

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 21st November, 2011.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (chair) (arrived at 7.15 pm), S Chaudhry, A S Dhaliwal, Matloob, Pantelic, Parmar, Swindlehurst (chair until 7.15 pm) and Walsh

PART I

61. Declarations of Interest

None.

62. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th October 2011

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2011 be approved as a correct record.

63. Order of Business

The Chair advised that he intended to alter the order of business, taking item 8, Children's Centre and Library in Colnbrook - Update, before the remaining items.

64. Children's Centre and Library in Colnbrook - Update

The Cabinet was provided with a presentation on the restoration process which had taken place to provide the children's centre in Colnbrook. Officers advised that the building had been affected by wet rot and woodworm, in addition to missing a roof, windows and water supply. After seven months of work, the grade one listed building had been restored to create a welcoming hub for the community and offering a secure environment for children.

The centre now offered a broad range of services, including a self service library, which was jointly provided by Sure Start and Library Services (Slough) in Slough. The service enabled members of the public to access books within the main library system. The Cabinet was advised that the Centre offered facilities for training classes, a family learning centre and health visitor drop in sessions. Services to be offered by the Centre were to be advertised during open days held on 24th and 25th November 2011.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that it was intended that the Centre be used to its full potential via the use of volunteers, who would enable it be open as frequently as possible. Officers advised that they were currently in the process of building relationships with volunteering organisations and establishing who may become a suitable key holder.

Resolved - That the Cabinet note the verbal update.

65. Draft Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/2013 to 2015/16

The Cabinet was provided with the latest projections of the Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2012/2013 to 2015/2016 and detailed a number of specific saving proposals. New proposals included a commitment to reduce agency staff spend which would primarily be achieved by employing agency staff for a maximum of 30 hours per week, wherever possible.

The Cabinet was advised of the proposal to increase the number of posts offered on a part-time basis, which would widen the pool of local people available to undertake roles, particularly women. Officers advised that this would have a minimum impact upon current full-time employees and it was emphasised that there was no intention to burden current staff with unreasonable workloads. Officers were questioned by the Cabinet as to the availability of evidence which suggested that part-time workers were as productive as full-time workers. Officers informed that evidence was available Council and industry wide which suggested that productivity was not hindered by part-time employment. It was agreed that this information be made available to Cabinet members at their request.

The final saving was to be made via increased emphasis upon maintaining a fit and healthy workplace. The Cabinet was informed that Officers suffering from long term sickness would not be affected by this proposal, but rather work would be undertaken with trade unions, staff and managers to minimise time lost as a result of short term sickness. In response to a question, the Cabinet was advised that this would not require amendments to be made to the Council's existing sick leave policy, but rather the measure currently available within the policy would be more readily enforced.

The Cabinet agreed to take the overarching savings strategy and targets as set out on Appendix A, in addition to the specific proposals set out in section 5.15 of the Report, on the grounds of urgency.

Resolved:

- (a) That the Council's current projected Revenue Budget for 2012/13 to 2015/16 be noted.
- (b) That updated assumptions underlying the Medium Term Financial Plan be noted.
- (c) That the overarching savings strategy and targets as set out on Appendix A to the report be approved and that additional proposals be further developed to meet remaining budget deficit. (Decision taken on the grounds of urgency).

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- (d) That the specific proposals set out in section 5.15 of the Report be agreed and that Officers be requested to implement them with immediate effect where possible. (Decision taken on the grounds of urgency).

66. Project Performance and Financial Reporting 2011/12

The Cabinet was presented with a report on the Council's overall performance from delivery of service to the financial management covering the period up to and including September 2011, in respect of the Council's Gold Projects, the revenue position and Treasury Report.

Resolved - That the Cabinet note the following aspects of the report:

- i. Project management
- ii. Financial performance – revenue and capital:
 - Note the current projected outturn position on the General Fund of an under spend of £189K.
 - Note that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reported a forecast surplus of £153k.
 - Note the identified areas of risk and emerging issues.

67. Council Taxbases for 2012/13

The Cabinet was presented with a report detailing the categories of occupation for the purpose of determining the council taxbase for the Borough during the 2012/13 financial year. Officers advised that a controlled formula was used for the calculation of the council tax; however some discretion was available with regard to the discount provided to owners of second homes and empty properties. It was agreed that a collection rate of 98% would be agreed for the financial year.

Resolved:

- (a) That the level of council tax discount in respect of second homes remains at 10%.
- (b) That the level of discount in respect of long-term empty properties remains at 0%.
- (c) That the collection rate for the council tax for 2012/13 be set at 98%.
- (d) That, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 the amount calculated by Slough Borough Council as its council taxbase for 2012/13 shall be:

i)	Parish of Britwell	1,809.5
ii)	Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle	1,959.1
iii)	Parish of Wexham	1,497.6
iv)	Slough Town	36,715.3
	All areas	41,981.5

68. Leisure Capital Strategy

The Cabinet was provided with a report detailing proposals as to which leisure services were needed in the context of evidence of need and national standards for leisure provision. In addition to considering the options for redevelopment of the existing leisure facilities within the borough, the report also detailed an opportunity to achieve service improvements and a potentially affordable capital project which would be delivered as part of the proposed LABV.

The Officer informed the Cabinet that three additional services had been given particular focus, namely the provision of squash courts, five a side football and an ice arena. Officers highlighted 3 current services which were likely to require costly repairs in the near future, those being, the main swimming pool, the base of which had begun corroding, the roof of the Montem Leisure Centre and the equipment required at the Ice Arena. The Cabinet was advised that funding for the leisure facilities could be raised via three options. The first was to do nothing, the second was the possibility of developing the facilities via a LABV. Officers informed that this would be the Council's preferred option as it would best value. The second available option was to invest via the re-let of the existing leisure contract.

In response to a number of questions, the Cabinet was advised that further work was needed to establish the most viable option, and a report would be presented to Cabinet in September 2012. The Cabinet highlighted affordability as being a particularly important consideration when making the decision as to the provision of future services.

Resolved:

- a) That the Assistant Director for Culture and Skills be authorised, following consultation with the Commissioner for Community and Leisure, to undertake further research detailed in section 6.14ff of the report and develop a user specification for re-providing leisure facilities currently located at Montem.
- b) That a further report be received in September 2012, or earlier if practicable, on plans for procurement and development in the context of the potential use of the LABV (Local Asset Backed Vehicle) to deliver the council's capital programme.

69. Public Outdoor Events Policy

The Cabinet was presented with a report which set out the background to a new Public Outdoor Events Policy for the Council. The Policy was intended to govern all outdoor events which were to take place within the town centre, Council parks and open spaces. The proposed Events Policy would provide

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clarity to event organisers and ensure that Council obligations and costs were met, particularly with regard to fees and charges.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that organisers would be provided with one day free of charge, either side of the event being held, to allow them to set up and dismantle. It was noted that a review was currently taking place with regard to the need to restrict parking within local areas, for long periods of time, during days on which major events were taking place.

The Cabinet agreed to take the decision on the grounds of urgency, as the Policy was to be implemented from 1 January 2012.

Resolved on the grounds of urgency -

- a) That the public outdoor events policy, at appendix A of the report, be approved.
- b) That the proposed scale of fees and charges, at appendix B of the report, be approved.
- c) That the implementation of the policy and fees and charges from 1 January 2012 be approved.

70. References from Overview and Scrutiny

None.

71. Executive Forward Plan

Resolved - That the Executive Forward Plan be approved.

Chair

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