

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 18th October, 2010.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), S Chaudhry, A S Dhaliwal, Matloob, Pantelic (from 7.10 p.m.), Parmar, Small and Swindlehurst

Apologies: Councillor Pantelic (late)

PART I

47. Declarations of Interest

None.

48. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th September 2010

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20th September 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair.

49. Performance and Financial Monitoring 2010/11

The Cabinet considered the Council's performance covering the period up to and including 2010 against the following key areas:

- Revenue and capital monitoring position to August 2010
- Performance monitoring against the Corporate Balanced Scored Card and the LAA Balanced Score Card to August 2010

The Director of Improvement and Development advised that the Corporate Scorecard provided an update on performance covering the period up to and including August 2010 drawing attention to:

- Areas of exception.
- Areas of improved performance.
- Assessment of where improvement actions were needed for performance to achieve end of year targets.
- Following concerns raised at the previous scrutiny around appraisal completion rates a dedicated presentation on this area of performance would be given by the Assistant Directors of HR and Transformational Change, Policy and Performance.

Members noted that the revenue budget position as at the end of August 2010 left an overall headline underspend position of £206,000. The Director of Resources advised that close scrutiny would be required from the Directorate Management Teams to ensure that the base budget position for 2011/12 and beyond was not weakened.

Members were advised that the capital programme for 2010/11 to 2016/17 was currently being reviewed by Cabinet Members and Senior Officers. The outcome of any changes that impacted on this current year would be reported in September budget monitoring report.

Resolved – That the following aspects of the report be noted:

- i. Performance and Project management.
- ii. Financial performance – revenue and capital.

50. Progress Report on Budget Strategy

The Chief Executive introduced a progress report on the delivery of budget 2011/12 setting out the steps taken to prepare for the anticipated severe funding cuts and to achieve a balanced budget in 2011/12 and beyond.

The Chief Executive advised that the Authority was close to securing £2m of the £7m target and that steps were in place to secure the vast majority of the remainder of the money. The workforce planning exercise had resulted in 237 expressions of interest that had been considered by the Corporate Management Team and there would be a further update on the practical outcome of these expressions of interest at the following meeting.

In answer to a question the Director of Resources advised that the £400,000 savings with regard to financing the capital programme had been achieved.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the report and noted the Senior Management restructure consultation paper that had been circulated and welcomed senior staffing being addressed in the first instance in response to the need to provide savings.

The Leader asked for confirmation that the Authority's estimate of the outcome and impact of the spending review was likely to be realistic. The Director of Resources advised that for planning purposes it was a prudent sum that had been calculated using sound methodology. Whilst the outcome would not be certain until the 20th October, the Director was confident that it would not be less than the Authority had anticipated.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

51. New Adult Social Care Commissioning Priorities

The Cabinet considered a report seeking approval for a new Commissioning Strategy for Adult Social Care Services setting out the priorities for the next two years. The Strategy would support the delivery of the "Putting Me First" programme and reflected changing needs for social care support. Implementation of the Strategy would also ensure best use was made of limited resources to deliver agreed priorities and improve the outcome for services users.

The Cabinet was asked to approve the identified priorities for commissioning, to commission identified services over the next two years in line with procurement requirements and guidelines and extension of the existing

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funding arrangements for services to ensure continuity service during the recommissioning programme period where required.

The Assistant Director, Personalisation, Commissioning and Partnership made a presentation to the Cabinet on the details of the Strategy.

Commissioners welcomed the work that had been undertaken on the Strategy and endorsed as it reflected good practice and provided the Authority with a long term strategy for the next five years which also would address the financial issues that the Authority would be facing.

Resolved -

- (a) That the draft Commissioning Strategy and priorities be approved.
- (b) That identified services be commissioned in line with procurement requirements and guidelines over the next two years.
- (c) That existing funding and contractual arrangements be extended where required to ensure continuity of service during the re-commissioning period.
- (d) That officers proceed with developing the detailed work programme to implement the strategy including formal consultation with users of services.

