

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 14th March, 2011.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), S Chaudhry, A S Dhaliwal, Matloob, Pantelic, Parmar and Small

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Shine, Plimmer, Dodds and P K Mann

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Anderson

PART 1

108. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal advised that a number of items on the agenda had a recommendation that delegation should be given to Officers in consultation with the Leader instead of the portfolio holder, the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal, as he was a Member of the Planning Committee which would consider applications related to the items.

109. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th February 2011

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th February, 2011 were approved as a correct record.

110. Performance and Financial Reporting 2010/11

The Cabinet considered a report which highlighted the Council's overall performance from delivery of service to financial management for the period up to and including January 2011.

The Cabinet noted that there was a replacement document circulated for the Housing Revenue Account Summary. The Cabinet was advised by the Deputy Director of Finance that there was an underspend of £896k which had increased during February. It was noted that since the Britwell and Haymill Project had been updated on the 21st February an update report had been prepared which was due to be considered later in the meeting. It was noted that the underspend placed the Council in a robust position to deal with future cuts.

Resolved: -That the following aspects of the report be noted:

- i. Performance and Project management
- ii. Financial performance – revenue and capital

111. Slough Borough Council's Third Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

The Cabinet considered a report concerning the Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which would provide the framework for planning and implementing transport measures in the Borough over the next 15 years. Cabinet also considered the interim transport implementation plan for 2011/12, which set out the transport measures to be employed over the first year of LTP3. Cabinet

received a presentation which highlighted the salient points of the plans. The Plan represented a fifteen year period as opposed to the previous plans which only covered five years. A Commissioner questioned the financial prospects for the plan in relation to central government's funding proposals. It was noted that the government had recently published a white paper which meant the funding picture was understood. No major programmes were planned until after 2015 but funding may be available from the Sustainable Transport Fund for both revenue and capital funding. It was noted that other funding opportunities may arise such as the recently announced pothole funding.

A Member present under Rule 30 asked about the transport situation in Colnbrook. Officers advised that the potential impact of the rail freight terminal was highlighted in the transport plan although it would need to be considered as part of planning considerations. The Head of transport advised that they were working with the Road Haulage Association to implement action plans over the forthcoming year. In addition an air quality management area had recently been established in Colnbrook.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the borough's LTP3 strategy document be adopted.
- (b) That the 2011/12 LTIP, which sets out the proposed transport programme over the coming financial year be endorsed.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the head of transport in consultation with the commissioner for neighbourhoods and renewal to make minor amendments or any points of clarification required prior to final publication of the LTP3 strategy document and the 2011/12 interim LTIP.

112. Slough Housing Management Standards

The Assistant Director, Housing introduced a report which proposed the adoption of standards for the Housing Management Service. The standards represent Local Offers under the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) Regulatory Framework. The Standards were prepared in consultation with tenants and leaseholders where required. It was noted that this was originally established under the previous government and the TSA had since been abolished although the regulatory framework had been rolled forward.

The Deputy Leader asked how standards would be improved with officers' increased responsibility. Cabinet was advised that previously there was a lack of clarity for tenants regarding which officer was responsible for a particular issue. The housing patches had now been reduced to 600 properties, which meant that officers would be recognised and have knowledge of the issues in their area. In response to a question the Assistant Director of Housing advised that the total expected saving from the new service was £450k once permanent staff were in place by June 2011.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the Housing Local Standards as illustrated in appendix A be adopted
- (b) That the proposals for a new structure for tenant engagement as illustrated in appendix B and highlighted in paragraphs 5.10 to 5.20 (of the report) be adopted

113. Berkshire Local Investment Plan - Adoption Report

The Cabinet considered a report which sought retrospective endorsement for the Berkshire Local Investment Plan (LIP), which had been prepared by the six Berkshire Local Authorities in conjunction with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The LIP set out the context and the priorities for future investment in Berkshire, in terms of housing investment and included strategic transport projects and other community infrastructure investment. The HCA had provided funding to local authorities for affordable housing and regeneration schemes and the LIP was drawn up to help guide and direct investment. However the change in national government had meant that much of the funding that the HCA was able to distribute had been reduced and the HCA's future role was to be more of an enabling and investment body.

Resolved: -

- (a) That the Berkshire Local Investment Plan (LIP), as agreed at the Leaders meeting on 23rd September 2010 be endorsed and
- (b) That continued co-operation with the HCA and fellow unitary authorities across Berkshire in relation to the LIP and any review or refresh of the document be agreed.

