DIRECTIONS UNDER SECTION 15(5) AND (6) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1999

1. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government ("the Secretary of State") has carefully considered the following in respect of Slough Borough Council ("the Authority"):

    i. The eighth report from Commissioners, dated 02 September 2026 and published on 15 October 2026
    ii. Discussions between Ministers and Officials of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Commissioners appointed to the Authority
    iii. The representation made by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Wal Chahl, on behalf of the Authority, dated 27 October 2026 and;
    iv. A representation made by a Councillor from the Authority received on 20 October 2026.

2. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the Authority is failing to comply with the requirements of Part I of the Local Government Act 1999 ("the 1999 Act").

3. The Secretary of State, having considered the representations made by the Authority as required by section 15(9) of the 1999 Act, and that listed above, considers it necessary and expedient, in accordance with powers under section 15(5) and (6) of the 1999 Act, to direct the Authority as set out below in order to secure the Authority's compliance with the requirements of Part I of the 1999 Act, in particular:

    i. Implement and embed an appropriately resourced Improvement and Recovery Plan, to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, to secure compliance with the Best Value Duty and deliver sustained improvements in services and outcomes for residents.
    ii. Refine and implement the Target Operating Model and a single, prioritised and appropriately resourced transformation programme.
    iii. Recover and improve services, including Children's Services, SEND and housing.
    iv. Fully co-operate with the Commissioners and take any reasonable action within the Authority's functions to prevent further failure, as reasonably determined by the Commissioners.

4. Pursuant to powers under section 15(5) and (6) of the 1999 Act, the Secretary of State directs:

    i. The Authority to take the actions set out in Annex A to these Directions.
    ii. That the functions of the Authority specified in Annex B to these Directions shall be exercised from the date of these Directions by the Commissioners acting jointly or severally; the Commissioners being persons nominated by the Secretary of State for the purposes of these Directions as long as those nominations are in force.

iii. That, from the date of these Directions, the Authority shall comply with any instructions of the Commissioners in relation to the exercise of the functions specified in Annex B, and shall provide such information and assistance as the Commissioners may require for the purpose of exercising the functions specified in Annex B.

5. These Directions replace the Directions issued 20 November 2024 with immediate effect. They shall remain in force until 30 November 2029 unless the Secretary of State considers it appropriate to amend or revoke them at an earlier date.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Frances Oram and Sophie Langdale
Senior Civil Servants in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
Date: 25 November 2026

ANNEX A

ACTION THE AUTHORITY IS REQUIRED TO TAKE

In this Annex, the following expressions have the following meanings –

"the Authority" includes the Leader, the Cabinet, members of the Cabinet, any committee or subcommittee of the executive, any committee or subcommittee of the Council, any officer of the Council or any other person who has responsibility for exercising the function or other decision making in relation to the matter in question.

The actions to be taken by the Authority are:

1. Implement and embed an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, with resource allocated accordingly to drive, embed, and sustain improvements across the Authority. This is needed to ensure as soon as practicable that all the Authority's functions are exercised in conformity with the Best Value Duty, thereby delivering improvements in services and outcomes for the residents of Slough. The Improvement and Recovery Plan should be considered by Full Council on at least a quarterly basis. The Plan should include, as a minimum, actions to:
    a. Recover and improve services, including Children's Services, SEND and housing, through clear improvement plans, accountable political and officer leadership, measurable milestones and a sustained focus on improving outcomes for residents.
    b. Refine and implement the Target Operating Model and a single, prioritised and appropriately resourced transformation programme that contributes to providing a clear pathway to financial sustainability and the sustainable delivery of core services and priorities. The programme should include clear benefits, savings, milestones, delivery accountabilities and governance arrangements. This should be supported by a digital strategy and future operating model that strengthen the Authority's ability to deliver services effectively and efficiently.
    c. Implement and maintain a rolling Medium-Term Financial Strategy that demonstrates how the Authority will achieve and sustain financial sustainability, close identified budget gaps, support service improvement and transformation, and reduce debt. The Strategy should maintain adequate reserves, include a robust multi-year debt repayment plan, and set out the investment required to deliver enabling infrastructure and service improvements, supported by robust delivery plans.
    d. Develop and embed a comprehensive workforce and organisational capacity plan, focused on development and retention to ensure the Authority has stable and effective leadership, sufficient organisational capacity and capability, and access to appropriate specialist expertise required to deliver improvement and sustain performance.
    e. Address the culture of the organisation, strengthening trust across the Authority and promote open, honest and accountable behaviours,

constructive challenge, organisational learning, collective accountability and effective member-officer relationships.

f. Strengthen the Authority's governance and organisational foundations, including its systems of internal control, risk management, internal audit, programme management, technology, processes and decision-making arrangements, to support effective delivery and improvement.

g. Strengthen the Authority's use of performance, financial and operational data to support timely, evidence-based decision making and the routine use of data, evidence, performance information and risk management to identify emerging issues, monitor improvement, evaluate delivery and drive transformation.

