

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 23rd January, 2017.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Shah, Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

92. Declarations of Interest

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

93. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th December 2016

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

94. Five Year Plan 2017-2021

The Head of Policy, Partnerships & Programmes introduced a report requesting the Cabinet to recommend approval of the refreshed Five Year Plan 2017-2021 to full Council on 31st January 2017.

The Five Year Plan was the high level strategic plan for Slough that set out the opportunities, challenges and priority outcomes against which resources would be allocated. An in depth review had been carried out, including working with the Leader and Cabinet to define their political priorities as reflected in the priority to 'put people first' and a wider theme of engagement. The number of outcomes had been reduced from eight to five, combining some where there was overlap, and removing others where they were more about ways of working rather than tangible outcomes. An annual report would be produced to check progress and ensure accountability, alongside the quarterly reporting process to the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Commissioners welcomed the streamlined, more focused plan and highlighted the importance of both aligning the priorities with the Council's financial resources and ensuring effective performance management arrangements were put in place. A number of other issues were discussed including the progress of the digital strategy and how delivery could be achieved at a time of reduced Government funding and other financial pressures.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst commented on the explicit removal of the town centre as a priority outcome following the combination of the current outcome 1, relating to Slough as a business destination, and outcome 3 on the centre of Slough. It was responded that bringing these

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outcomes together was intended to reduce duplication and increase focus to support these priorities across Council departments. Progress would be monitored and reported through the combined Outcome 5.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to recommend to full Council that the refreshed Five Year Plan 2017-2021 be approved.

Recommended – That the Council agree to the refresh of the Five Year Plan attached as Appendix A to the report.

95. Financial Report - Month 8 2016-17

The Commissioner for Finance & Strategy and Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report setting out the forecast financial information to the end of November 2016.

The revenue over spend had been reduced by 42% from £1.596m the previous month to £0.917m, primarily due to an improvement in the position for Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration due to increased income. There remained significant pressures in the adult social care and temporary accommodation budgets due to increased demand and work was continuing to address these issues. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) position was broadly unchanged with a surplus of £0.396m. The consolidated capital programme continued to improve and the current forecast was to spend 84% of the £135m capital programme.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made since the previous month in beginning to reduce the over spend to a level below the comparable position in 2015/16. Commissioners discussed the plans in place to further reduce the over spend and the Assistant Director indicated that he was confident the over spend would be brought back into line with budget by the end of the financial year.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst commented on the revenue forecast position related to previous years once children's service care over spends were removed. He expressed concern about persistent failure to control expenditure in adult social care and the impact it could have being carried forward into future years budgets.

The Cabinet noted the current revenue, capital and HRA forecasts and considered and approved the write off requests detailed in section 9 of the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the current financial forecast at Month 8 and the ongoing work by departments to reduce the over spend be noted.
- (b) That the write off requests detailed in the section 9 of the report be approved.

96. Performance & Projects Report: Q2 2016/17

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report providing the Cabinet with performance information, balanced scorecard indicators and an update on key projects to the end of the second quarter of 2016-17. The report had been split from the regular financial updates and re-styled to provide a more strategic and accessible summary of performance trends and issues.

The only two balanced scorecard indicators with a 'Red' RAG rating both related to 'excess weight' for primary school children and the Cabinet noted some of the steps the Council was taken with its partners to address this issue. Three Gold Projects had an overall 'Red' RAG status – Agresso implementation, Environmental Services contract procurement and the delivery of major transport schemes. The report set out a number of key achievements during the reporting period including the opening of The Curve, completion of the first Council homes by Slough Urban Renewal on Ledgers Road, over 4,000 streetlights converted to LED lamps and additional CCTV and reassurance activities in Salt Hill Park.

Commissioners asked questions and discussed a number of specific performance issues raised in the report including childhood obesity and early years education. The new style report format was welcomed and it was noted that performance would be closely monitored both by Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst commented on the steps the Cabinet was taking to ensure delivery of Outcomes 3 and 6 of the Five Year Plan relating to the centre of Slough and people managing their own health, care and support needs. At the conclusion of the discussion, the report was noted.

Resolved – That the Council's current performance as measured by the indicators within the balanced scorecard and update on Gold projects and performance be noted.

97. HRA Rents and Service Charges 2017/18

The Commissioner for Finance & Strategy introduced a report that presented the changes in housing rents and service charges for 2017-18 and asked that they be recommended to full Council on 31st January 2017.

It was proposed that Council house dwelling rents would decrease by 1% from Monday 3rd April 2017 in line with Government policy and that garage rents, heat, utility, ancillary charges and service charges rise by 2% based on the September inflation figure. In response to a question from a Commissioner, it was noted that the average tenant would pay £1.04 less per week in rent and 5 pence more in service charges, a net reduction of 99 pence per week.

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After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the proposed rent and service charges to full Council.

Recommended –

- (a) That Council house dwelling rents for 2017/18 decrease by 1% over the 2016/17 rent with effect from Monday 3rd April 2017, in line with current government guidelines and legislation.
- (b) That garage rents, heating, utility and ancillary charges increase by 2.0% with effect from Monday 3rd April 2017, based upon the September RPI figure.
- (c) That service charges increase by 2.0% with effect from Monday 3rd April 2017, based upon the September RPI figure.
- (d) That 'other committee' property rents increase by an average of 2.0% from Monday 3rd April 2017 in line with the September RPI figure.

