

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 15th March, 2018.

Present:- Councillors Chohan (Chair), N Holledge, Parmar, Rana (until 7.32pm), A Sandhu, R Sandhu and Sarfraz.

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Plenty.

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Chaudhry.

PART I

69. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

70. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 1st February 2018

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

71. Action Progress Report

Details on the current status of actions agreed were outlined for Members consideration.

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

72. Member Questions

None received.

73. Adult Social Care Transformation 2018 - Annual Update

The Adult Social Care (ASC) Programme Manager, Simon Lawrence, provided the Committee with an overview of the progress made by the programme since 2015. The programme of work being undertaken had been devised to oversee improvements to social care practice under the Care Act 2014, the development of new ways of working, NHS integration and deliver £7.9m of savings for the period 2015-19.

Members were reminded of the background as to why change was required, which included:

- The current models of public service delivery and how they related to the public were not sustainable for the long term. In England the need for social care was rising from increasing numbers of older and disabled people (+2.8%), people with learning disability (+1.2%) and people with MH needs (+1.7%) between 2016 and 2017.
- Raising customer expectation and increasing choice and control

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- Providers finding it difficult to retain & recruit staff, maintain quality improvements and margins (in 2017, 67% of LAs reported provider closures nationally)
- Since 206 local non-elective admissions to hospital had increased.
- Long term funding proposals were not sustainable unless they addressed the needs of the whole of the population and not just older people.

The Committee were informed that a number of measures were being implemented to address the issues raised. Preventative approaches were being developed to enable residents to become more able to support themselves to live independent and healthy lives. Capacity within the community, to enable a focus on supporting more people to manage their own health, care and support needs and targeting individuals most at risk of poor health were being developed.

Since 2013 there had been a 17% reduction in the Adult Social Care budget and the ASC Programme had been developed to manage demand and deliver savings of up to £7.9m. It was noted that the Better Care Fund (NHS contribution towards Adult Social Care) would cease in 2020. The Council in its budget setting had introduced a 3% precept on the Council Tax for 2018/19 towards Adult Social Care Services. Details of the main projects in Tranche 1(2015-17) of the programme were outlined, with specific focus on performance areas that required improvement.

Tranche 2 (2018-20) of the Programme highlighted the four key areas in delivery of the programme as new ways of working, develop social capital, implement integrated care and promote self care.

Members raised a number of issues in the ensuing discussion, including what services were available to individuals who required support from mental health services. Members were informed that a Social Prescription Service had been developed, which provided individuals with both support in the community and introduction to services available to them within the locality. Responding to what incentives were being used to recruit and retain key workers at Slough, the ASC Programme Manager confirmed that social care workers were paid a London weighting in addition to their salary and an apprenticeship scheme had been introduced. It was acknowledged that recruiting Domiciliary Care Workers was difficult and to ensure a consistent and constant supply of workers, the Council was working in partnership with the NHS via the Transformation Programme to address the matter.

Members requested that the Health Scrutiny Panel be requested to monitor the implementation of the Tranche 2 Implement Integrated Care and Promote Self Care outcomes and that the Overview and Scrutiny be provided with a progress update in six months time.

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Resolved - That details of the report are noted and specifically;

- a) The progress made in the delivery of the transformation programme.
- b) The cessation of important incomes streams namely the Better Care Fund (ceases 2020) and the time limited financial support provided by the Adult Social Care precept and the implications that this will have to the department.
- c) The increasing demand on services generated by the current case load and the future medium-term changes in population demographics in Slough and how this will impact the delivery and quality of services locally.
- d) The need for meaningful conversation with the Citizens of Slough regarding the impact that population and budget pressures will have and the role they have in supporting the vision for adult social care in Slough.

74. Revenue Financial Report 2017/18 - Quarter 3

The Committee were provided with an update on the latest revenue financial position for the Council for the 2017/18 financial year. At the time of publication of the report, the total estimated net commitment for the year across all service areas was £104.899m compared with a net budget for the council of £103.548m. This represented a budget pressure of £1.351m. However, there were planned in year savings of £0.699m that were still expected to be achieved and a number of additional savings including:

- a) Additional Savings - £107k within the Adult and Communities Directorate to offset the income shortfall on the Cemeteries & Crematorium and Registrars services.
- b) Contract Renegotiation - £350k – The Place and Development Directorate expected a saving resulting from the expected renegotiation of contracts.
- c) One off income - £252k – Further expenditure had been identified within the Finance & Resources Directorate as being eligible for funding from one off sources.

The forecasted budget pressures related to the Special Educational Needs Transport budget, due to an increase in the number of children who were eligible for the service; an overspend in temporary accommodation and Homelessness and an income shortfall in Cemeteries and Crematorium and Registrar services. Members were provided with an outline of management actions proposed to address the overspends which included a one off saving of £350k from contract revaluations.

