

Cabinet – Meeting held on Tuesday, 18th April, 2017.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Bedi (part), Nazir (part) and Sarfraz (part)

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

132. Declarations of Interest

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

133. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th March 2017

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th March 2017 be approved as a correct record.

134. Financial Update - Month 11 2016-17

The Leader of the Council introduced a report that provided the Cabinet with the latest financial forecast at Month 11 to the end of February 2017. The Council was on course to achieve a near break even position following the substantial work that had been undertaken by services across the organisation. An underspend of £0.018m was now forecast, which was a significant improvement on the forecast overspend of £0.418m reported last month.

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit summarised the key aspects of the report and highlighted that one of the reasons for the improved position was the inclusion of additional investment income in the Regeneration, Housing & Resources directorate. The Cabinet also noted that the Housing Revenue Account position was unchanged with a surplus of £0.396m currently forecast. It was expected that 89% of the total capital programme would be achieved which was a significant improvement on the historic position.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made and thanked Officers for their work in addressing the overspend. The report was noted.

Resolved – That the latest financial forecast be noted.

135. Proposed Transfer of Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Services from Slough Children's Services Trust to Slough Borough Council

The Commissioner for Education & Children's Services introduced a report that set out a proposal for a joint approach between the Council and Slough Children's Services Trust to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Education to return Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) service responsibilities back to the Council.

The proposal was supported by both the Council and the Trust and reflected the improved relationship between the two organisations and strengthening of the leadership of the Council's education service. It was considered that moving the service responsibilities back to the Council was the best option to deliver better services to children in Slough. The legal, financial and human resource implications as detailed in the report were noted. The Director of Children, Learning and Skills clarified that the mechanism to enable the transfer would be a Fourth Direction, rather than a variation to an existing Direction, and that this process would be delayed until after the forthcoming General Election on 8th June 2017.

The Cabinet agreed that the Secretary of State be approached to enable the return of SEND services to the Council.

Resolved – That the proposed approach to the Secretary of State that would enable the return to SBC of all legal, financial and service responsibilities for SEND at the earliest possible date in 2017 be supported.

136. Insourcing Update - Environmental Services

The Commissioner for Transport & Highways introduced a report that recommended that the Cabinet instruct Officers to commence the set up of a Local Authority Direct Services Organisation (DSO) for the insourcing of Environmental Services.

The Cabinet had agreed in September 2016 to insource the services in the current Environmental Services contract and it had been envisaged that this would be in the form a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) with a Teckal exemption. However, following a review of the immediate opportunities in commercial waste, it was proposed to insource to a DSO initially to ensure the new arrangements were operational from 1st December 2017 and focus on key service delivery issues for residents such as household waste collection. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the organisation could potentially migrate to a LACC with a Teckal exemption in the future if appropriate.

Commissioners considered the proposed mobilisation structure and arrangements as set out in the appendices and discussed a number of matters including communication with residents and operational refuse

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collection issues. After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to instruct Officers to proceed via a DSO model initially and approve the governance arrangements for mobilisation as set out in the appendices to the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That Officers be instructed to commence the set-up of the new DSO.
- (b) That the proposed governance arrangements and responsibilities for mobilisation of the DSO and proposed organisational structure both for the Council client and DSO be approved.

137. Housing Strategy for Slough

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that sought approval to recommend the new Housing Strategy for Slough 2016-21 to full Council. It was proposed that the Cabinet receive a progress report on an annual basis.

The Interim Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing & Resources reviewed the process undertaken to develop the strategy and summarised the key priorities and action plan. The main amendments since the draft considered by the Cabinet in December 2016 included an updated policy on affordable housing, such as the Slough Living Rent; more detail on how homelessness issues would be addressed; support for care leavers and other vulnerable groups; and links between housing and public health.

The Cabinet welcomed the new strategy and thanked Officers for the comprehensive approach to consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and partners. Commissioners agreed to recommend the strategy to full Council on 25th April 2017.

Recommended –

- (a) That the draft Housing Strategy 2016-2021, as at Appendix C to the report, be approved.

Resolved –

- (b) That a progress report on the Strategy be brought back to Cabinet on an annual basis.

138. Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2017-47

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that sought approval of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2017-47. The plan had been updated from the version published in October 2016, and it was proposed that the document be reviewed annually.

