



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

Gavin Jones  
*By email*

**Max Soule**  
*Deputy Director, Local Government  
Stewardship*

**Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing and Communities**  
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[www.gov.uk/dluhc](http://www.gov.uk/dluhc)

11 January 2022

Dear Mr Jones,

### **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL: INTERVENTION**

I am writing to inform you that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has nominated you as Assistant Commissioner for the purposes of the Directions he made on 1 December 2021 under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 in relation to Slough Borough Council. I enclose the formal nomination document.

You are nominated as Assistant Commissioner for the period from 11 January 2022 to 30 November 2024. The Secretary of State previously appointed Max Caller CBE as Lead Commissioner and Margaret Lee as Finance Commissioner.

As Assistant Commissioner you will have the roles and responsibilities set out in the Directions, a copy of which I enclose, along with a copy of an explanatory memorandum. Under the Directions, Commissioners will act jointly or severally and are accountable to the Secretary of State in that you have been nominated by him and can have your nomination withdrawn by him. I have also enclosed terms of engagement that you will need to sign and return. It is expected that in the first year this role will require a commitment from you of three days a week. In particular it is expected that you will provide additional capacity to focus on the oversight of the implementation of the improvement and recovery plan, hold officers to account for delivery, help set the vision for the organisation, and drive the cultural change required.

You will be entitled to a fee for each day you act as Assistant Commissioner. You will also be entitled to reasonable expenses. Under the terms of the Directions, it is the Council's responsibility to meet these costs and the Secretary of State has set these fees for you at £1,100 per day. Fees are payable up to a maximum of 150 days per annum for the first year and are expected to reduce in year two and further thereafter. These limits should not be exceeded without prior approval of the Secretary of State. As to reasonable expenses, we would expect these to be in accordance with the rules for senior officers set out in the Council's staff handbook.

I understand you intend to continue your employment as an officer of Essex County Council and you will ensure that transparent arrangements are agreed between Essex County Council and Slough Borough Council that allow you to meet your commitments as a Commissioner. I also understand this will be subject to agreement by Essex County Council in line with the governance arrangements at this authority given your current statutory role as Head of Paid Service. I expect Essex County Council to ensure robust governance arrangements are in place that support the continued delivery of services at the standard that residents expect and that you will keep these arrangements under review.

In your role as a public appointee, it may be necessary to disclose information on your remuneration as part of annual accounts and you will be required to consent to the disclosure of this information. By accepting this appointment, you will be indicating your consent to this.

You will wish to note that the Secretary of State has asked that the Commissioners provide him with regular progress reports on a six-monthly basis or at such other times as you and he might agree, with the first report expected as soon as is practical and within the first three months of the intervention.

The Secretary of State expects you to take an interest in matters across the Council, beyond those functions you are exercising, given the importance of ensuring that the Council is delivering best value in all that it does. You will play an important role in informing Ministers' response to the situation in Slough, including what the right medium-term plan might be for Slough given the scale of the financial and wider challenges facing the Council. The Secretary of State is also mindful that the lessons from past interventions suggest that once Commissioners are in post additional issues can arise. He is therefore directing the Authority to undertake an assessment of the functional capability of all service areas, to identify any gaps in capacity and capability, and may expand the scope of the intervention if necessary.

The Secretary of State was pleased to note that the Council has started to look at moving to whole council elections to be held in Slough every four years. This will be another matter on which you should work closely with the Council and the Secretary of State is expecting updates. The Secretary of State is clear that moving to whole council elections will be an important step in the Authority's recovery.

The Secretary of State has also asked that you work closely with Trevor Doughty, the Children's Commissioner, and that you play an active role in the discussions with DfE relating to the safety valve intervention programme given the size of Slough's Dedicated Schools Grant deficit. The intervention programme requires genuine collaboration across education and finance leadership in authorities, for the long-term benefit of children and young people, and as such your involvement in the programme will be critical to Slough's progress. It is clear from the recent Ofsted and CQC inspection of the local area's Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) services that attention is acutely required. The safety valve programme will be a crucial tool for prioritising Slough's children and young people with high needs in a sustainable way.

Your appointment has the status of an office holder and not of an employee. Nothing in this letter shall be construed as, or taken to create, a contract of service or contract for services between yourself and DLUHC, the Crown, or Slough Borough Council.

Should you have any queries or issues either now or during the Directions period please contact me in the first instance.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for assisting in this intervention. We are very grateful for your commitment to taking up this challenge to improve the performance of Slough Borough Council so that it effectively serves and protects the people of the area.

Yours sincerely,

**MAX SOULE**

**NOMINATION UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 (DIRECTIONS UNDER SECTION 15(5) AND (6) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999 TO SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL, 2021)**

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in exercise of his powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 and in accordance with the Directions to Slough Borough Council dated 1 December 2021 nominates Gavin Jones as Assistant Commissioner to act jointly or severally with the Lead Commissioner and Finance Commissioner for the period beginning on the date of his appointment and ending on 30 November 2024 or such earlier time as the Secretary of State determines.