52. Secondary School Places - Update

The Cabinet considered a report which set out proposals for addressing the Council's statutory responsibilities for ensuring sufficiency of secondary school places including how capital investment in the secondary schools estate over the next nine years could enable the additional school places required between now and 2019 to be provided.

Following the cessation of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme and in light of the absence of any replacement funding framework to expand and improve schools Members were advised that the Council could choose to speculatively approach the Department for Education to highlight Slough's future needs with the aim of securing agreement on future funding. This would allow the Council to make plans to satisfy future needs.

The report set out the work that had been undertaken with regard to the BSF Programme. The implications for Slough's mainstream secondary provision following the withdrawal of BSF the implications for Slough Special Educational Needs provision and Post-16 provision.

The Director of Education and Childrens Services advised that the Authority had positioned itself well for submitting a request to Government for capital funding. Slough was able to provide evidence of well thought out plans in education strategies to support both school improvement and more efficient

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use of resources. The pupil place planning and school asset management data was robust, and the proposed school organisation plans would address the future demand for school places. The Director outlined what the next steps for the Authority could be which included submitting a case for capital funding to the DfE, supported by the information and strategies referenced and attached to the report and starting the consultation process on the changes required for school organisation, including seeking applications from promoters/ providers for each of the two proposed new schools at the appropriate time.

The Director answered a series of detailed questions with regard to the status of new Academy Schools and Free Schools that could be set up by parents/ other organisations. She advised that the Authority was waiting for guidance on the detailed operation of the schools.

Resolved -

- (a) That a case be submitted for capital funding to the Department for Education following the demise of Building Schools for the Future, supported by the information about the need for secondary school places and Slough's Secondary School Improvement Strategy.
- (b) That a statutory consultation be carried out on the proposed changes to schools (we can start preliminary consultation, but statutory notices cannot be published until funding to implement the capital works is in place).

53. Report on choice Based Letting and Homelessness Strategy Implementation

The Cabinet considered a report on the current situation regarding the introduction of an 'advert and bid' choice based letting system and seeking approval for the proposed course of action. The report also set out the progress in delivering the Homelessness Strategy and an update on homelessness and related issues for 2009-2010.

The Housing Needs Manager set out the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 which required the Authority's policy on offering people who were to be allocated housing accommodation, a choice of housing accommodation or the opportunity to express preferences about the housing accommodation to be offered to them.

The current Government's view was that, whilst the previous Government set a target for all local authorities to implement a choice based advert and bid scheme by the end of 2010, this had no statutory or regulatory force. Local authorities were encouraged to develop local responses on social housing which best reflected their local circumstances, whilst continuing to ensure that the priority for social housing went to the most vulnerable in society.

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Members were advised that the Authority was already compliant with legislation and met local need. A delay in implementation of the new housing IT system and the onset of proposed public sector financial restrictions had led to a reconsideration of an advert and bid scheme in Slough. Officers recommended a postponement until the council's financial position was clearer and the new housing IT system was fully functional. The merits of advertising vacant homes could then be undertaken.

The Housing Needs Manager explained the proposed minor policy changes to the lettings scheme and sought approval to a policy of officer discretion to incentivise the release of larger and unoccupied in demand units as an extension of the existing tenants incentive scheme 'Money to Move'.

Commissioners welcomed the proposals in the report and placed on record their appreciation of the work of the Homelessness Team who achieved excellent results in what were often very difficult circumstances.

Resolved –

- (a) That the implementation of an advert and bid approach to letting social housing be postponed.
- (b) That the minor changes to the housing register as outlined in paragraph 5.21 of the report be adopted.
- (c) That Officers may apply discretion to offer tenants of under occupied homes, of four bedrooms and larger, incentives to exchange by varying the existing tenants incentive scheme.
- (d) That the progress made in preventing homelessness be noted.

54. Executive Forward Plan

Resolved - That the Forward Plan be approved.

55. Members' Attendance Record

Noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)