Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

James Blythe ACMA
Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship and Interventions

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2nd Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Dame Mary Ney
By email

05 March 2026

Dear Mary,

I am writing to thank you for agreeing to be the Lead for the external review into the Slough Borough Council Intervention. This letter formally appoints you on behalf of the Secretary of State and outlines the terms of reference for the review. You are appointed alongside Will Godfrey who will act as Supporting Reviewer.

As you know, Slough Borough Council have been under Best Value intervention since 1 December 2021, which was then extended in November 2024 to expire in November 2026. The latest Commissioner report highlights that the continued slow pace of progress at the Council is having real impacts on the residents of Slough, and I am mindful that, alongside addressing the basic requirements for the Council, we support the borough of Slough's wider development. The Secretary of State has therefore taken the decision to support the commissioning of an external review.

The review will reflect the Government's established approach to interventions of local authorities, applying the general principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, alongside considerations of governance, financial management and the authority's capacity to deliver sustainable improvement. The review will examine the specific circumstances that have led to the current intervention in Slough, assess the progress that has been made to date, and identify any further actions required to secure a stable and effective authority both in the immediate term and for the long term future of the authority.

The review will be provided in a written format suitable for publication. In the event that any relevant evidence comes to light, the Secretary of State will reserve the right to review Slough's position against Best Value powers. Once complete we will publish your final report on gov.uk.

You should complete your work as soon as practicable, given the Department expects it to be complete by the end of April. You will carry out your work by meeting with key individuals within the organisations and by reviewing all documentation and representations that you believe are relevant. Your access to material and key

individuals will include material that may considered confidential from a public perspective.

To help you with your work you will be provided with dedicated secretariat resource from my team. We will also facilitate press support when managing interest that may be generated as a result of your review. We will be providing IT support to underpin the effective delivery of the review. I have enclosed terms of appointment that you will need to sign and return.

My team will be available to discuss your role, the review and how you intend to proceed in more detail. If you have any questions please get in touch at any time.

The Department will write separately to the Leader of Slough Borough Council to notify him of your appointment.

Yours sincerely

JAMES BLYTHE

Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship and Interventions