

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 14th June, 2010.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), S Chaudhry, A S Dhaliwal, Matloob, Pantelic, Parmar, Small and Swindlehurst

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Maclsaac

PART I

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Pantelic declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 – Application to Purchase Freehold Interest – 29 Church Street, Slough as she worked in the building. Councillor Pantelic indicated that she would withdraw from the meeting during consideration of that item.

Councillor Swindlehurst declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 – Application to Purchase Freehold Interest – 29 Church Street, Slough as he was a member of the Management Committee of Slough Labour Memorial Halls Limited. He indicated that he would be withdrawing from the meeting during consideration of the item.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th April, 2010

The Minutes of Cabinet held on 8th April, 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. Slough Labour Manifesto

The Cabinet considered the Slough Labour Party's Manifesto pledges for the local government elections held on Thursday, 6th May, 2010. Commissioners noted that irrespective of Central Government control the people of Slough would expect the Labour Party's promises to be delivered over the coming year and that the Group's performance would be judged against these pledges.

Resolved - That the Slough Labour Party Manifesto be endorsed.

4. Statement of Accounts and Outturn Position for 2009/10

The Strategic Director of Resources introduced the report and advised that the overall outturn position for the General Fund 2009/10 was in line with the approved budget and showed a small surplus of £253,000 against the budget of £102.2m. This reflected the breakeven position that had been reported throughout the financial year taking into account departmental action plans to mitigate in year pressures that had been identified.

The report set out explanations for significant variations from budget for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The report also provided a summary of spend and resources to fund the Council's capital

Cabinet - 14.06.10

programme 2009/10 and provided an outline of the Treasury Management Activity and related prudential indicators for 2009/10.

A provisional draft copy of the pre-audit statement of accounts had been provided to Cabinet Members and a draft Annual Report and Summary of Accounts document was tabled at the meeting.

Members were advised that the Audit of Accounts was planned to commence in late July early August 2010 and would continue until September. Whilst it was not anticipated that there would be any significant changes all figures were inevitably subject to audit. The final Pre-Audit statement of Accounts and Annual Report and Summary of Accounts would be presented to the full Council meeting that had been arranged for 29th June, 2010.

(Councillor Small arrived)

The Leader asked for information from the Director on the forward budget and risk assessments that may have already been undertaken with regard to potential cuts to public services. The Director advised that there would be an impact on planned expenditure but that the Council was in a strong financial position. Dealing with any reductions would be challenging and any reduction in specific activities would be a Member decision. A Commissioner asked whether the People 1st functions being assimilated within the Council would have an effect on the budget. The Director of Resources advised that the budget and accounts did not reflect the ALMO functions being brought in-house but she anticipated that the transfer would offer up benefits with opportunities for efficiencies.

A Member present under Rule 30 queried the overspend detailed for the Community and Wellbeing Directorate and asked whether this made any allowance for any further pressures. The Commissioner for Health and Wellbeing advised that the pressure was containable in future budget.

Members acknowledged that the level of spend on the capital programme and its delivery was a credit to work of departments. The Cabinet placed on record its appreciation of the work that all officers had undertaken in helping to produce the Statement of Accounts and Outturn position for the 2009/10 financial year.

Recommended -

- (a) That the Statement of Accounts (Appendix B) for the Financial Year ended 31st March 2010 be referred to the Council for approval.
- (b) That the outturn position of the General Fund for 2009/10 be noted.
- (c) That the level of balances and reserves be noted.
- (d) That the carry forwards recommended be noted.
- (e) That the Housing Revenue Account position for 2009/10 be noted.
- (f) That the spend and resources to fund the Council's capital programme be noted.
- (g) That the actual prudential indicators for 2009/10 be noted.

Cabinet - 14.06.10

- (h) That the treasury management activity for 2009/10 be noted and the revised authorised borrowing limit outlined in paragraph 5.53 for 2009/10 and 2010/11 be agreed.

5. Primary School Places Action Plan 2011-13

In addition to the papers that had been circulated, the Commissioner for Education and Children Services tabled a letter from the Headteacher of Castleview School and a revised recommendation (e) for the Cabinet's consideration.

In introducing the report the Commissioner drew attention to the fact that the Authority had received confirmation that the £9m which was to be made available from Central Government had been confirmed.

The report detailed a Primary School Places Action Plan 2011-13. Members were reminded of the background to the increase in Primary School provision and the forecast of additional places that would be needed between September 2011 and September 2013. The report set out a number of options for the Cabinet to consider:

- using surplus existing accommodation (option 1)
- adding Infant Annexes to other primary schools (option 2)
- building a new school (option 3(a))
- refurbishing the Town Hall (option 3(b))

Members were asked to recommend that available funding was used to expand primary places for September 2011 by using surplus existing accommodation and by adding infant annexes at 4 other primary schools.