114. Phase 1 & 2 Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Scheme - From Concept to Reality

The Cabinet considered a report which provided an update on the progress made since the February Cabinet meeting on the Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Scheme. The Assistant Director of Environment and Regeneration outlined the proposed plans contained in the report for phases 1 and 2 of the regeneration scheme. A number of actions had taken place since the last Cabinet meeting including; Additional analysis had been commissioned on the further section of land at Kennedy Park, the garages on the Phase 2 site had been demolished and a protective fence erected, discussions had taken place with the Scouts and Guides to consider options for relocation to a number of sites within Britwell and a consultation had taken place with Britwell residents to gauge their priorities for services at the new Community Hub. A Design and Build brief for the community Hub was due to go out shortly and an Options Appraisal for the provision of community facilities in Britwell would be completed by 31st May. Conditions for the S106 agreement were due to be agreed shortly which would ensure that full outline planning permission was in place. Cabinet also considered a separate Part 2 paper regarding the acquisition of the lease for the Jolly Londoner Public House which had been provisionally agreed subject to Cabinet approval. It was agreed that Members would discuss the matter in Part 1 without making any

reference to Part 2 material. Cabinet was requested to take an urgent decision in order for the contract to be entered into by March 31st.

A Member present under Rule 30 questioned whether there was some apathy towards the consultations as there was only a 2% response rate. It was acknowledged that whilst this may seem very low, for a cold door drop a 3% response rate was considered good and 5% was considered excellent. Therefore the 2% response rate was acceptable and as it was only concerned with the community hub it was likely that fewer residents would be interested than in wider consultations.

A Member present under Rule 30 sought clarification on the number of properties proposed on Wentworth Avenue. Members were advised that a developer with good knowledge of the market would be best placed to put forward a proposal. There was scope for developing 2 or 3 storey properties as well as family housing but the Council would consult on what tenants and residents wanted from the area. In response to a question the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal advised that if a developer proposed an alternative option for the provision of shopping facilities the Council would consider proposed developments that worked.

In response to a question Members were advised that a large number of properties in some buildings were vacant and it may be possible to proceed with demolition but residents in remaining blocks would need to be consulted beforehand. The Cabinet considered the recommendations in the report and the additional recommendation on the separately circulated papers on the Jolly Londoner and welcomed the work undertaken to date and the update on progress due to be considered at the next Cabinet meeting

Cabinet noted that:

- A. to inform negotiations with SEGRO for bringing further land at Kennedy Park into the Council's ownership, that a second phase contaminated land analysis has been commissioned for completion by 31st March 2011.
- B. work has been undertaken to commission a brief to develop an options appraisal for the enhancement of the range and quality of activities in Kennedy Park in preparation for further public consultation.
- C. notices have been issued and served on the remaining users of the garages and an order placed to demolish the garage court to the west/rear of Wentworth Avenue shops with the requirement that the work be completed by 31st March 2011.
- D. wide-ranging discussions have been held with the representatives of the Britwell Scouts and Guide Groups currently located in Kennedy Park, adjacent to Pemberton Road to consider options for their relocation.
- E. a short public consultation has been conducted with the residents of Britwell on their priorities for services to be located in the new Britwell Community Hub (see recommendation (8) below).

Cabinet resolved that:

- (1) officers should negotiate with Scottish and Southern Electricity to secure either the ownership or where appropriate access across the strip of land in their occupation between Kennedy Park and the SEGRO land.

- (2) the site of the Britwell Family Centre on Long Furlong Drive be included in Phase 1 (Kennedy Park) of the Britwell and Haymill regeneration Scheme.
- (3) subject to agreeing (1) above, that the rating for the Britwell Family Centre on Long Furlong Drive in the Asset Management Plan be changed from a Category A to Category D – asset for disposal.
- (4) officers now work formally with the users of the Britwell Family Centre to identify and agree suitable alternative accommodation for their future use when the Centre is required for construction.
- (5) delegate to the interim Assistant Director of Environment & Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader, the finalisation of the outstanding conditions in the Section 106 agreement associated with the Planning Committee's decision of 17th March 2010 to secure Outline Planning Permission for Phase 1 (Kennedy Park).
- (6) the whole of Phase 1 (Kennedy Park) and Phase 2 (Wentworth Avenue and environs) be procured through an EU compliant design and build tendering process at the earliest opportunity, subject to:
 - a. the availability Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding of up to £6 million as a contribution to the estimated cost of developing Phase 1 (Kennedy Park) to reflect the need to develop at least 45 affordable homes for direct management by the Council.
 - b. by 30 September 2011, the Assistant Director of Housing to complete a property specific tenant (and where appropriate Leaseholder) consultation on the proposal to demolish Wentworth Flats and Marunden Green houses.
 - c. local residents being asked to become involved with the formation and development of a Neighbourhood Board and for the Board, once formed, to be consulted on the selection of the successful developer based upon the design proposals and other quality criteria within the Tender Documentation.
 - d. priority be given by the selected developer to constructing the social housing required to decant housing tenants from Wentworth Flats and to provide new retail units to provide for the local area.
 - e. at the earliest possible opportunity following the rehousing of the tenants of the Wentworth Flats, the flats and the shops in that block be demolished.
 - f. that, subject to the Local Planning Authority's requirements, a mixture of housing ownership and tenancies be created in both Phases 1 & 2 to secure maximum value from the use of the sites and the creation of balanced communities, with a minimum 30% social housing and 10% intermediate housing such as shared ownership.
 - g. to incorporate the use of "Building Licences" into the contract with the developer in order to incentivise the pace of development.
 - h. that having regard to the development of the Community Hub and the existence of a range of other community buildings being located in Britwell an options appraisal be completed by 31 May 2011 to examine the community needs and use of suitable accommodation within the Britwell and Haymill Regeneration area and to report back to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity after completion of the report.
 - i. the Assistant Director of Environment & Regeneration, in consultation with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods & Renewal be authorised to determine the final specification for the Design & Build Tender Documentation.
- (7) to minimise the need to relocate tenants from both Wentworth Flats and the elderly people's dwellings on Marunden Green, that:

