

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 18th November, 2013.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), P K Mann, Munawar, Parmar, Sharif (from 6.55pm), Swindlehurst and Walsh

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Grewal, Minhas, Strutton and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Pantelic

PART 1

47. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

48. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th October 2013

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th October 2013 be approved as a correct record.

49. Slough's Relationship with Heathrow Airport

The Chief Executive introduced a report and made a presentation on Slough's relationship with Heathrow Airport and set out the results of the recent resident's survey and research on the economic relationship between Slough and the airport.

The research had been considered by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 30th October 2013 and it had been recommended that the Cabinet "...oversee the collation of all relevant data relating to the impact of Heathrow on Slough now and in the future" once the Davies Commission had announced its shortlist of options in December 2013. The Cabinet were informed of the key conclusions emerging from the various pieces of research as detailed in the presentation and report, which underlined the economic importance of Heathrow to Slough and the potential impacts of various options including the 'worst case scenario' of the relocation of Heathrow.

(Councillor Sharif joined the meeting)

Members noted the key points emerging from the research which were summarised as follows:

- Heathrow was currently operating at 98% capacity and many of its services were made possible by transfer passengers.
- The Resident Survey commissioned by the Council revealed that 56% of respondents believed Heathrow had a positive impact on their life compared to 32% mixed and 10% negative. 68% were affected by aircraft noise of which 25% stated that it was very disruptive.

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- LEP commissioned research estimated that between 290,000 and 350,000 jobs were at risk if Heathrow closed and 35,000 additional jobs could be generated by an additional runway at Heathrow.
- A report by Lambert Smith Hampton indicated that the closure of Heathrow could result in a total loss of property values between £1.9m and £2.6bn.
- The Economic Impact Study, commissioned by the Council and conducted by independent consultants, had demonstrated that a total of between 15,200 and 18,800 Slough residents' jobs were at risk if Heathrow closed, including both direct and 'catalytic' jobs i.e. employment related to the economic activity resulting from proximity to the airport.
- Maintaining the status quo at Heathrow was estimated to lead to a decline in jobs in Slough of 1,000 by 2020 and over 2,000 by 2030.

The Cabinet noted that a wide range of environmental and health impacts would also need to be considered as part of the overall assessment of the options in responding to the Davies Commission. A number of matters were discussed including the various options proposed to the Davies Commission; air quality management; the importance of Heathrow engaging more fully with local communities to mitigate impacts such as noise; and the importance of ensuring Slough was able to exploit the potential economic opportunities if the option of Heathrow expansion was pursued. The Cabinet welcomed the survey and Economic Impact Study and agreed that a clear and evidence based response to the Davies Commission was important once the shortlist of options was published. The Council should also collate and conduct the necessary work to assess these options to inform the Council's response.

Resolved –

- (a) That the findings of the Economic Impact Assessment be endorsed and recommended to the UK Airport's Commission for their consideration, stressing that the relocation of Heathrow would have a catastrophic effect on the communities surrounding it.
- (b) That the importance of Heathrow to the economy and employment opportunities in Slough and surrounding areas be recognised, and deep concern be expressed over the possible relocation/closure of Heathrow or measures which would diminish the position of the airport.
- (c) That awareness be raised of the Residential Day Noise Insulation Scheme to eligible households in Slough to mitigate the disruptive impact that noise has on residents.
- (d) That relevant departments across the council be requested to explore required mitigations for a range of future Heathrow related scenarios.

50. Finance and Performance Report: Quarter 2 2013-14

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced a report which set out the Council's overall performance and financial management for the period up to and including September 2013.

Members were informed that the Council were currently forecasting an overspend of £0.7m, with the main area of variance in the Children's and Families service which was forecasting an overspend of £1.7m, some of which had been offset by savings in other areas. The overspend was reducing but required further remedial action to ensure this position was mitigated by the end of the financial year. It was forecast that 70% of the capital programme would be spent during the financial year with the main area of re-profiling being The Curve project which was progressing to timescale and would require a movement of over £8m of allocated budget from 2013-14 into 2014-15. Members noted the financial performance and considered and approved the write off requests as detailed in the report.

The Assistant Director summarised the key issues in relation to the Council's performance scorecard and Gold Projects. It was noted that 85% of indicators had been rated as either 'Green' or 'Amber' with a number of indicators moving from 'Red' or 'Amber' to 'Green' during the quarter including waste to landfill and recycling. Members considered the actions being undertaken on the 'Red' rated indicators one of which was the number of households in temporary accommodation. The Cabinet noted that whilst the indicator was above target, the number had reduced from 96 to 93 between August and September and none of the households were in bed & breakfast accommodation. Members discussed a number of issues relating to housing trends in the Borough, particularly the impacts of Government housing and benefit reforms, and discussed the progress of the establishment of the Council's social lettings agency.