At the same time planning and design work could proceed on additional infant annexes and funding approved as they become acquired. The results of the feasibility study for the Town Hall (option 3b) when received would be submitted to the Cabinet for further consideration. Commissioners discussed the proposed Action Plan and noted that it allowed the Council to deliver the necessary school places which was a statutory responsibility. The Assistant Director Raising Achievement confirmed, in answer to a question, that there was no scope to introduce a restriction on schools applying to become Academies as any school would have the right to apply to be an Academy. In answer to a question with regard to what action would be taken when demand for places fell the Assistant Director advised that surplus places, having been provided via the modular route, would give the Council flexibility for the future. The Assistant Director also advised that whilst parents were allowed to express a preference for a school place and additional places could not be kept solely for Slough children, Schools' Admissions policies generally gave the greatest priority to those living within closest proximity to the school.

In moving the recommendations the Commissioner drew attention to the tabled proposal for an amended 2(e). Commissioners favoured the approach proposed as it enabled the authority to have the most flexibility in what was

Cabinet - 14.06.10

clearly a rapidly changing position. A Member present under Rule 30 asked whether the Council had considered the Thames Valley University site. The Assistant Director advised that the Council was open to all suggestions for possible sites for school but there was a balance to be struck between available resources and where best value could be achieved. The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal reminded the Cabinet that the Council has entered into a joint agreement to dispose of the Thames Valley University site for housing. The Assistant Director advised in answer to a question that the arrangements for opening the Willow Primary School on the former Lea Junior School site were in hand for opening in September 2010.

Resolved -

- (a) That Primary School Places Action Plan 2011-13 be approved in principle.
- (b) That current available funding be used to expand 6 primary schools (more if required) to meet the demonstrable shortfall in school places projected for 2011 and all funding for existing projects is profiled to ensure that the benefit of external funding is maximised and, where necessary, spent by 31st August 2011.
- (c) That an amount (to be based on the outcome of the current feasibility study) be set aside to refurbish the old Town Hall building for use as a school, if the feasibility study indicates this is a viable option.
- (d) That sources of funding for a new school in the Chalvey area continue to be explored.
- (e) That this Council will continue working to ensure there are sufficient school places for all primary school children in Slough in September 2010. Cabinet therefore instructs officers to report to the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services at the end of June on Demand for reception and other year places. If it appears likely that there will not be sufficient school places for September 2010, then the Director for Education and Children's Services will examine the available options and, in consultation with the Commissioner for Education and Children's Services, take forward one proposal for expansion in this paper, or more, as required. The following criteria will determine which proposals for expansion in 2010 are brought forward if required:
 - 1. Geographic area school located in Slough, and its proximity to local demand for places
 - 2. Standards of the school.

6. Former Redundant Elderly Persons Care Home - Wexham House, 132 Knolton Way, Wexham, Slough

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the tender bids that had been received in relation to the former Redundant Elderly Persons Care Home - Wexham House, 132 Knolton Way, Slough. The Chair advised that the detail of the bids had been set out in the Part II paper and the Cabinet agreed to discuss the matter in Part I without divulging any of the details of the bids. The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal proposed that the Cabinet should accept the highest bid as it represented best value for money. Members noted that there had been 2 bids from GPs and asked the Director of Resources whether there was anything the Cabinet could do to ease what was obviously a pressure for GP Surgeries using Section 106 or similar. Commissioners endorsed the need and their commitment for better GP surgeries in the town and it was agreed that the Director of Resources would be asked to liaise with the two GP bidders to see if there was any way the Council could assist in the provision of better surgery accommodation.

The Director of Resources advised the Cabinet to recommend acceptance of the three highest bidders (in priority order) as this would provide a safety net for being able to proceed once the Council had started to undertake its liquidity and process checks on the bidders.

Resolved –

- (a) That bids 1, 2 and 3 as set out in the Part II report (in that order of priority) be agreed as representing Best Value.
- (b) That the Borough Secretary and Solicitor, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources be authorised to dispose of the subject property to the preferred bidder.

7. Housing Futures - Provision of Housing Management Services - Update Report

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the progress made to-date with planning the return of Housing Management services to direct provision and the winding up of the company People 1st (Slough) Ltd in accordance with the statutory requirements from 1st July, 2010. In speaking to the report the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal drew attention to the significant work that the Project Board had undertaken and the proposal that it had made to determine that it would be in the best interest of tenants and leaseholders and staff of both the Council and People 1st to accelerate the proposal and to transfer all staff to the Council at midnight on 30th June, 2010.