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The Interim Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing & Resources set out the context in which the Business Plan had been developed, highlighting that the HRA was stable in the short term with a major investment programme. However, there were a number of medium to long term threats to its viability, principally arising from Government policies including annual rent reductions to 2020, the forced sale of higher value voids and the impact of welfare reform.

Commissioners considered the key changes since the previous plan had been approved by Cabinet in October 2016, including the Government's withdrawal of its 'Pay to Stay' policy, the results of the housing stock condition survey and the start of work on the housing options appraisal which was due to report to Cabinet in December 2017.

The Cabinet approved the HRA Business Plan 2017-2047 and agreed to consider a further update in March 2018.

Resolved –

- (a) That the HRA Business Plan be approved;
- (b) That a further update of the Business Plan be brought before Cabinet in March 2018, incorporating the outcome of the Housing Options Appraisal.

139. Heart of Slough North West Quadrant Update

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the latest position regarding the redevelopment of the North West Quadrant Site to facilitate a comprehensive mixed use development. The site was one of the largest development sites outside of London and would be a major driver of jobs, regeneration and investment.

Appendix One to the report, which contained exempt information, was noted and considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the agenda without disclosing any of the exempt information.

It was confirmed that the Council had successfully completed the acquisition of the University of West London's freehold interest in the North West Quadrant site and approval was sought to delegate authority to negotiate an option with Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) for the disposal and subsequent development of the site via a special purpose vehicle. A report on the preferred route for the private sector delivery partner would then be presented to Cabinet by July 2017. The Head of Asset Management stated that the anticipated timescale was for the delivery partner to be decided in 2017, planning in 2018 followed by a five year build programme.

Commissioners welcomed the completion of the acquisition and discussed the aspirations for the site. A high quality, mixed use scheme including 1,400 new homes, 270,000 sq ft of office space and major retail and leisure opportunities was planned. It was suggested that the business space be

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focused on promoting enterprise and innovation to attract and grow small businesses. The job opportunities for young people and transport issues were also discussed and it was recognised that the site was in a prime location with excellent public transport links. The Council was also investing in key schemes such as Windsor Road and through the Mass Rapid Transit scheme for the A4 to deliver the increased capacity to support the development of this and other sites.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet welcomed the acquisition and agreed the recommended delegation to make further progress on the delivery model with a further report to be considered in the summer of 2017.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be noted that the Council entered into a contract for the purchase of the site from UWL on 30 March 2017 for the purchase sum agreed by Cabinet in September 2016 and completed the acquisition on 5 April 2017.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Interim Chief Executive, following consultation with the Commissioner for Housing and Urban Renewal, to negotiate an option for the disposal and subsequent development of the site via a special purpose subsidiary of Slough Urban Renewal.
- (c) That it be noted that a report on preferred route for the private sector delivery partner would be presented to Cabinet by July 2017.

140. Slough Urban Renewal Partnership Business Plan 2017-2022

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the progress of Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) and sought approval of the revised Partnership Business Plan (PBP).

The report summarised the achievements of the SUR over the past year and highlighted some of the key projects that would be progressed over the next 12 months which included completing the 'Milestone' development on Ledgers Road, Arbour Park and several schools extensions; continuing work on sites such as Wexham Green and Slough Basin; and delivering the ice arena refurbishment and commencement of construction of the new leisure centre. In the longer term, the PBP included a pipeline of commercial and community projects with a value of around £250m.

Commissioners asked about a number of aspects of the PBP and discussed the employment and training opportunities created by the various projects. The Cabinet agreed to approve the revised Partnership Business Plan and emphasised the importance of ensuring schemes were delivered on time and budget.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress being made by SUR be noted; and

- (b) That the Partnership Business Plan for the period to December 2020 be agreed.

141. Draft Airports National Policy Statement: New Runway Capacity in the South East

The Planning Policy Lead Officer introduced a report that sought Members views on the Draft Airports National Policy Statement that was intended to set out the Government's support for a third runway at Heathrow. The Cabinet was asked to consider and approve the comments set out in paragraphs 5.8 to 5.47 of the report as the basis for the formal response of the Council to the National Policy Statement.

