

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 12th April, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Akram (Vice-Chair, arrived 6.45pm), Anderson, Bains, Carter, Mann, Nazir and Pantelic

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Gahir and Hulme

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

126. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

127. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th March 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

128. Food Poverty Task & Finish Group Update

The Policy Insight Manager introduced a follow up report on the actions taken so far, and the planned next steps, to implement the recommendations of the Food Poverty Task & Finish Group.

It was noted that good progress had already been made on a number of the twelve recommendations from the Task & Finish Group. The Local Welfare Provision team had increased capacity following the Phase 2 restructure as part of Our Futures; a directory of financial support was being worked on; and new data insight tools had been introduced which would inform the relevant Council strategies and policies to address food poverty. It was also noted that considerable support had been provided during the pandemic both in terms of providing food vouchers during school holidays and thousands of hot meals through the OneSlough approach. The next steps included incorporating the recommendations into the new strategic framework for the Council which would drive forward service planning in the future.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made on some of the short term, low cost recommendations and reiterated its commitment to follow up on the medium to long term actions later in the year. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Hulme commented on the need to increase the employment opportunities for residents and ensure that Council contracts delivered strong social returns on investment. It was agreed that Lead Members & Directors would review progress in the summer with a further report to scrutiny and Cabinet in the Autumn of 2021.

Resolved –

- (a) That the actions taken so far and proposed next steps listed in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the report be noted in relation the recommendations of the Food Poverty Task & Finish Group.
- (b) That Lead Members & Directors give further consideration to the implementation of the recommendations at a meeting in the summer of 2021 with a further update to be presented to the Cabinet in within six months.

(Councillor Akram joined the meeting)

129. Development and Execution of a Place Brand for Slough

The Associate Director, Place Strategy & Infrastructure introduced a report on the procurement of a design agency partner for the development and execution of a place brand for Slough.

The Council and partners had developed a range of new strategies and plans in the past year including the Slough 2040, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Regeneration Framework Masterplan. The development of a place brand was intended to take forward this work to the next stage by bringing together and articulating the 'story of place' as part of the communications strategy for the town. A tender had been put out in February 2021 to identify a branding agency that could work with the Council and partners on a brand narrative as well as marketing collateral and an initial implementation plan.

Hemingwaydesign had been awarded the contact following a competitive process during which eight bids had been received. The contract was initially for a two year period. Work would begin immediately and progress would be reported to Cabinet later in the year.

The Cabinet welcomed the concept to promote Slough and help change outdated perceptions. Slough was already a successful town with a strong economy and regeneration strategy and it was agreed that the development of a place brand could help maximise the opportunities. Cabinet members commented on the importance of incorporating Slough's cultural and community strengths into the work, and to ensure that clear outcomes and impacts were established and measured.

At the end of the discussion the recommendations were agreed and the Cabinet would receive a presentation from Hemingwaydesign on the progress of developing the brand by the end of 2021.

Resolved –

- (a) That the decision to award the contract for the development and execution of a place brand for Slough to Hemingwaydesign be noted.

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- (b) That the Cabinet receive a presentation from Hemingwaydesign and a project update on the emerging outcomes of the work by the end of 2021.

130. Observatory House - Lease Arrangements

The Associate Director, Place Strategy & Infrastructure introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the progress with regards to increasing the occupancy of Observatory House and sought approval to lease part of the second floor.

The report set out the utilisation of the building since it was purchased in May 2018 as part of the accommodation strategy and transformation programme. This included initial plans to lease the fourth and fifth floors to generate income. The Cabinet noted that Slough Children First Ltd had now taken up occupancy of the fourth floor and plans were in place for the fifth floor to be the Slough Innovation Space and Future Skills Hub. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had rapidly accelerated remote working and taking account of future changing work patterns the Medium Term Financial Strategy assumed the equivalent of an additional floor (16,000 sqft) be leased. The Cabinet was asked to approve a lease of circa 3,600 sqft on the second floor and the operational implications were explained.