There were no financial consequences inherent within the report and the cost associated with the project were being closely monitored by the Project Board. In answer to a question from a Rule 30 Member the Director of the Green and Built Environment confirmed that the Project Board would meet as often as necessary as the final structure of the returning services was

Cabinet - 14.06.10

determined and staff assimilated into the Council structure. The proposal to bring the transfer forward to the 1st July 2010 was to reassure staff as there was some anxiety when the transfer was to take place on the 1st January, 2011. Members noted that with the abolition of People 1st Members would have lost a form of engagement with the management of housing services given that they would no longer have five seats on the Management Board. Member involvement would be crucial in the coming months as the returning services were reorganised and embedded within the Council. Accordingly the Cabinet was asked to consider making the Housing futures project a standing item on the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel. The report would be presented to the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel on 17th June, 2010.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress to date in engaging, informing and consulting our tenants and staff on the proposal to return housing services to in-house provision be noted.
- (b) That the decision to bring forward the transfer date to 1st July 2010 following the mutual agreement of the People 1st Board and the Council to the early termination of the management agreement be endorsed (para 5.4 refers).
- (c) That further decisions relating to the successful reintegration of People 1st staff and services into the council be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal, the Strategic Director of the Green and Built Environment and the Strategic Director of Resources with an update report being brought to Cabinet in September 2010.
- (d) That the Housing Futures project be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel as a standing item.
- (e) That the Council's scheme of delegation for housing related functions formerly undertaken by staff within People 1st (Slough) Ltd be amended as indicated in Appendix A (para 5.11 refers).

8. Slough Borough Council's Carbon Management Plan: 2009 - 2014

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to the Carbon Management Plan 2009-2014. The Plan had been circulated to all members of the Cabinet and an amendment sheet setting a number of corrections that needed to be made to the Plan had also been circulated. Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Carbon Management Programme Board had approved the Plan and the list of activities summarised in Section 4 subject to the relevant Director providing clarification in writing to the Committee concerning the long term financing of the programme.

Cabinet - 14.06.10

The Plan was a mechanism through which the Council would deliver on its commitments in its sustainable Community Strategy and Strategic Plan to reduce energy use through a programme of energy saving projects. In addition it created an opportunity to save revenue costs on future energy bills. The Cabinet was asked to endorse the Plan including the target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2014 and to be carbon neutral by 2020. The report set out the key policy obligations and drivers for the Plan, the financial costs of the programme and sources of funding.

Commissioners discussed the benefits that could arise from the Plan and noted that initiatives such as vacating the old Town Hall would assist the Council in achieving its target as this was an old and efficient building with high emissions. As an interim measure the Council had committed to achieving a 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions (excluding schools and contracted out services) by December 2010 as part of the national 10:10 campaign launched in the summer of 2009. It was planned to achieve these targets by reducing demand for energy across operational buildings, increasing the efficiency of the energy the Council use. The Council had calculated the "value at stake" as a programme i.e. the cost of the Council of not doing anything to reduce carbon emissions. The financial value at stake of the Council's Carbon Management Programme was estimated to be £12.3 million - this being the projected cumulative saving that could be realised over the period 2009-2014 if the Council's emissions were cut by 40% and it was noted that this sum did include penalties. A Member present under Rule 30 indicated his full support for the Plan and asked for confirmation whether the figures were based on estimates. The Director advised that the Council had to work on estimate figures.

Commissioners noted that all projects had to take carbon management emissions into account and this was embedded in the Project Management arrangements.

Resolved -

- (a) That the Carbon Management Plan (attached as Appendix A to the report) be adopted.
- (b) That the target to reduce CO₂ emissions from the Council's own operations by 40% from a 2008/09 baseline by 2014 be adopted, and
- (c) That the activities listed in Section 4 of Appendix A of the report be supported.

9. Statutory Service Delivery Plans Safety, Health & Safety and Trading Standards

The Cabinet considered the Statutory Service Plans in relation to Food Safety Service, Health and Safety Service and Trading Standards. The Service

Cabinet - 14.06.10

Plans illustrated the Council's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability. They also showed how the local authority had adopted a balance of techniques and approaches to support local businesses, drive up compliance, enhance consumer protection and promote safety and wellbeing in the work place and the community. Ginny De Haan, Head of Food Safety, and Business Support, outlined some of the recent initiatives being undertaken to promote food safety. In thanking members of the team for the production of the report the Cabinet placed on record particularly its thanks to Ginny De Haan for her outstanding contribution to the work on swine flu.

Recommended - That the Statutory Service Plans in relation to the Food Safety, Health & Safety and Trading Standards work undertaken by the Council be endorsed.

10. Appropriation of Land to Planning Purposes, Slough Canal Basin

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the need to appropriate an area of land held for HRA Housing Amenity purposes to planning purposes.

