're doing with Members and create some space for Sukhdev to share his observations.

8.2 Ged noted that the Target Operating Model would be a standing item on the agenda.

## **9. AOB**

9.1 None.

**(The meeting closed at 15:00)**

### ***Date of next meeting***

Thursday 26 September 2024 13:30pm in the Council Chambers.