Commissioners raised a number of issues in discussing the response including the monitoring and enforcement of air quality standards and the mechanisms to hold Heathrow to the commitments made in securing permission to build a third runway. The Cabinet reiterated its support in principle for a new Northwest runway at Heathrow and highlighted the importance of ensuring the ensuring Heathrow kept its promises to local people on issues such as noise, access, air quality and employment. At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet agreed the outline response and gave delegated authority to the Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration to submit further detailed comments in the consultation process.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Government's preference for additional air capacity in the South East to be delivered by a new Northwest Runway at Heathrow be welcomed;
- (b) That the suggested comments set out in paragraphs 5.8 to 5.47 to the report be agreed as the basis for a formal response from Slough Borough Council to the National Policy Statement;
- (c) That delegated powers be given to the Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration, following consultation with the relevant Commissioners, to submit further detailed comments to the consultation; and
- (d) That the comments by the Heathrow Strategic Plan Group on the Draft National Policy Statement which have been submitted to the Parliamentary Select Committee as set out in Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

142. Reference from Audit & Corporate Governance Committee - Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report that requested the Cabinet to approve the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy. The strategy had been considered by the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee at its

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meeting held on 16th March 2017 and it had been agreed to recommend the document to the Cabinet.

The strategy included an accompanying policy statement that made it clear that the Council operated a 'zero tolerance' approach towards fraud and corruption. The document had been substantially rewritten from the previous version and was based on best practice. If agreed, the document would be applied across the Council and incorporated into relevant induction and training of staff.

After due consideration, the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy was agreed.

Resolved – That the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

143. Contracts in Excess of £250,000 in 2017-18

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the contracts with an estimated value of over £250,000 that were proposed to be let in the 2017/18 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.

144. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting on 9th March regarding a Business Improvement District (BID) for Slough town centre and by the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 4th April 2017 in relation to homelessness.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had requested: "That the Cabinet support the exploration of a Business Improvement District for Slough as the best possible solution for revitalising Slough town centre." Commissioners welcomed the principle of working in partnership with local businesses to enhance the town centre but felt that more information was needed before the recommendation could be approved. It was therefore agreed that further work would be undertaken to scope a BID proposal with a report to be presented to the Cabinet at a future meeting.

The Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel had recommended:

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- That the Cabinet lobby for the Local Housing Allowance in Slough to be adjusted to reflect its similarity with London Boroughs.
- That the Cabinet write to London Boroughs to reinforce the need for them to fulfil their obligations towards homeless people for whom they are responsible.

After taking advice from the Interim Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing and Resources, the Cabinet welcomed the Panel's recommendations and agreed to take forward both recommendations in principle, with a slightly revised approach as set out below.

Resolved –

O&S Committee – Town Centre Business Improvement District

That the following recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting on 9th March 2017 be noted:

- That the Cabinet support the exploration of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Slough as the best possible solution for revitalising Slough town centre.

The Cabinet agreed that further work should be undertaken with businesses and partners in the town centre before bringing a further report on the BID proposal to Cabinet at a later date.

NCS Panel – Homelessness

That the following recommendations from the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel made at its meeting on 4th April 2017 be noted and welcomed:

- That the Cabinet lobby for the Local Housing Allowance in Slough to be adjusted to reflect its similarity with London Boroughs.
- That the Cabinet write to London Boroughs to reinforce the need for them to fulfil their obligations towards homeless people for whom they are responsible.

The Cabinet agreed that:

- The Council include the issue raised about Local Housing Allowance in a wider representation to Ministers about greater financial recognition for the scale of the homelessness problems facing Slough.
- That the suggestion of the Panel be taken into account as part of the consideration of the best approach in relation to London Boroughs and other Local Authorities which were placing households in Slough in view of the growing demands this was placing on key services in the borough.

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145. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 17th March which set out the decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet over the next three months.

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

146. 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.

Below is a summary of the matters considered during Part II of the agenda.

147. Part II Minutes - 20th March 2017

The Part II minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2017 were approved.

148. Heart of Slough North West Quadrant Update - Appendix One

The Part II Appendix was considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the agenda (item 8 of the agenda).

149. Commercialisation of Business Advice Service

That a proposal to collaborate with other local authorities on a joint commercial business advice service be agreed.

That the Food & Safety Team charge food businesses a cost recovery fee of £210 per visit for reassessment of their Food Hygiene Rating Scheme score.

150. Repairs, Maintenance & Investment (RMI) Contract Update and Next Steps

The Cabinet received an update on the RMI contract and agreed the next steps of the procurement process.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.48 pm)