



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Gavin Jones
Denise Murray
Ged Curran
[By email]

Jim McMahon OBE MP
*Minister of State for Local
Government and English
Devolution*

**Ministry of Housing,
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22 October 2024

Dear Gavin, Denise and Ged,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September updating me on progress of the intervention at Slough Borough Council. We are publishing your letter today alongside your fifth report submitted on 30 April 2024, together with this response. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued work and support provided to Slough Borough Council.

I am committed to resetting the relationship between local and regional government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement. It is important that you continue to work with Slough in partnership to support focus on recovery and reform. It is imperative that all councils are fit, legal and decent, and there must be a clear and deliverable plan in place to ensure recovery remains on track to address Slough's problems so that residents have a well-functioning local authority with a set of statutory services they deserve.

It is clear the Council is on a journey towards meeting its Best Value Duty, and while there has been positive progress since the intervention began, there is still significant work to be done. Improvements, including stabilising the Council's financial position and developing a Target Operating Model that aligns with the medium-term financial outlook are required. A robust and resourced transformation plan that aligns to the target operating model is needed to drive change, which must be underpinned by strong leadership and a comprehensive workforce strategy to foster and embed cultural change. Your report also set out improvements still needing to be secured, relating to risk management, governance (including the scrutiny function and audit committee), evidence-based decision making and partnership working including resident engagement.

After carefully reviewing the findings and evidence in your report, the Deputy Prime Minister and I have concluded that the Council is not yet meeting its Best Value Duty and that further government support is required to continue to assist Slough Borough

Council. Therefore, accordingly, we are minded-to exercise powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999 to issue new Directions to the Council that set a new end date for the intervention of 30 November 2026, and require the Council to take actions that are consistent with both the existing Directions and the priorities you have set out in your fifth report and update letter.

Accordingly, my officials will today write to the Council to seek representations on the proposed Directions by Monday 4 November 2024. Once received, the Deputy Prime Minister and I will consider carefully all the representations before making a final decision on whether to make the proposed changes to the intervention and issue new Directions to the Council. Pending consideration of representations of the proposals, I am provisionally inclined to reappoint you as Commissioners to Slough and also appoint the interim Chief Executive, Will Tuckley, as a Managing Director Commissioner to help support the Council to lead its own recovery.

Separately, I note the continued progress of children's social care and SEND services under Department for Education intervention. It is important you continue to work closely with Paul Moffat, the Children's Services Commissioner, given the interdependencies.

I am copying this letter to the Council's Leader, Interim Chief Executive, Interim Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Yours sincerely,

JIM MCMAHON OBE MP
Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution