

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 17th October, 2016.

Present:- Councillors Munawar (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair), Ajaib (from 6.40pm), Bal, Matloob, Sharif (from 6.35pm) and Sohal

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Anderson, Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Morris, Plenty, Shah, Strutton, Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

53. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bal declared that his daughter worked for Slough Borough Council.

54. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th September 2016

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th September 2016 be approved as a correct record.

(Councillors Sharif and Ajaib joined the meeting)

55. Hollow Hill Lane Experimental Scheme

The Cabinet considered an update on the experimental order process and duration required for Officers to make a decision on the closure of Hollow Hill Lane. Following the Cabinet resolution of 19th September 2016, the Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure & Regeneration had written to Andrew Jones MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport to seek clarification on the minimum period of closure required to obtain sufficiently robust data to develop the mitigation package necessary to address the long term traffic issues if the road was to close permanently in the future. A formal response had not yet been received.

The Cabinet considered comments and representations from Langley St Mary's ward Members Councillors Amarpreet Dhaliwal and Diana Coad, via written correspondence; and the Chair of Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel (who was also a Member for Langley St Mary's). The Chair of Langley Neighbourhood Forum, Eleanor Cryer MBE, was invited to address the Cabinet to set out the views of the Forum from their public meeting on 11th October. The Cabinet was informed of the continued significant traffic disruption in the area attributed to the closure and was asked to reopen the road after three months i.e. 2nd November 2016. The Officer recommendation was for a closure of six months to 2nd February 2017 to provide sufficient time for the required data collection and consultation; and to negotiate with HS2 and other relevant parties on the mitigation package.

The Commissioner for Transport & Highways set out the extensive discussions that he had held with residents, ward Members and stakeholders; and that he understood the level of concern about the closure. He confirmed that the scheme would not have been trialled were it not for the major national infrastructure schemes coming forward which meant that the Council had a duty to local residents to fully prepare for any future permanent closure and secure the best possible mitigation package. The Commissioner proposed a change to the recommendation to add a review after three months, i.e. 2nd November, to take account of any outcomes of negotiations with HS2 and the Ministers reply regarding the sufficient level of data collection required.

A range of issues were discussed including the accuracy of the information provided to the Neighbourhood & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, about which the Chair had expressed dissatisfaction; the communication and engagement process with residents; and the reasons for the closure continuing after 2nd November. Officers responded that the six month period included data collection, traffic surveys, consultation feedback and drop-in sessions and provided sufficient time to fully assess the impacts of closure across periods including school holidays, varying weather conditions and adjustments made to the network in response to changing patterns of traffic. Commissioners sought assurance that any funding secured in a mitigation package would be spent in Langley and it was confirmed that there would be a legal agreement setting out the specific schemes designed to address the issues caused by any future closure.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommendation for a six month period of closure to 2nd February 2017, subject to a review at three months by Officers as proposed by the Commissioner for Transport & Highways and agreed by the Cabinet.

Resolved – That Officers be granted a period of six months for the closure in order to allow them to make a robust case for either opening or closing Hollow Hill Lane. However, Officers, following consultation with the Commissioner for Transport & Highways, would review the experimental scheme after 3 months (2nd November 2016) to take on board the negotiations outcome; reply from Andrew Jones MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport; and if sufficient information is compiled by this date to make an informed decision on the matter.

56. Parking Strategy

The Cabinet was asked to approve an updated version of the Parking Strategy that reflected changes to legislation and the recommendations of the scrutiny task and finish group made in 2015. The document updated that adopted in 2011 as one of the 'Strategic Supplementary Documents' of the Third Local Transport Plan which was the primary framework for the delivery of transport initiatives in the borough.

Cabinet - 17.10.16

Officers explained a wide range of actions undertaken to improve parking provision and enhance the attractiveness of the town centre, including bringing the four town centre car parks up to Park Mark standard and ensuring competitive pricing to attract people into Slough. Commissioners discussed the matter raised by the Task & Finish Group of the provision of disabled bays outside doctor's surgeries and Officers stated this would be looked at where practical. In updating the strategy, free parking had been offered to all blue badge holders in Council owned car parks and up to 3 hours free parking in Pay & Display bays.

In relation to the future roll out of the pavement parking policy, the new strategy would be implemented on a more localised basis by involving ward Members in addressing issues on a street by street basis. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst raised concern that this new approach would not provide the strategic control required to tackle the problem equally across the borough. In response to a question under Rule 30 from Councillor Anderson, it was noted applications or renewals for private car parks would include a condition to achieve Park Mark status within three months which would improve quality standards.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to approve the revised Parking Strategy.

Resolved – That the Parking Strategy, as at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

57. **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2016-2046**

The Cabinet considered the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2016-46 that set out the financial commitments and spend priorities for managing the Council's housing stock. In view of significant uncertainty around national housing policy, it was proposed that the plan be approved and be followed by a period of consultation, with a further review taking place over the next six months prior to seeking Cabinet approval again in March 2017.

The Interim Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing & Resources gave a presentation on the key aspects of the Business Plan and the future outlook. The HRA was in a strong position in the short-term, but there were major uncertainties and threats to be addressed which may affect viability. These included major changes in Government policy such as 1% annual reduction in rents for 4 years from 2016/17 with uncertainty beyond that; mandatory annual payment to Government following sale of higher value voids; "Pay to Stay" would increase rents for households with incomes over £31,000, with proceeds flowing back to the Treasury; welfare reform, including Universal Credit, impacting on collection rates; and the information from the stock condition survey that would report in January 2017.

The Cabinet welcomed the £100m plan over the next seven years to repair, maintain and invest in the existing housing stock and the £40m to be invested

Cabinet - 17.10.16

in the next four years in developing new affordable homes. It was noted that as well as consulting residents about the plan and conducting a review in March 2017, it was also proposed to launch, in partnership with tenants and leaseholders, a major Option Appraisal on the future of council homes.

Commissioners discussed various aspects of the Business Plan, particularly the engagement with residents and the Cabinet was assured that there would be a full consultation process. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Morris broadly welcomed the plan but highlighted the importance of addressing fuel poverty and raised concerns about ability of the current Residents Board to deliver effective tenant empowerment. The proposal to increase rent levels for new Council properties was discussed and the rationale was explained. The differential level had the potential to generate the income required to fund the building of more new homes, whilst ensuring it was linked to the Local Housing Allowance to retain affordability. Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst spoke under Rule 30 and expressed concern about the higher rents on new build properties and the major Option Appraisal on the future of Council homes. It was confirmed that if the Cabinet approved the Business Plan the new rents would be implemented on the 23 new build properties. The concerns raised included the near doubling of rents on new builds, the potential impacts on any existing tenants moving to new properties and the fact that the higher rents would be implemented immediately, before the major consultation process. The comments were noted and a number of the points raised by Members under Rule 30 would be discussed at the next meeting of the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the Business Plan and other recommendations as set out in the report. It felt that the Plan provided a clear direction to secure the long-term viability of the HRA, start a process to engage residents, invest in existing stock and develop new homes where possible.

Resolved –

- (a) That the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved.
- (b) That the draft Business Plan be issued for consultation to the Residents Board and other residents groups.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal to finalise the Business Plan in the light of comments received during the consultation.
- (d) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal, be authorised to begin planning for the Options Appraisal of the Council's housing stock referred to paragraph 5.7 of this report, with a proposal to be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

Cabinet - 17.10.16

- (e) That the development programme set out on Section 8 of the Business Plan be confirmed.
- (f) That the policy on rents to be charged on new build homes as set out in paragraphs 8.11 and 8.12 of the Business Plan be approved.

58. Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan Progress Report

A report was considered that updated the Cabinet on the progress of the plans for a community hub and associated development as part of the Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan since the previous Cabinet report of March 2016.

It had been envisaged that the Cabinet would be in a position to approve the business plan in September 2016, but the project was 3-6 months behind schedule to ensure the best possible scheme could be developed for the site of the former Merrymakers Public House. Approval was sought to enter into an Option Agreement with Raw Investments Limited (RIL) to develop the proposed community hub and the Council was working with RIL and other partners to develop a scheme that included a GP practice, pharmacy, dental practice, library, police station, council services and new residential units.

Commissioners welcomed the progress that had been made in developing a proposal that met the desire of local residents for health services alongside new community facilities. Asked about the anticipated timescale if the Option Agreement with RIL was approved, and it was responded that the Cabinet would be asked to approve the business plan in December 2016, planning would be sought in early 2017 with construction starting later in 2017 and the facility opening in November 2018.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst sought clarity on the position regarding the number of housing units as part of the redevelopment and the levels of rent on the new council housing units. It was noted that RIL would take ownership of the properties above the hub with the others would be Council homes for which the level of rents had not yet been confirmed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommendations to progress the development and consider approval of the business plan at its meeting in December 2016.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Council enter into an Option Agreement with RIL in relation to the land required to introduce the health care element community hub and associated car parking at Trelawney Avenue (as shown in Appendix One to the report) and dispose of this land to RIL for a sum that represents no less than the independent land valuation, if the option granted on the land is exercised.

Cabinet - 17.10.16

- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal and Commissioner for Environment & Leisure, to agree the terms of the Options Agreement, and
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Asset Management to agree terms for the early surrender of the Thames Valley Police (“TVP”) lease of Langley Police Station for an amount that is supported by an independent valuation.
- (d) That it be noted that provided the new facilities remained cost neutral, Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (“SCCG”) had secured approval from NHS England to transfer funding into the proposed hub.
- (e) That it be noted that the proposals to introduce affordable housing on the land released by TVP.
- (f) That it be noted that scheme enablement had commenced, with the Merry Makers Public House and community hall vacated and ready for demolition in November 2016.
- (g) That it be noted that Thames Valley Police (TVP) had confirmed they required touch down space within the hub and in the meantime temporary space at Langley Library.
- (h) That it be noted that subject to the District Valuer valuations, as set out in section 5.7 of the report, providing a viable business case for the current proposals to proceed, a final report would be presented to Cabinet in December 2016.

59. Slough Basin Option Report

The Cabinet considered a report that sought formal approval to grant an option to Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) to redevelop Slough Basin and part of Bowyer Playing Fields to progress the long-term aspiration to create a high quality, residential led scheme at the end of the Slough Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

The Slough Basin scheme would be promoted and delivered in partnership with Waterside Places, the Canal and Rivers Trust development arm. It was recognised that the site had the potential to deliver significant regeneration benefits and granting an option to SUR was an important step forward for the complex scheme. It would provide the SUR and partners the certainty required to further develop the concept and bring forward to planning. The proposal would come back to the Council and Cabinet approval would be required for the disposal. The tenure mix was still to be finalised, however, there was an opportunity for the Herschel Homes subsidiary housing company to acquire the private rented units, subject to approval of the business plan by Cabinet in December.

Cabinet - 17.10.16

Commissioners commented on the need for a clarity and transparency in the strategic approach to such a major development and sought assurance that ward Members would be engaged in the development of the proposal, and particularly any community facilities. Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and asked the Cabinet to ensure that the regeneration benefits were maximised; access to the canal was maintained; and that the strategic intent of utilising any revenue or capital receipts for community benefit be clarified. The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal confirmed that the potential for a community hub would be considered as part of the wider development of the Council's emerging strategy on community hubs and that maximising the regeneration benefits for the local community was a key ambition in taking forward the plans.

The Cabinet then agreed to grant an option to the SUR and give delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing & Resources to take further practical steps to move the scheme forward.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be agreed to the grant of an option to SUR and to agree that Council officers should proceed on the basis that the sites at Slough Basin will be disposed to and developed by SUR , subject to Cabinet approval of the final sum that will represent no less than the best value consideration;
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing & Urban Renewal and the Leader of the Council, to negotiate an SBC option over any potential Private Rented Sector (“PRS”) units promoted within the scheme, and
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing & Urban Renewal and the Leader of the Council, to agree and approve the terms of the Joint Venture vehicle between SUR (SBC and Morgan Sindall Investment Limited) and Waterside Places (Canal and River Trading CIC and Muse Developments Limited) which will be used for the promotion and delivery of the Slough Basin scheme.

60. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

61. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between October to December 2016 be endorsed.

Chair

Cabinet - 17.10.16

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.48 pm)