2. Working cross-party to develop and implement a plan for the ongoing support of members, including arrangements for the induction and development of members elected in the May 2027 elections. The plan should include actions to strengthen member-officer relationships, support effective governance and decision-making, enhance members' ability to provide challenge and scrutiny, and promote a culture of collective accountability and constructive challenge.
3. To report to the Commissioners regularly, as directed by the Commissioners, on the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan and Transformation plan, and adopt any recommendations of the Commissioners with respect to these.
4. To undertake in the exercise of any of its functions any action that the Commissioners may reasonably require to avoid so far as practicable incidents of poor governance or financial mismanagement that would, in the reasonable opinion of the Commissioners, give rise to the risk of further failures by the Authority to comply with the Best Value Duty.
5. To provide the Commissioners, at the expense of the Authority, with such reasonable amenities and services and administrative support as the Commissioners may reasonably require from time to time to carry out their functions and responsibilities under these Directions.
6. To allow the Commissioners at all reasonable times, such access as appears to the Commissioners to be necessary:
    a. to any premises of the Authority;
    b. to any document relating to the Authority: and
    c. to any employee or member of the Authority.
7. To pay the Commissioners' reasonable expenses, and such fees as the Secretary of State determines are to be paid to them.
8. To provide the Commissioners with such assistance and information, including any views of the Authority on any matter, as the Commissioners may reasonably request.
9. To co-operate with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in relation to implementing the terms of these Directions.

ANNEX B

FUNCTIONS OF THE AUTHORITY TO BE EXERCISED BY THE COMMISSIONERS

In this Annex –

"statutory officer" means any of: the head of paid service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; the chief financial officer designated as having responsibility for the administration of the Authority's financial affairs under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972; the monitoring officer designated under section 5(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; and the scrutiny officer designated under section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (and the expressions "statutory officer" and "statutory office" are to be construed accordingly); and

the Authority" includes the Leader, the Cabinet, members of the Cabinet, any committee or subcommittee of the executive, any committee or subcommittee of the Council, any officer of the Council or any other person who has responsibility for exercising the function or other decision making in relation to the matter in question.

"senior positions" are defined as direct reports to the Chief Executive and their direct reports, and their Group Managers – tier one, tiers two and three.

The Commissioners shall exercise:

1. All functions associated with the governance and scrutiny of strategic decision making by the Authority.
2. All functions associated with the financial governance and scrutiny of strategic financial decision making by the Authority.
3. The requirement from section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs, and all functions associated with the strategic financial management of the Authority, to include:
    a. providing advice and challenge to the Authority on the preparation and implementation of a detailed plan to achieve financial sustainability and to close any short and long-term budget gaps identified by the Authority across the period of its medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) including a robust multi-year savings plan;
    b. providing advice and challenge to the Authority in the setting of annual budgets and a robust medium term financial strategy for the Authority, including strictly limiting future borrowing and capital spending;
    c. scrutiny of all in-year amendments to annual budgets;
    d. the power to propose amendments to budgets where Commissioners consider that those budgets constitute a risk to the Authority's ability to fulfil its Best Value Duty;

e. providing advice and challenge to the Authority on the preparation of sustainable and affordable capital, investment and treasury management strategies, including on any requirement for an appropriate debt reduction plan or for any revisions to the Authority's minimum revenue provision policy (MRP);

f. providing advice and challenge to the Authority of a suitable scheme of delegations for financial decision-making; and

g. ensuring compliance with all relevant rules and guidelines relating to the financial management of the Authority.

4. All functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of persons to positions the holders of which are to be designated as statutory officers, and the designation of those persons as statutory officers, to include:

a. the functions of designating a person as a statutory officer and removing a person from a statutory office; and

b. the functions under section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 of –

   i. appointing and determining the terms and conditions of employment of an officer of the Authority, insofar as those functions are exercised for the purpose of appointing a person as an officer of the Authority principally in order for that person to be designated as a statutory officer; and

   ii. dismissing any person who has been designated as a statutory officer from his or her position as an officer of the Authority.

5. All functions to define the officer structure for the senior positions, to determine the recruitment processes and then to recruit the relevant staff to those positions.

6. All functions relating to the appointment and dismissal of persons to positions of directors of council companies (except Slough Children First).

7. All functions associated with the Authority's operating model and redesign of services to achieve value for money and financial sustainability.

8. All functions pertaining to the development, oversight and operation of an enhanced performance management framework for officers holding senior positions.