

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 13th April, 2015.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), Carter, Hussain, Mann, Munawar, Parmar, Sharif and Swindlehurst

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

111. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

112. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th March 2015

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9th March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

113. Carbon Management Plan April 2015 - March 2020

The Commissioner for Environment & Open Spaces introduced a report which sought approval for the new five-year Carbon Management Plan 2015-20 which set out how the Council aimed to reduce its carbon emissions and mitigate against the effects of climate change.

The Council's first Carbon Management Plan, adopted in 2009, had set a target of a 40% reduction in carbon emissions against the 2008/9 baseline. The Council achieved a 49% reduction in CO₂ emissions during the period of the previous plan due to a number of both planned and unplanned factors. The new plan aimed to reduce total carbon emissions by a further 20% against the 2013/14 baseline, which would mean a total reduction of 60% since 2008/9, and reduce operating costs relating to carbon emissions by 10% by 2020. The approved Capital Programme included a fund of £100,000 per annum between 2015/16 and 2019/20 to support invest to save projects which would deliver both CO₂ reductions and revenue savings.

Commissioners asked about the governance arrangements and how the outcomes would be monitored. It was responded that Carbon Management Board was the primary monitoring authority for the plan and it involved the Commissioner for Environment & Open Spaces and relevant Council departments such as asset management, transport and waste. The potential of utilising solar panels on Council buildings was raised and it was noted that these options would continue to be appraised to evaluate whether they had the potential to contribute to the carbon and revenue savings targets. A number of the key actions and suggestions were discussed including the planned investment in new LED street lighting which would deliver major energy savings and the trial use of electric vehicles.

The Cabinet approved the plan, subject to a minor textual amendment to paragraph 3.9 (2) Priority Actions.

Resolved – That the Carbon Management Plan April 2015 – March 2020, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

114. Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2015-20

The Commissioner for Environment & Open Spaces introduced a report which sought approval of the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy 2015-2020 which set out the priorities for further improvements to the 87 parks and open spaces in Slough and to encourage more people to use them.

The importance of parks and open spaces was recognised, with around three quarters of residents using them on a regular basis. However, with both parks usage and physical activity levels in Slough both lower than national averages, the strategy was an opportunity to promote formal and informal activity by increasing the number of 'welcoming, safe and easily accessible' parks with a diverse range of facilities. The new strategy defined the Council's vision and priorities to 2020 and incorporated the views of more than 900 residents surveyed. The key priorities and targets were detailed in section 5 of the report which included new facilities, improved landscaping, promotion and a more meaningful role for residents in shaping the facilities and environment of their local parks. Significant improvement works were planned in 2015/16 at several parks including Bails & Godolphin and Kennedy Park.

Commissioners discussed the importance of links with the broader Leisure Strategy which had been agreed last year, and in particular how the actions proposed would contribute to the targets to reduce obesity and increase levels of activity. The Assistant Director, Community & Skills responded that the two strategies were closely aligned and that informal activity in parks and open spaces was a vital step towards more formal leisure activities. The five-year implementation plan for the Leisure Strategy agreed by the Cabinet in March 2015 included a range of specific programmes to promote these opportunities. Members were updated on some of the practical actions underway including the Get Active Programme using parks as their primary location during the summer months and multi-sports course training that had been provided to more than 30 people who had committed at least 20 hours to community activity.

Members suggested that there was more potential in engaging local people in the gardening and upkeep of the parks. The Assistant Director recognised this and highlighted that Priority 5 of the strategy aimed to encourage residents to take a more active role in parks and contribute to the delivery of projects. The Commissioner for Education & Children's Services stated that many young people often cited concerns about safety as a barrier to using parks and requested that Slough's Youth Parliament be fully engaged in seeking to address these issues. The Assistant Director agreed that this would be taken forward. Commissioners also discussed the short and medium term options to resolve parking and traffic issues in Salt Hill Park.

The Cabinet welcomed the strategy and agreed that it be approved.

Resolved – That the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy be approved for adoption and implementation.