A Member sought clarification regarding the age of the debts that were being considered to be written off and was informed that the majority related to cases that were pre April 2012. The Committee were assured that no cuts would be made to frontline services during the current financial year.

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- Resolved** – a) That details of the latest financial position be noted.
b) That the budget virements as listed in paragraph 7 of the report be noted.
c) That the write offs as detailed in paragraph 8 of the report be noted.

75. Review of Housing Allocations Scheme 2013/18

The Service Lead, Strategic Housing Services reminded the Committee that the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 enabled Local Authorities to make local decisions on who should be given priority for an allocation of social housing. Consultation had taken place on the current Housing Allocation Scheme, as agreed in 2014 and the proposed changes were highlighted as:

- **Community Contribution:** the Community Contribution priority be changed from one year to six months.
- **Priority for Disability and Medical:** It was proposed that these households receive additional preference and Band B priority. Applicants assessed as having some need to move on medical/welfare grounds are placed in band C. As at the end of March 2017 there were 69 applicants meeting this requirement. It was unlikely that those placed in band C on medical priority (unless in need of older persons accommodation) would ever receive an offer of social housing due to the large demand from band B.
- **One Offer Only:** That the current two offer policy is changed to one offer only. The current scheme enables two offers of social housing to be made. In the last year 123 offers of council property were refused. In some cases newly built properties were refused because there was no Right to Buy or Right to Acquire. A legal review process was in place to deal with the suitability of all offers.
- **Owner Occupiers:** In exceptional circumstances owner occupiers be enabled to join the Housing Register for an offer of designated housing for the over 60s.
- **Homelessness:** Qualifying homeless households are transferred to Band B irrespective of community contribution. It was also proposed that other agreed homeless households who do not meet the 5 year residence criteria are placed into Band C irrespective of community contribution.
- **Key Workers:** Key workers (Teachers and Social Workers dealing with vulnerable adults and children) are given reasonable preference when joining the Housing Register in relation to the specific pilot scheme being adopted in 2018/19.

It was noted that all 2,500 applicants on the Housing Register had been consulted and the majority of responses were in support of the proposed changes. The local MP had also responded, requesting that priority be given to those individuals under occupying properties and the Lettings and Void Manager confirmed that this had been addressed in the proposed changes.

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Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Plenty sought clarification on the time period requirement for Key Workers and owner occupiers being eligible to join the Housing Register. It was explained that the five year residency in the borough criteria would be reviewed for key workers. Owner occupiers were currently unable to join the Housing Register and the changes being proposed would benefit an older person to move into older persons housing. However, a provision of selling or leasing the existing home would need to be in place to facilitate any offer.

Resolved – That details of the proposed changes to the Council’s Housing Allocations Policy, as detailed in the report, be noted.

76. Obesity Task and Finish Group - Final Report and Recommendations

The Scrutiny Officer detailed the findings of the Obesity Task and Finish Group. The Committee were reminded that the Group’s remit was to undertake work on making Slough Borough Council (SBC) an ‘exemplar Council’. This involved establishing a working environment where the health and wellbeing of staff was placed at the heart of policy making. Areas such as catering, work stations, workplace culture and options for physical activity were raised as part of this.

The Task and Finish Group arranged a variety of methods to gather its information. A workplace survey was held in the autumn of 2017 and received over 230 responses; at this time, Members also attended the staff canteen to see the food available to staff at SBC. Meetings were held with the canteen management, the Leisure Team, Human Resources and Facilities to hear about the workplace environment, and discuss how this could affect health and wellbeing. Finally, a site visit to Mars Confectionary saw an environment where a strategic approach had been taken to the matter.

Members noted details of the findings of the Task and Finish Group and endorsed the proposed recommendations.

Resolved –

- a) That the current food offer at Slough Borough Council be reviewed, to include canteen provision (e.g. traffic light labelling of food) and vending machines;
- b) That methods for increasing levels of physical activity and reducing levels of sedentary behaviour within work and outside work be implemented through behaviour change;
- c) That the incentivising of activity through outsourced services be supported (e.g. reduced cost for use of the Montem Leisure Centre);
- d) That engagement with senior leadership and Councillors be undertaken to establish a wellbeing ethos across the Council, which will include team / departmental ‘Health Champions’.

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77. Forward Work Programme

Resolved – That details of the Forward Work Programme be noted.

78. Members Attendance Record 2017/18

It was noted that Councillor Chahal had not attended two consecutive previous meetings of the Committee. In accordance with Part 4.5, Rule 2.5 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, a letter would be sent to Councillor Chahal, warning him of the impending revocation of his membership of the Committee, should he miss the scheduled meeting for April 2018.

Resolved – a) That details of the Members' Attendance Record 2017/18 be noted.

b) That a letter be sent to Councillor Chahal regarding his attendance at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

79. Date of Next Meeting - 12th April 2018

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 12th April 2018.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.25 pm)