Members discussed the proposed sale of properties in Parlaunt Road which the Cabinet had agreed to dispose of in November 2012. It was noted that the anticipated capital receipt of £1.4m was above the valuation reported at the time of the original decision and would be utilised for new community facilities in Langley via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Resolved –

- (a) That the proposed sale of Parlaunt Road be noted; Cabinet approved this disposal at its meeting in November 2012. This property is an HRA (Housing Revenue Account) property and the anticipated capital receipt of up to £1.4m will be utilised to support the HRA;
- (b) That the latest forecast financial information for the 2013-14 financial year be noted;
- (c) That the Council's performance against the balance scorecard indicators to date during 2013-14 be noted;

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- (d) That the Council's performance on 'Gold' projects during 2013-14 be noted; and
- (e) That the write-offs detailed within the report be approved.

51. Revenue Budget 2014-15 - Proposed Savings

The Assistant Director, Finance and Audit introduced a report requesting approval for the first tranche of savings proposals for inclusion in the 2014-15 revenue budget which would be recommended to Council in February 2014.

Members were informed of a number of changes to the assumptions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) model since the previous update to the Cabinet in July 2013. These included an increase in the Council Tax Base, retained Business Rates and none ring-fenced grants, however, a further reduction in the Revenue Support Grant was anticipated and a number of further directorate pressures, particularly within Children's Services, meant that the net impact of these changing assumptions was to increase the total savings requirement for 2014-15 by circa £0.5m. In excess of £12m worth of revenue savings were required for 2014-15, of which the report had identified £9.1m with a further £3.1m yet to be identified. The assumptions underpinning the MTFS were subject to further change pending the Local Government Finance Settlement which would follow the Chancellor's Autumn Statement to be delivered in December 2013.

Members discussed the savings set out in Appendix A to the report which were proposed to be recommended to Council in February 2013. The Cabinet thanked officers for the progress that had been made to date in identifying the proposed savings and welcomed the fact that the savings were focused on corporate services rather than front line services. Following due consideration, it was agreed that the proposed savings would be included in the 2014-15 Budget.

Resolved – That the savings set out in Appendix A of the report be included in the Revenue Budget 2014-15 to be approved by Council in February, subject to any further adjustments.

52. Transactions Relating to the Castlevue Site

The Head of Legal Services introduced a report which summarised a number of transactions relating to the Castlevue site which enacted the decisions taken by the Cabinet at their meeting on 7th August 2012. The Cabinet were also asked to approve the use of General Fund capital to pay for the acquisition of the land edged blue on Appendix C to the report.

Councillors Grewal, Minhas and Strutton addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and amongst other matters they raised the issue of the capacity of local schools and transport to accommodate the extra homes being built as part of the developments. The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal

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referred to the Cabinet decision of 16th April 2012 in a report titled 'Review of Provisions and Allocation of Available Resources' to set aside a minimum of 10% of the capital receipt for investment in infrastructure "...to benefit the residents of the Upton Court Area". The Cabinet were asked to amend the 2013/14 Capital Programme to allocate 10% of the receipt of £5.1m for the following works to be carried out:

- Provision of a left turn lane from Upton Court Road to the A4 westbound to be allocated £350,000 (a scheme design was tabled).
- A safety improvement scheme in the Marlborough Road area to be allocated £100,000.
- Traffic study and implementation of improvements on A4 Lascelles Road to be allocated £50,000.

The Cabinet agreed that securing public benefit from the development of the site was important and would complement the wider regeneration proposals for the area which included the potential for new health provision on Trelawney Avenue. The recommendations in the report were agreed and the proposal to amend the capital programme as discussed was also agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the transactions specified in Paragraph 1.1 of the report be noted.
- (b) That funds from General Fund capital be used to pay for the acquisition of the land shown edged blue on the plan at Appendix C.
- (c) That the 2013/14 Capital Programme be amended to allocate 10% of the £5.1m capital receipt to enable the following works to be carried out:
 - i. A4/Upton Court Road junction – provision of a left turn lane from Upton Court Road to the A4 westbound (£350,000);
 - ii. Marlborough Road area – safety improvements scheme (£100,000); and
 - iii. A4 Lascelles Road – traffic study and implementation of improvements (£50,000).