Members were advised of a joint proposal for the redevelopment of land holdings at Slough Canal Basin by British Waterways and Travis Perkins. The redevelopment would require a further area of land in SBC ownership to be incorporated into their site. The Council had been requested to grant an option on this land to the developers. Appropriation of the land for planning purposes would enable negotiations on proposed terms of disposal to be finalised. Members noted that as the land was presently used as open space the local authority would need to conduct a consultation exercise and consider the responses received and that these responses would be reported to a future Cabinet meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That 0.11Ha/0.27 Acre of land off Kendal Close as shown on Plan attached as Appendix B be appropriated from HRA Housing Amenity to Planning purposes.
- (b) That the necessary procedures set out in paragraph 5.5 of the report be authorised.

(Councillors Swindlehurst and Pantelic left the meeting).

11. Application to Purchase Freehold Interest, 29 Church Street, Slough

The Cabinet considered a report detailing an application to purchase the Council's Freehold Interest in 29 Church Street. Members were advised that the Council owned the freehold interest in 29 Church Street Slough which was let by a way of a long lease to Slough Labour Club at a peppercorn rent. Application to purchase the Council's interest, had been received from Slough Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) who wished to implement a scheme for the redevelopment of the property to provide centralised accommodation

Cabinet - 14.06.10

for the Voluntary Sector in Slough. Approval was requested to enter into negotiations with SCVS and the Labour Club to progress the SCVS proposal. It was noted that this would entail not dealing with the disposal on normal best value basis via the open market but entering into discussions with a single party SCVS and exercising the Council's wellbeing powers on the grounds of the benefits for community.

Commissioners discussed the proposal and a question was asked as to where the SCVS would obtain funding for the freehold interest. The Director of Resources advised that funding had been secured by SCVS under the Capacity Builders Grant - this funding was time limited and restricted to the acquisition and development costs of the scheme. Commissioners asked whether any future sale of the land could be protected to ensure the Council's best interests. The Director of Resources advised that the authority needed to consider and weigh up the benefits of the initial capital and vested interests in any future transactions if appropriate. SCVS were proposing that they acquire the freehold and Commissioners asked whether the best return to the council could be achieved by offering SCVS a lease. A member present under rule 30 asked for clarification of members position with regard to the members of the Labour Party considering this matter as the Labour Party occupied the premises. The Leader advised that the Labour Party were tenants in the building and therefore had no particular interest in the matter. It was proposed and agreed that the Director of Resources should be authorised to enter into negotiations, on terms to be finalised, and conclude negotiations that would best safeguard the council's financial interests.

Resolved -

- (a) That the application be noted.
- (b) That the Strategic Director of Resources be authorised to enter into and conclude negotiations to safeguard the Council's best financial interests.

(Councillors Swindlehurst and Pantelic returned to the meeting).

12. Berkshire Wide Credit Union

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the work that was currently ongoing to create a Berkshire Wide Credit Union namely Community Savings and Loans Limited and to reaffirm previous commitments of support through the provision of grant funding and support in kind.

In introducing the report the Commissioner for Performance and Accountability drew attention to the proposals in the report and proposed that an addition to 2(b) be made to request a yearly progress report and that the Commissioner be briefed following the meeting that was to be held with the Berkshire Unitaries on 17th June 2010. Commissioners fully endorsed the proposals in the report as the creation of local credit union would help ensure low cost loans were available to those members of the community who might

Cabinet - 14.06.10

otherwise be financially excluded and would encourage the development of the savings culture to help individuals become financially secure.

Resolved –

- (a) That the work currently in hand to create a Berkshire Wide Credit Union, complete with “Slough Branch” which will provide a savings, and a low cost loans facility for those residents who find themselves financially excluded be noted.
- (b) To reconfirm previous commitments of support made by the local authority, namely:-
 - 1. A grant of £10,000 per annum, for each of the first 3 years, to help fund initial start up costs (this figure may need to be revised following a meeting of all 6 Berkshire Unitaries on 17 June) with a yearly progress report
 - 2. The provision of low cost office accommodation, ideally at MyCouncil for use by borrowers and savers
 - 3. Marketing and publicity
 - 4. Employee payroll deduction
 - 5. Report to Cabinet Commissioner after meeting of the six Berkshire Unitaries on 17th June.

13. Scheme of Delegation to Officers - Executive Functions

The Cabinet considered a report seeking agreement to Scheme of Delegation to Officers insofar as the scheme related to executive functions.

Resolved - That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers set out in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution (as submitted to and agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council and subject to the amendments proposed in the Housing Futures report – item 7 on the agenda) be adopted insofar as the scheme related to executive functions.

14. References from Overview and Scrutiny

None.

15. Executive Forward Plan

Resolved - That the Forward Plan be approved.

16. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item in Part 2 of the Agenda, as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (amended).

PART II

(The following is a summary of the matter considered in Part II of the meeting).

17. Redundancy - Senior Officer

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the redundancy of a senior officer. The report set out the details of the proposal along with a copy of the Severance Policy and Procedural Guidance which would be followed in all cases. The Cabinet agreed to the redundancy as set out in the report.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)