- a. no further housing tenant allocations be made after 1st June 2011 to the Wentworth Flats (except on grounds of urgent medical need for rehousing);
 - b. no further housing tenant allocations be made and to the elderly people's dwellings on Marunden Green with immediate effect;
 - c. subject to the above, the Housing Service actively pursue rehousing the existing Housing tenants;
 - d. no further commercial lettings be agreed at any of the properties.
- (8) due to the level of vacant properties on Marunden Green, that at the earliest possible opportunity following the vacation of all surplus housing property, the elderly people's dwellings on Marunden Green be demolished and the site made good for redevelopment.
- (9) the Britwell Community Hub building created to relocate the Library and My Council be the subject to:
- a. a competitive Design and Build Tender with 28 days to respond, that will identify design proposals, timescales for delivery and inclusive costs.
 - b. subject to (8) a. above, that the following two sites be the subject of the Tender, both separately and as a combined facility:
 - i. The old Housing Payment Office and MALT building at 41/43, Wentworth Avenue together with the adjoining land and buildings (shown as 1A in Appendix B);
 - ii. The Wentworth Industrial Court buildings together with the adjoining land (shown as 1B in Appendix B).
 - c. subject to (8) b. above, that officers should now work formally with the users of the Wentworth Industrial Court to identify and agree alternative accommodation for their future use once the site is required for construction.
 - d. That, subject to (8) b. above, Members of the Neighbourhood Board be consulted on the selection of the successful developer based upon the design proposals and other quality criteria within the Tender Documentation.
- (10) That the Interim Borough Secretary and Solicitor, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources be authorised to agree the surrender of the existing lease for the vacant Jolly Londoner public house on the terms outlined in the Part II report circulated separately.
- (11) That a further progress report be made to the next Cabinet Meeting in April 2011.

115. Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS)

The Commissioner for Education and Children introduced a report which sought approval for the creation of an Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS). The report outlined the significant investment that Slough had made towards children and young people. The IYSS proposed to remodel the services currently provided by Connexions, the Youth Offending Team, Health Improvement Team and the Youth Service, to provide a more targeted and community based service. The proposal formed part of the Council's overall strategy to use the Council's assets and community buildings more efficiently as a result of reduced funding from central government.

It was made clear that the report did not propose closing down community buildings or signing over the youth service to the private sector but it was intended to remodel the youth services and use buildings more effectively. The Commissioner for Opportunity and Skills advised that more targeted work would

be provided to reach the young people who needed it most and were not previously using the service and some universal provision would still be retained. The way the services would be provided in future meant that some would need to be provided in different buildings to make use of facilities such as group rooms.

A Member present under Rule 30 raised a query about the closure of Weekes Drive Community Centre. The Member was informed that the youth service only owned four buildings and all others were rented; therefore there was no threat of closure to community buildings. However the youth service was looking to use a smaller and more affordable building in Cippenham. In response to a question regarding the provision of services at the Haymill Centre it was noted that the reconfigured youth service would focus on more targeted work with smaller groups and therefore the facilities of a building such as Haymill would not be required. Services would be provided from a new location in Britwell such as the new community hub. It was reconfirmed that the Cabinet was not considering the closure of community buildings. Any proposed closure of community buildings would form part of the Council's Asset Strategy and would be reported to Cabinet in future and as necessary. At present clubs and community groups would continue to use the facilities as normal.

Resolved:- That the proposal for creating an IYSS be implemented as detailed in the report and that the new service be phased in from 1st April 2011.