115. SRP Partnership Business Plan

The Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing and Resources introduced a report which informed Cabinet of the progress of the Slough Regeneration Partnership and sought approval for the SRP Partnership Business Plan 2015-2019. The report had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9th April and no specific comments had been referred to Cabinet.

The Partnership had made substantial progress on a number of key projects during its second year including The Curve, the construction of which was on time and on budget; the Ledgers Road development of 73 homes for which construction would start this month; and the Wexham Nursery site for 104 houses which had recently secured planning permission. It was noted that circa 30% of these homes would be purchased by the HRA to provide new council properties. Members were updated on the revised profile of capital receipts for the next five years; the potential opportunities from the SRP procurement process on other projects; and the strengthened partnership working between the Council and Morgan Sindall.

The Cabinet were updated on the option of the SRP developing smaller residential sites of less than 20 units, rather than the Council establishing a dedicated Subsidiary Housing Company. The potential benefits of developing through the SRP were noted although Commissioners also recognised the potential benefits the flexibility of a housing company could provide in meeting the council's wider strategic objectives. It was agreed that Cabinet would receive a further report recommending a way forward later in the year.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress being made by the Slough Regeneration Partnership be noted and that the Partnership Business Plan for the period 2015 to 2019 be agreed.
- (b) That it be noted that the SRP was working collaboratively with SBC asset management team to prepare a development programme for a package of small sites within Slough and that it be agreed that a follow-up report with recommendations for the delivery of small sites be presented to Cabinet by July 2015.

116. Policy for Significant Asset Purchases

The item was withdrawn.

117. School Places Strategy

The item was deferred.

118. Real Time Passenger Information

Further to the discussion by Cabinet in March about the low detection rates of the Real Time Passenger Information system in Slough, Commissioners considered a report setting out ways to improve performance and recommending a suitable target detection rate.

The Acting Head of Transport and the Business Performance Director at First Buses answered questions from Commissioners about the reasons for the low levels of detection. A number of improvements to the system had been made as detailed in the report and it was recognised that the rate had improved from 30% to 60% in the past few months, since the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel began scrutiny of the issue.

Commissioners felt that the recommended target detection rate of 75% rising gradually towards 100% over the next year following three month reviews should be more ambitious. The technical challenges of achieving a 100% detection rate were noted, however, Members agreed that a target rising rapidly towards 100% by June 2015 on First Bus services should be set to ensure passengers could be confident in the system and to reflect the significant level of capital investment made by the Council in the infrastructure. The Council and bus operators shared the same objectives of promoting public transport use and RTPI had the potential to make bus services more attractive to passengers. It was also agreed to actively work with London Buses, Arriva, other bus companies and neighbouring authorities to improve detection rates on these services and adopt a monitoring framework to manage performance.

Commissioners asked that the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel monitor the rate of improvement in detection rates and report back to Cabinet if performance failed to meet expected levels. The Cabinet welcomed the more positive recent dialogue with First Buses and thanked them for their contribution to the meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the improvements detailed in section 5 of the report be made to enable RTPI on all First bus services in Slough, and move towards a detection rate of 100% on these services by June 2015.
- (b) That real time links be implemented for London Buses, Arriva and other operators in Slough and that a monitoring framework be developed for detection rates on these services.

- (c) That the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel monitor detection rates on a regular basis and report to Cabinet, if required, should detection rates fall below acceptable levels.

119. Contracts in Excess of £250,000

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the contracts with an estimated value of over £250,000 that were proposed to be let in the 2015/16 financial year and exemptions to competitive tendering. The contracts listed in Appendix A to the report were included in approved budgets and all contracts would be let in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules. After due consideration, the Cabinet endorsed the list of contracts.

Resolved – That the list of contracts attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

120. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

121. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Commissioners considered the published Notification of Decisions which set out both the key and non-key decisions expected to be taken by Cabinet between April and June 2015.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Forthcoming Key Decisions for the period between April to June 2015 be endorsed.

122. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item in Part II of the agenda as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 the Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972.

123. Part II Minutes - 9th March 2015

Resolved – That the Part II minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9th March 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.38 pm and closed at 8.16 pm)