

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 14th September, 2017.

Present:- Councillors Sadiq (Chair), Chahal (Vice-Chair), N Holledge (until 7.50pm), Parmar, Rana, Sarfraz (until 7.55pm) and A Sandhu

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Ajaib

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Chaudhry and R Sandhu

PART I

18. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

19. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 13th July 2017

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

20. Action Progress Report

Resolved – That details of the Action Progress report be noted.

21. Member Questions

None received.

22. Progress Report on Implementation and Development of Key IT Projects

The Committee was provided with an update on the implementation and development of key IT projects. Up until 2013, IT services were provided by an internal team and a decision was made to add IT Services and Customer Services to the core arvato contract. It was recognised at the point of outsourcing that IT had been under invested in previous years and much of the infrastructure would require replacing imminently. It was noted that key current critical projects included RMI, DSO (Environmental Services), ICT Platform Modernisation and the Network/Telephony Project.

A Member queried as to who provided assurance on the delivery of key projects and whether an analysis was conducted regarding the cost benefit of the key projects. The Head of IT explained that the Information Governance Board and Capital Strategy Board monitored development of key projects ensuring economies of scale were being achieved. It was agreed that a copy of the three-monthly report submitted to CMT regarding Implementation and Progress of Key IT Projects would be circulated to the Committee.

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Responding to whether all necessary arrangements had been implemented to ensure the successful transition of the environmental services contract in house, the Committee was informed that detailed project plans were in place and that the service would be transferred across in November 2017, ahead of the formal go live date of December 2017, to allow a period of testing.

Resolved – That the Committee note progress made to date on implementation and development of Key IT projects.

23. Housing Strategy - Theme 1: New Housing Supply

The Interim Housing Supply Manager provided the Committee with an update on the progress regarding the implementation of actions relating to Theme 1: New Housing Supply. It was noted that significant progress was being made to enable the provision of 927 new units of housing per year for Slough in line with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); with the recent purchase of the former Thames Valley University Site, which had the potential of up to 1500 new homes.

It was widely recognised that Slough's growing population meant that 20,000 new homes were required by 2036. A number of options were being explored to address this issue but land supply remained a challenge. Options for development on the borders of the Borough or just outside were dependent upon adjoining local authorities co-operating with the Council to meet some of the need outside of the Borough. Mr Carter, the Assistant Director, Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration explained that discussions were taking place with neighbouring local authorities through the Council's Local Plan regarding this matter.

Members asked a number of specific questions about how these discussions would help to address the land supply issues that were a barrier to achieving the 927 additional homes per year over the next 20 years. It was responded that this process was being led by the Planning Department as part of the Local Plan Review. Discussions were ongoing as part of the Duty to Co-operate although it was noted that there had been significant resistance from neighbouring authorities. There were other major sites and opportunities coming forward in Slough such as the TVU site, however, concerns were raised about the potential over supply of flats and risk that Slough could become a 'ghetto' town. Officers recognised that the right balance needed to be struck in different parts of the town to provide both the sufficient number of new homes and the appropriate mix to build strong communities.

A Member requested further details relating to the provision of new homes for particular groups within the community. It was explained that development at James Elliman Homes would offer a number of creative housing options around cost effective shared housing and bespoke properties to specifically address the needs of care leavers, who were unable to go into an independent tenancy without support.

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Responding to the development of Council homes, Mr Thomas, the Interim Head of Housing, explained that the Housing Revenue Account contained plans for 190 homes over a period of five years. Recent developments at Milestone, Ledgers Road and forthcoming developments at Wexham would ensure that the target would be met.

The Council was proposing to introduce a wider range of social and affordable rents, termed Slough Affordable Rent and Slough Living Rent, and the definition of an affordable rent was raised. The Government defined affordable as 80% or less of the market rent although it was recognised that even this level was unaffordable to many working households in Slough and the policy aimed therefore to address this issue.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Committee agreed to undertake further scrutiny of Themes 3 and 4 in January 2018 and Themes 2 and 5 in July 2018.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Committee note details of the various housing supply delivery targets which had been set to encourage the supply of new homes of all tenure types in the Borough.
- (b) That the Forward Work Programme be updated as follows:
 - Themes 3 (Council Homes) and 4 (Homelessness) on 11th January 2018.
 - Themes 2 (Private Sector) & 5 (Special Needs / Vulnerable) on 12th July 2018.

24. 5 Year Plan: Outcome 5

The Economic Growth and Enterprise Manager introduced a report that updated the Committee on the progress of Outcome 5 of the Five Year Plan – ‘Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents’.

There were six key actions in Outcome 5 and Members considered which of the following actions to select for further scrutiny in the future:

1. Focus the Council’s business inward investment and retention function on growing business rate to support service provision.
2. Deliver infrastructure improvements to attract and support businesses.
3. Support businesses and partners to enable residents to develop skills to meet local employers need.
4. Deliver a Local Plan that support economic growth.
5. Maximise the opportunities for local people from an expanded Heathrow Airport.
6. Cultivate a vibrant town centre.

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After due consideration, Members agreed to scrutinise key action 6 at the meeting in November 2017, actions 1, 3 and 5 in March 2018 and actions 2 and 4 in September 2018.