The Cabinet commented that Member meetings would shortly be able to return to Observatory House as Covid-19 restrictions were eased and the fact a comprehensive plan was in place for the full occupation of the building was welcomed. It was also noted that the acquisition of the building was part of the wider accommodation strategy which included the Council moving out of Landmark Place and moving services out into communities through the Localities Strategy. The proposed redevelopment of St Martin's Place into approximately 60 social and affordable homes would also contribute to both housing and financial objectives.

The Cabinet noted the report and agreed the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report updating on the occupation of Observatory House be noted.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Place to agree terms of and approve the grant of a lease and any supplemental document(s) of part of the second floor Observatory House for a maximum term of 10 years, the lease to be granted at best consideration.

131. Revised Slough Local Outbreak Management Plan

The Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing and the Service Lead, Public Health introduced a report that sought approval for the revised Covid-19 Local

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Outbreak Management Plan. The updated version of the plan for endorsement was included in the supplementary agenda, and this version included further information from Public Health England and the Department of Health & Social Care.

It was a requirement for local authorities to produce an Outbreak Management Plan and the document set out the roles, responsibilities and processes for managing Covid-19 outbreaks. The plan had been revised since its initial adoption in June 2020 and whilst the fundamental roles of the council and health partners were unchanged it incorporated the expansion of testing, the vaccination programme and the 'roadmap' for relaxing restrictions. The Government had announced funding allocations for each local authority through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) and Slough would receive £769,057.

The Cabinet discussed the positive work undertaken in response to the pandemic over the past year including the OneSlough community response, the BAME project, innovative approaches to community testing and vaccination and the community champions. The Outbreak Engagement Board would continue to review the communications activity which was recognised to be an important part of the local response.

After due consideration the revised Outbreak Management Plan was endorsed and the Cabinet asked to receive the Equalities Impact Assessment at a later stage.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Council's Local Outbreak Management Plan as at Appendix A in the Supplementary Agenda be endorsed; and
- (b) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive to maintain and amend the plan following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing and the East Berkshire Director for Public Health.

132. Covid-19 Decisions Update

The Cabinet received a report which set out the further significant decisions taken by Officers in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The decisions taken in the latest report included the extension of the Covid Information Officers and the various measures being put in place to deliver Covid safe elections on 6th May 2021.

The schedule of significant decisions as set out in Appendix A to the report was ratified insofar as it related to executive functions.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted; and

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- (b) That the Significant Decisions taken by Silver as set out in Appendix A be ratified.

133. CIF Annual Report & 2021/22 Cabinet Allocations

The Lead Member for Governance & Customer Services and the CIF Responsible Officer introduced an update on Community Investment Fund (CIF) spend in 2020/21.

CIF funding had once again provided over £1m investment in a wide range of projects in every ward across the borough. Cabinet Members highlighted a number of schemes that had been delivered during the year which had been well received by residents. All of the £210,000 of revenue allocated for eligible projects and almost £1.8m had either been spent or committed to capital projects. The report and appendices were noted.

A sum of £147,000 remained unallocated and was available to spend. The Leader proposed, and it was agreed, that £47,000 be allocated for further tree planting as part of the successful Urban Forest programme, with the remaining underspend not to be utilised in view of the financial pressures facing the council. It was requested that the additional funding being made available for tree planting include fruit trees and orchards with links being made to the work to address food poverty in the borough.

Resolved –

- (a) That the expenditure to date from the annual Community Investment Fund 2020/21 be noted.
- (b) That the current forecast potential underspend at the end of the financial year 2021/21 be noted.
- (c) That £47,000 of the 2020/21 underspend be allocated for further tree planting, potentially including fruit tree orchards, as part of the Urban Forest programme.

134. Contracts in Excess of £180k in 2021/22

The Cabinet received a report that set out the list of contracts with a value in excess of £180,000 that the Council expected to let in the 2021/22 financial year.

It was a Constitutional requirement that Cabinet approval be secured before tendering commenced. All contracts would be subject to the other requirements of the Financial and Contract Procedure Rules. The list of contracts as in Appendix A to the report were approved.

Resolved – That the list of contracts expected to be let in 2021/22, as at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

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135. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or scrutiny panels.

136. Notification of Key Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Key Decisions published on 12th March 2021 which set out the key decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next three months.

Resolved – The published Notification of Key Decisions was endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.45 pm)