Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Your reference:
Our reference:

Abena Oppong-Asare MP

By email

15 October 2026

Dear Abena,

I am writing to let you know that I have today updated Parliament about the steps we are taking to support two councils to recover and reform: Slough Borough Council and Bedford Borough Council.

Slough Borough Council

I have today published Slough Borough Council Commissioners' eighth report and an external led review by Dame Mary Ney and Will Godfrey into the intervention at Slough Borough Council, together with my response.

With the current Directions due to expire on the 30 November 2026, the Secretary of State and I are satisfied Slough Borough Council is not yet meeting its Best Value Duty and that further time is needed to implement and embed the necessary changes and improvements.

I am minded to exercise powers under section 15(5) and 15(6) of the Local Government 1999 Act to implement a new package that ensures the Council's compliance with its Best Value Duty. In determining the future model, I am mindful of the recommendations set out in the external led review that makes a series of recommendations for the intervention, the report can be found at: Intervention at Slough Borough Council - GOV.UK.

It is my view that stepping back the intervention at this point would bring significant risk to the Council's recovery. The proposal consists of issuing new Directions to the Authority until 30 November 2029 which require the Council to take actions to address the outstanding issues and priorities. I am minded to refresh the Commissioner model moving to a single Commissioner team, working to shared DfE and MHCLG objectives.

It is my belief this will provide the Council with the continuity necessary to embed outstanding improvement activity, drive transformation and take forward the external review recommendations.

Bedford Borough Council

On 10 February 2026, the then Secretary of State commissioned a statutory inspection of Bedford Borough Council and its compliance with its Best Value Duty. The Inspection reported to the Department in June 2026.

I have carefully considered the Best Value Inspection Report for Bedford Borough Council, and other relevant material, and I am satisfied that the Council is failing to comply with its Best Value Duty, specifically the Best Value themes of Continuous Improvement, Governance, Leadership, Culture, and Use of Resources.

I have today published this Report and also updated the Council and Parliament that I am minded to exercise powers to secure the Council's compliance with the Best Value Duty. I have proposed an intervention package to assist the Council in achieving the necessary improvements, which includes the appointment of a team of Commissioners, some of whom will have powers to exercise specified functions of the Authority, to provide oversight, challenge and support and exercise their powers to secure improvement.

For Slough and Bedford, the councils and other interested parties are now invited to make such representations as they wish on the proposals. Any representations will then be carefully considered before I make a decision for each council as to whether to make any and, if so, what Directions.

Yours sincerely,



JIM MCMAHON OBE MP
Minister for Local Government, Devolution and Regional Growth