Resolved – That the key agreed contained within Outcome 5 be scrutinised as follows:

- November 2017: Key action 6
- March 2018: Key action 1, 3 & 5
- September 2018: Key action 2 & 4

25. Review of Obesity in Slough

The Director of Adult Social Care, Mr Sinclair, and the Consultant in Public Health, Ms Howell-Jones, introduced a report that updated Members on the progress of the previous scrutiny review of childhood obesity, outlined the proposed new obesity strategy for Slough and identified potential areas for any Task & Finish Group to research.

The report detailed the progress made on the ten recommendations of the review carried out in 2013 including actions on the location of fast food outlets, nutrition in schools and promotion of physical activity. It was noted that a significant amount of work had been undertaken since the review, although it was difficult to directly attribute this activity to the prevalence of obesity. Slough did not currently have a strategy to address obesity and the public health team was therefore in the process of developing a new obesity strategy focusing on cross-Slough ambition, an exemplar Council and public health intervention programme. It was recommended that the Committee establish a Task & Finish Group to research and make recommendations on how Slough Borough Council could become an exemplar Council by building on the work currently undertaken by the Employee Wellbeing Board.

The headline childhood obesity performance indicators were 'red' rated in the Council's Corporate Balanced Scorecard, however, the Committee was informed that progress was being made on other related targets as a result of the work being carried out. Members particularly emphasised the importance of working with children in secondary schools and Officers summarised some of the work that was being done to promote activity and healthy eating. A survey was currently being undertaken with secondary schools to collate further information and it was agreed that the results would be sent to Committee Members when available.

Members noted the progress that had been made in response to the previous scrutiny review and welcomed the development of a new obesity strategy for Slough. It was agreed that the Committee establish a Task & Finish Group focused on making Slough Borough Council and exemplar Council in relation to health promotion and that the draft Terms of Reference for this review should be considered by the Committee in November 2017.

(Councillors Holledge and Sarfraz left the meeting)

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Resolved –

- (a) That a Task and Finish Group be established to develop and implement a programme of work which aimed to make Slough Borough Council an exemplar Council with regards to helping staff and members maintain and improve their health.
- (b) That the Task and Finish Group's Terms of Reference be submitted to the November 2017 Committee meeting for approval.

26. Financial Update - Budget Monitoring Update Period 4 2017/18

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit, Mr Wilcox, introduced a report that provided an update on the Council's latest revenue financial position as at the end of July for the 2017-18 financial year.

The Council's profiled budget for the period was £42.0m and expenditure was £42.7m representing an overspend of £0.7m. Based on the latest service area forecasts, the Council was projected to overspend its General Fund Revenue Budget by £1.904m in 2017/18, although service areas were expected to operate within their funding envelopes and management action was being taken to address in year pressures. The main areas of overspend included temporary accommodation, arvato transactional services contract, SEN transport and Early Years.

Members discussed a number of specific areas of the report including the use one off income from Slough Urban Renewal to support the 2017/18 revenue budget and the virements between Council departments as set out in the report. At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the latest financial position be noted.
- (b) That the budget virements as detailed in the report be noted.
- (c) That the write offs as detailed in the report be noted

27. Quarter 1 Performance 2017/18

The Performance Manager introduced a report that provided the Committee with the latest performance information for the 2017-18 financial year; summarised the Council's performance against the Corporate Balanced Scorecard indicators and updated on the progress of the key projects.

There had been an increase in the proportion of Corporate Balanced Scorecard indicators rated as being on target since the previous quarter, up from 40% to 45%. This was due to the increase in Council Tax in year collection rate which was 30.88% and was considered on target for the time in

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the financial year. The RAG status had therefore improved from 'Amber' to 'Green'.

Members discussed a range of issues including the current statistics for the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) in Slough as the figures in the scorecard appeared to be out of date. It was noted that there was a lag in the nationally provided data and it was anticipated that the next set of data would be available in November 2017 and the scorecard would be updated accordingly. Concern was expressed about the fall in bus punctuality arising from increased congestion and it was responded that the Council had a significant programme of transport and highway investments to tackle congestion.

In relation to key projects, it was requested and agreed that details of lessons learnt reports compiled by the Programme Management Office for The Curve, transfer of services back in house from Cambridge Education and Subsidiary Housing Companies be circulated to the Committee.

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.

28. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered details of the Forward Work Programme for the Committee 2017/18.

Resolved - That the Forward Work Programme be updated as follows:

November 2017

- Review of Obesity in Slough Task and Finish Group terms of Reference
- Economic Strategy - to include Outcome 6 from Theme 5 of the Five Year Plan

March 2018

- Five Year Plan: Outcome 5, Themes 1, 3 & 5

September 2018

- Five Year Plan: Outcome 5, Themes 2 & 4

29. Members Attendance Record 2017/18

It was noted that Councillor R.Sandhu had missed two consecutive Committee meetings. In accordance with Council Rules Part 4.5, Procedural

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Rule 2.5, a letter would be sent to Councillor Sandhu reminding him of the impending revocation of his membership of the Committee should he fail to attend the next meeting.

Resolved – That details of the Members Attendance Record be noted.

30. Date of Next Meeting -16 November 2017

Members were reminded that a Joint meeting with the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel was scheduled for 2 November 2017, to consider details of the Local Plan.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 16th November, 2017.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.19 pm)