53. Older People's Commissioning Strategy 2013-2018

The Commissioner for Health & Wellbeing and Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, Commissioning & Partnerships introduced a report which sought approval of the Older People's Commissioning Strategy 2013-18.

The Commissioner explained the context in which the new strategy had been developed including demographic changes, significant changes in Government policy and funding pressures. Extensive consultation with service users, the voluntary and community sector and other stakeholders had been carried out. The refreshed strategy aimed to provide preventative services designed to help people maximise their independence and also

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sought to reshape the market to deliver choice and control to older people. The Assistant Director informed Members of the key aspects of the new strategy and responded to a number of questions from Commissioners including about the demographic trends which underpinned the strategy.

Resolved – That the Older People’s Commissioning Strategy 2013-2018 be approved.

54. Delegation of Procurement Function for Public Health

The Commissioner for Health & Wellbeing introduced a report regarding the joint public health agreement with the unitary authorities in Berkshire.

The agreement had been entered into in March 2013 but would need to be amended to enable the procurement of joint public health services and contracts. The report set out the current position with regards to the contract and the Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Wellbeing both to negotiate and conclude amendments to the Public Health Agreement and to arrange for the delivery of joint procurements as appropriate.

Resolved –

- (a) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Wellbeing, following consultation with the Commissioner for Health & Wellbeing, to negotiate and conclude amendments to the inter-authority Public Health agreement dated 28th March 2013 to provide for the administration, management and operation of future contracts for which joint procurement has been agreed.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Wellbeing to arrange for the delivery of joint procurements with the other Berkshire unitary authorities through the Strategic Director of Public Health for the future provision of joint public health services and or contracts.

55. Slough Borough Council Land Use Prioritisation

The Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing & Resources introduced a report which provided an overview of Council strategies and policies that relate to the competing demands for developable land within Slough.

The Cabinet were informed that the review was not proposing the adoption of new policy but it brought together a range of existing policies and strategies to make a clear statement of priorities for Slough. The documents considered as part of the work undertaken included overarching strategies such as the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy as well as the suite of planning documents such as the Core Strategy 2006-2026, the Local Plan and the Site Allocations Development Plan. In view of Slough’s constraints in terms of developable land, it was anticipated that there would be future competition for sites and the clear statement of strategic priorities would be beneficial.

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Members considered and agreed the proposed approach for developments within and outside of the town centre.

Resolved – That the amalgamated strategic priorities be noted, and the strategic approach set out below be endorsed:

- Within the town centre the priority uses will be those that have the potential to re-invigorate the town centre as a place to do business, to shop and to live and reflect a continuation of the Heart of Slough masterplan strategic commitments.
- Outside the town centre, and outside existing employment areas the key priority uses of land will be those that contribute to the key themes of the Council's Wellbeing Strategy – housing and health with appropriate development to support the local economy.

56. Flood Management Update

The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewal and Head of Highways Engineering introduced a report which updated Members on flood management in Slough and sought approval to adopt the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2012, the Surface Water Management Plan 2012 and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013.

The Council took on various duties, responsibilities and powers as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 which arose out of the Pitt Review 2008 following the 2007 floods across significant parts of the country. The Cabinet were informed of the various flood management strategies, plans and documents which provided the future direction for the Council in discharging its responsibilities and were asked to adopt some of these documents. The Cabinet were also updated on the progress of two key projects, the Slough Flood Alleviation Scheme to tackle fluvial and surface water flooding, and the Community Pathfinder Project for which the Council had successfully bid to DEFRA for £253,000 to engage with communities in Chalvey, Manor Park and Upton Lea on flood risk issues.

Members were advised that the final enactment of the FWMA related to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and it was anticipated that the Council would need to establish a SuDS Approval Board (SAB) by April 2014. The SAB would be responsible for the approval of proposed SuDS/drainage systems in new developments or redevelopments. Members asked a number of questions about how this process would work and how it would be coordinated with planning to ensure developments were not unduly delayed. It was confirmed by officers that SAB approval was separate from planning but that the timescales were similar and they were working closely with planning officers to implement the system in a coordinated way.

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The Cabinet discussed a number of other issues including the practical ways in which the Community Pathfinder Project was engaging with residents; the measures being undertaken to reduce the risk of surface water flooding; and the current emergency planning arrangements. After considering the summary documents, the Cabinet agreed to approve and adopt relevant plans and strategies as circulated in the appendices.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2012 be approved and adopted.
- (b) That the Surface Water Management Plan 2012 be approved and adopted.
- (c) That the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013 be approved and adopted.

57. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

58. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.34 pm and closed at 8.20 pm)