98. Set up and Governance of Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) for Environmental Services

The Commissioner for Highways & Transport introduced a report which sought Cabinet approval to take the next steps necessary to set up a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) for Environmental Services following the Cabinet decision of 19th September 2016 to insource the service. The report detailed the governance arrangements and sought confirmation that the LACC be a company limited by shares which would be wholly owned by the Council.

The Waste and Environment Manager provided Commissioners with a comprehensive overview of the proposed governance arrangements, organisational structure, requirements of a Teckal exemption, responsibilities for management of the LACC and recruitment and/or secondment into certain roles. Cabinet approval would ensure that the company could be activated by 1st April 2017 so the preparatory steps could be undertaken to deliver the statutory duties via a Teckal exemption from 1st December 2017.

The Cabinet discussed a range of issues including the potential savings to be achieved by insourcing and the commercial opportunities open to the company. The projected savings were detailed in the report to Cabinet in September and were estimated to be £950k without profit. There were a range of commercial opportunities in the market which it would be a priority for the commercial director to explore. Commissioners considered the risks of insourcing and were assured that there was a robust process to identify, profile and manage risks. Asked about the possibility of a two-tier workforce, it was reported that detailed planning on issues such as human resources and finance was the next step following the set up of the company and further reports would be considered by the Cabinet in due course. The Council was working with the unions and the Amey board to achieve a smooth transfer. Assurance was sought that the Council was on track to begin delivery from 1st

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December 2017. It was confirmed that this was the case and that the option to extend the current contract was a necessary contingency.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst highlighted concern about the insourcing of a number of risks to the Council that currently resided with the outsourced provider including industrial relations; commercial opportunities in the trade waste market; and management expertise and capacity. The comments were noted.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the recommendations were approved.

Resolved –

- (a) That officers be instructed to commence the set-up of the new LACC.
- (b) That the proposed governance arrangements and responsibilities for management of the LACC and proposed organisational structure both for the Council and LACC be approved.
- (c) That the recruitment and / or secondment into the roles identified through the headline proposed governance arrangements and structure for management of the LACC be approved.
- (d) That the LACC corporate structure be confirmed as a company limited by shares (CLS).

99. Repairs, Maintenance & Investment (RMI) Contract - Progress Update

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal and the RMI Project Manager introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the progress made in recommissioning the repairs, maintenance and investment services and sought approval to delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive to appoint the preferred bidder.

The Cabinet noted the procurement process that had been undertaken to deliver the preferred model of a strategic partnership arrangement between the Council and a service provider. The objective would be to provide an innovative service that produced a social return on investment; made greater use of technology and digital media to make services more accessible to residents; and improve the collection and use of data to provide a responsive service. There were three providers engaged in Stage 2 of the competitive dialogue process and there had been extensive involvement of Members and key stakeholders. The call for final tenders would now be issued on 10th February, not 27th January as stated in the report.

Commissioners welcomed the thorough and comprehensive process undertaken, including the involvement of Members, and discussed the next steps set out in Appendix B to the report, including the delegation to the Interim Chief Executive to appoint the preferred bidder. The anticipated benefits to residents, particularly in terms of customer service, were

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discussed. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the service provider would be based in Slough; a specialist project manager for IT would be in place throughout mobilisation; that a clear performance framework would be implemented; and that the three Neighbourhood Forums would provide an opportunity to engage residents and partners in both service performance and community projects.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst welcomed the process undertaken and highlighted the importance of ongoing Member engagement. Clarification was sought and provided on the involvement of the RMI Project Board prior to the final sign off.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet noted the progress report and agreed to delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive to appoint the preferred bidder, following consultation with the relevant Commissioner.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made be noted; and
- (b) That in order to meet the procurement timetable and section 20 consultation requirement and to allow the Council the optimum mobilisation period to work together with the new Service Partner, that the Interim Chief Executive, as Project Sponsor, be granted delegated authority, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Urban Renewal, to appoint the Preferred Bidder following evaluation of final solutions from the 3 Bidders.

100. One Public Estate - Authority & Governance for participation in the Berkshire Property Partnership

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report regarding the Council's participation in the Berkshire Property Partnership as part of the One Public Estate (OPE) programme which aimed to work with other public bodies to better manage assets.

The Cabinet noted the background to the OPE programme, the planned projects in Slough and considered the governance arrangements for the Council's participation in the Berkshire Property Partnership as detailed in the report and appendix. The Slough locations included in the bid were the hub sites at Trelawney Avenue, Wentworth Avenue and the former Centre site on Farnham Road.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst asked about the wider benefits over and above the already identified projects. It was noted that there were also opportunities from the Area Based Reviews. The Council's match funding contribution could be in-kind such as officer time.

After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Terms of Reference for the Berkshire Property Partnership, at Appendix A to the report, be agreed.
- (b) That the release of any necessary funds to support its requirements and obligations to participate in the OPE programme be agreed; noting that such funding will be delivered as a “consideration” under the terms of the agreement and will be contained within existing budget projections.
- (c) That the Interim Chief Executive may delegate to his representative on the working Partnership, authority to make decisions supporting the programme delivery in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

101. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

102. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet noted the Notification of Decisions from 1st January to 31st March 2017 which had been published on 23rd December 2016. An updated version had since been published and was available on the Council’s website. It was noted that the Housing Strategy would now be considered by Cabinet in March and Council in April 2017. A reference had been received from the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel related to the closure of Hollow Hill Lane and this would be considered by the Cabinet on 6th February 2017.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between January to March 2017 be endorsed.

103. 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.

104. Part II Minutes - 19th December 2016

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

Chair

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(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.17 pm)