

## **Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 12th March, 2012.**

**Present:-** Councillors Anderson, S Chaudhry, A S Dhaliwal, Pantelic, Parmar, Swindlehurst, Walsh and P K Mann

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillor Strutton

### **PART I**

#### **105. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **106. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th February 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February were taken as a read and signed by the chair as a correct record.

#### **107. Order of Business**

The Chair advised that he intended to alter the order of business taking item seven, Proposal for Haymill Site including Haymill College; and item six, Old Town Hall Conversion to Primary School – Progress Report, before all other items.

#### **108. Proposal for Haymill Site - Including Haybrook College**

The Cabinet was presented with a report regarding the proposal for the expansion and partial re-provision of Haybrook College and the Executive Headteacher of Haybrook College, Helen Huntley addressed the Committee with regard to the proposals, which included the provision of new purpose built accommodation whilst also being expanded on the Haymill site to ensure future demand for the school's services would be met.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the report and asked a number of questions with regard to the use of the new school facilities by external organisations and funding of placements. Officers advised that they aimed to ensure that the use of facilities for sporting and gaming activities, in addition to private meetings, would be possible by providing a new school hall, almost double the size of that which currently existed.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the Haybrook College be provided with new modular / permanent accommodation on the northern half of the Haymill site to replace accommodation currently used within the Haymill building and Springboard annex, but with some expanded provision to meet predicted demand for the next three years;

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- (b) That the redundant Springboard and Haymill buildings be demolished at the earliest possible opportunity;
- (c) That the Interim Assistant Director Environment & Regeneration agree the overall project budget following consultation with the Director of Regeneration & Resources, Director of Education and Children's Services, the Commissioners for Neighbourhoods & Renewal and Education & Children, following tender of the agreed works and demolition packages.

### **109. Old Town Hall Conversion to Primary School - Progress Report**

The Cabinet was provided with an update on the progress made on the Town Hall Conversion and Refurbishment project, following its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> September, at which it agreed a final contract value with Mansell Construction Services Ltd of up to 2.4m. The Cabinet was advised that an estimated £490k would also be required to cover furniture costs, site preparation costs, highway works, kitchen equipment, IT hardware and management fees. Officers informed the Cabinet that work to develop the school had begun three weeks beforehand and it was anticipated that previously agreed deadlines would be met.

Members welcomed the progress made and questioned whether any public events had been organised to 'showcase' the school. Members were advised that due to the tight timescales within which the development was to be carried out, it would be unlikely that members of the public could be invited into the Town Hall School itself before its opening. Claycotts Community School would be holding a number of open evenings for potential parents at which the Town Hall School would be publicised.

#### **Resolved -**

- (a) That the progress made with creating a new school from the Old Town Hall be noted.
- (b) That the funding for the project to be £2.89M be agreed.

### **110. Project, Performance and Financial Reporting for 2011/12**

The Strategic Director of Resources and Regeneration presented a report highlighting the Council's overall performance, covering the period up to and including January 2012.

Members raised a number of questions, in particular whether the Council was finding it difficult to meet the large volume of requests made under the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act, particularly given the recent budget constraints face by the Council. Officers advised of the importance of legitimate Fol requests and that the Information Commissioners' Office provided useful direction with regard to the provision of responses.

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Members noted the improvement in Slough's recently reported GCSE results in comparison to the previous year.

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

- i. Project management
  - The current reported status of each Gold Project.
- ii. Performance Scorecard
  - The performance issues identified and highlighted.
- iii. Financial performance – revenue and capital
  - The current projected outturn position on the General Fund of an under spend of £2.380m following the reallocation of resources as laid out in section 15 of this report
  - The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reported a forecast under spend of £362k.
  - The identified areas of risk and emerging issues; and that
  - The reallocation of resource in section 15 of this report be approved.

### **111. Review of Reserves and General Fund Balances**

The Cabinet was provided with the outcome of the Section 151 officer's Review of Reserves and General Fund Balances following the adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012, and a review of committed expenditure for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 based on the known position as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012. Officers advised that adopting a risk based approach to increasing general fund balances in a planned way would reflect best practice.

**Resolved -**

- (a) That the allocation of the initial £1.46m arising from 2011-12 planned savings programme as a contribution to General Fund Balances be agreed as a commitment to the long term financial sustainability of the council.
- (b) That following the contribution to General Fund as detailed above, a further £685k arising from 2011-12 planned savings be allocated to earmarked reserves to fund the one off items approved by Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February be agreed.
- (c) That officers undertake a comprehensive review of provisions in the light of progress made during the year and provide recommendations for reallocation of any available resources arising as a result to the April Cabinet meeting.

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- (d) That allocation of £50k be made from the under spend to enable preparatory work to be undertaken to bring forward options for consideration under (c) above.

### **112. Corporate Procurement Strategy**

The Cabinet was presented with a report seeking review and ratification of the Corporate Procurement Strategy. The Strategy supported inclusion of community benefits in all procurement activity, investing in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Black and Minority Ethnic groups. The Strategy supported procurement's role to provide advice and guidance to the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate the Chamber's role in enabling local SMEs to compete in the local market. The Strategy was to be circulated to all Officers in April 2012.

The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The OSC had recommended that the Strategy be approved subject to an addition to the Strategy to ensure that it reflected the Council's commitment regarding social responsibility. The Members indicated that they were happy to support the recommendation.

**Resolved** - That the Corporate Procurement Strategy be ratified and that its implementation across the Council be endorsed, subject to an addition to the strategy to ensure that it reflects the council's commitment to social responsibility.

### **113. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Adoption 2012-2013**

The Assistant Direct of Housing Services outlined the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2012 – 2013. Members were advised that the Localism Bill had received Royal Assent in November 2011 and included a new system of accounting for the Housing Revenue Account known as self financing. This new system would result in the Council taking on an additional debt of £137million in March 2012. Officers advised that the HRA had been revised to take into account this new structure.

Concerns were raised by Members regarding the maintenance of the Council's housing stock, given the increase in discounts available under the Right to Buy scheme which had been announced earlier that day.

**Resolved** -

- (a) That the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2012/2013 be approved. (Paragraph 5.6 of the report and appendix 1 refers)
- (b) That the growth items, identified in paragraphs 5.5 & 5.8 of the report amounting to £245,000 for supervision and management and £950,000 for Repairs & maintenance be approved.

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- (c) That the revised medium term capital programme be approved (Paragraph 5.11 of the report)
- (d) That the medium term sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be noted.

### **114. References from Overview and Scrutiny**

None.

### **115. Executive Forward Plan**

The Director of Resources and Regeneration advised that a report on the Arbour Vale site would be brought to the April Cabinet meeting. The Director advised that development of the site was in hand.

#### **Resolved -**

- (a) That the Executive Forward Plan be approved.
- (b) That a report on the Arbour Vale site be brought to the April Cabinet meeting and that the existing delegation to the Director to progress the development contract be confirmed.

### **116. Part II Minutes - Cabinet 14th February 2012**

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2012 were taken as read and signed by the chair as a correct record.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.40 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)