116. Free Swimming

The Cabinet considered a report which set out proposals to maintain the present free swimming offer to the end of August 2011. It also requested that Cabinet decide on a number of options for an alternative and affordable free swimming offer for local residents from September this year which would then be reviewed by Slough Community Leisure (SCL). It was noted that the Council was previously successful in securing a government grant for free swimming which was topped up by the Council. The Government funding for free swimming was withdrawn mid year in July 2010. Since then the programme had been maintained with support from SCL. The cost of free swimming was £112,000 a year. However it was not possible to continue free swimming as it was beyond 2011 due to the cut in government funding and increased pressure on Council budgets.

The report contained three options for provision of free under 17s swimming and an option for the provision of free over 60s swimming. Cabinet was requested to put forward their recommendations or preferences to the SCL Board who would then decide on the best prospects for continued provision of free swimming beyond August 2011. A Member present under Rule 30 asked about the level of take up of free swimming by low income families. SCL had not asked anybody about their income but had looked at the overall profiles and based upon use of free swimming costed the proposals accordingly. It was noted that if SCL decided on the option to provide free swimming to under 17s from low income families there was a need to be careful about how this would proceed to ensure that the registration would not distinguish between those receiving free swimming under the low income criteria and other users.

Cabinet fully supported the proposal to provide two free sessions a week for the over 60s and agreed that the cost for this should be found from efficiency savings being negotiated with SCL for the Council's contribution to the cost of leisure services. Cabinet was concerned that the proposal for 10 swims for the price of 7 did not really constitute free swimming as the young person would still have to pay. However Cabinet endorsed the proposals for free swimming for low income families, provided that it could be implemented appropriately and Cabinet endorsed the proposal that children go free when accompanied by a paying adult at weekends.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the present free swimming offer be maintained until the end of August 2011.
- (b) That the options to provide an affordable and sustainable free swimming offer from 1 September 2011 be approved and that Option 1 of the report be endorsed as the Cabinet's preferred option to move forward and that Option 3 be endorsed in line with Option 1 provided that it is implemented in a manner sensitive to individuals' circumstances.
- (c) That Option 4 be approved and the financial resourcing of the Council be noted.

117. Appropriation of Land at Moray Drive, Slough, Berkshire

The Cabinet considered a report which sought approval to proceed with the appropriation of land at Moray Drive, Slough, from open space to planning purposes and to transfer the land for social housing purposes to Thames Valley Housing Association following advertisements in the local press. It was noted that no responses had been received to the public notice for the appropriation of the land.

Resolved:-

- (a) That permission be give to appropriate the land shown edged red on the Plan annexed to this report at Appendix A, which forms part of the Moray Drive playground ("the Land"), from open space to planning purposes under the provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (the "1972 Act").
- (b) That the transfer of the land for social housing purposes to Thames Valley Housing Authority following requisite advertisements in the local press be approved.

118. Write off of Irrecoverable Debts - Business Rates

The Cabinet considered a report on the write-off of various individual business rate debts which had proved to be irrecoverable. It was noted that there was no financial lost to the Council as these were offset by the national non-domestic rates pool. It was noted that the Council could still pursue the debt in future if that became possible.

Resolved:- That the debts set out in the summary at paragraph 5 of the report be approved for write-off.

119. Climate Change Strategy

Cabinet considered a report which sought approval of Slough Forward's Climate Change Strategy, the launch and publication proposals, action plan and a joint venture agreement to secure a significant carbon reduction from the Council's own estate. The Commissioner for Environment and Open Spaces advised that the strategy set out the Council's key role in leading and enabling a rapid improvement in the energy efficiency and carbon emissions from the borough's transport, homes and economy. The Strategy also focused on the commitment to tackle climate change. The Cabinet agreed that the targets set were quite ambitions but the Council was committed to achieving them.

- (a) That the Climate Change Strategy be approved.
- (b) That the publication and launch of the Climate Change Strategy as outlined in paragraph 5.4 of the report be approved;
- (c) That the development of a supporting Action Plan be approved;
- (d) That the principle of entering into a legal agreement with Anesco Ltd to install solar PV panels on a number of key council buildings as outlined in paragraph 5.5 of the report be approved but that the final decision and the terms and conditions of the legal agreement be delegated to the Assistant Director of Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Acting Borough Secretary and Solicitor or Head of Legal Services.

120. Vote of Thanks for the Director of the Green and Built Environment

The Cabinet agreed a vote of thanks for Denise Alder, Strategic Director of the Green and Built Environment for her dedication and hard work whilst at Slough, as this was her last Cabinet meeting prior to taking early retirement.

121. References from Overview and Scrutiny

None were received.

122. Executive Forward Plan

Resolved:- That the Executive Forward Plan for the period March to June be approved.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.25 pm)