



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Stephen Brown
Via email

Max Soule
*Deputy Director, Local Government
Stewardship*

**Department for Levelling Up,
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14 September 2023

Dear Stephen,

I am writing to inform you that the Best Value Commissioners wrote to Minister Lee Rowley on 13 July 2023 with their third report on the progress of the intervention in Slough, as required by the Directions first issued to the Council on 1 December 2021 and updated on 1 September 2022. The report has today been published on gov.uk, alongside a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS).

The report notes that this has been a period of change for the Council, with a refreshed Commissioner Team in place and a change in political leadership. The report highlights that the intervention is now at a pivot point. The Council is demonstrating commitment to improvement and has achieved a number of successes, such as a stable corporate leadership team, a successful move to all out elections and an improvement in report quality and financial oversight.

However, the report also acknowledges that the scale of the challenges facing Slough remains significant and that the Council needs to demonstrate a commitment to accelerating the pace of transformation, provide more evidence of further implementation of changes and demonstrate greater grip on the financial position. The report also identifies a number of specific priorities, such as strengthening capacity within the management tier, implementing a robust performance management system, building on culture change work and producing a Medium-Term Financial Plan for the coming years.

In his WMS the Minister notes that he is pleased to see evidence for cautious optimism, whilst acknowledging the significant scale of the challenges still facing the Council, and that following the changes at Slough in recent months this is an excellent opportunity for the Council to make substantial progress towards resolving its Best Value failure.

Your Authority remains under intervention for children's social care functions, under section 497(A) and (4B) of the Education Act 1996. This was recently also extended to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It is important that statutory services for vulnerable children and families continue to be delivered to an acceptable standard, with the aim of demonstrating a strong standard of services through Ofsted monitoring and inspection. The Department for Education's Children's Services Commissioner and SEND Adviser and officials will continue to liaise with you, through established arrangements, on improvements to children's services functions.

I am copying this letter to the Authority's Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Commissioners.

Yours Sincerely,

Max Soule
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship