

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 14th April, 2014.

Present:- Councillors Mann, Munawar, Parmar, Sharif, Swindlehurst (Chair) and Walsh

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Nazir

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Anderson and Pantelic

PART 1

103. Declarations of Interest

Councillor PK Mann declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 8: 'Development of Council Owned Land', in that a member of her family worked at Langley Police Station.

104. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2014

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th March 2014 be approved as a correct record.

(Councillor Sharif joined the meeting)

105. Corporate Plan 2014/15

The Head of Strategic Policy & Communications introduced a report seeking approval to Recommend the draft Corporate Plan 2014/15 to Council.

Members noted that the six operational priorities were consistent with the previous year's plan and included improving customer experience; developing new ways of working; promoting economic growth and protecting the council's finances. The plan set out the most important changes for the coming year, which were considered to be improving Children's Social Care; delivering the Council's budget for 2014/15 and identifying further required savings; and implementing Fit for the Future to ensure that all staff had the skills to meet the challenges ahead.

The Cabinet were informed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the plan on 8th April 2014 and had welcomed the concise and focused plan. They had recommended an amendment to page 18 – children's social care to strengthen this section:

“Encourage partners to improve frontline inter-agency working and communication in order to risk assess and prioritise highly all referrals about children at risk in order to keep them safe.”

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The Cabinet considered a number of aspects of the plan before agreeing to recommend the Corporate Plan to Council, including the amendment from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Recommended – That the Corporate Plan 2014/15, as set out in Appendix A, be approved, subject to incorporation of the amendment from Overview & Scrutiny in relation to Children's Social Care.

106. Carers Caring for Others - Slough's Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy Refresh 2014-17

The Commissioner for Health and Wellbeing and Assistant Director Adult Social Care introduced a report which sought approval for the interim Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy.

It was noted that the joint strategy, between the Council and the Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), built upon the existing Slough Carers' Strategy which had now come to an end and needed to be refreshed. The revised document under consideration was an interim document in view of the major legislative and policy changes within health and social care that impacted on carers, particularly the Care Act 2014. The refreshed strategy adopted an integrated approach with health and set out how services would be delivered differently in line with national and local policy drivers.

(Councillor Munawar joined the meeting)

The Strategy contained six agreed local priorities which included hospital and carers; improved support for young carers; training and information for professionals; and the involvement of carers. Commissioners discussed these priorities and, in particular, emphasised the importance of supporting young carers and the identification of carers to ensure they could access the appropriate support. The Cabinet also considered engagement with voluntary and community sector partners and the delivery mechanism and monitoring arrangements with the CCG.

Following discussion, the Cabinet approved the interim Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy.

Resolved – That the draft interim Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy, including the resource allocation, as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.

107. Better Care Fund and Local Delivery Plan

The Commissioner for Health and Wellbeing and the Assistant Director Adult Social Care introduced a report on the Better Care Fund (BCF) in Slough and sought endorsement for the Slough BCF delivery plan, jointly developed by the Council and Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

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The purpose of the BCF was to increase the integration between health and adult social care services. The key features of the BCF delivery plan were outlined and Members noted the comprehensive process that had been undertaken to develop the plan, which had been signed off by the Slough Wellbeing Board and submitted to NHS England on 4th April 2014. Slough's BCF delivery would focus on three strands: self care and prevention services; improved care co-ordination; and maintaining and promoting independence.

The financial summary set out in Appendix A was considered and it was noted that the figures in table 2 on page 118 had been updated and the pooled budget for 2014/15 from the Council and the CCG would be £5.612m and for 2015/16 would be £9.76m. Commissioners discussed a number of issues including the governance arrangements with the CCG and the way in which service improvements would be measured.

The Cabinet endorsed the BCF delivery plan and in view of the fact there would not be another scheduled Cabinet meeting until June, it was also agreed to authorise the Assistant Director for Adult Social Care, following consultation with the lead Commissioner for Finance, to take any interim steps relating to the financial planning if required.

Resolved –

- (a) That the future planned activity set out in section 6 of the report and the benefits, implications and risk associated with the BCF planning for Slough set out in section 7 of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Slough Wellbeing Board (SWB) sign off of the final Slough BCF delivery plan for submission to NHS England be endorsed.
- (c) That the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, following consultation with the lead Commissioner for Finance, be authorised to take any necessary interim steps relating to the financial planning of the BCF ahead of the next Cabinet meeting in June.

108. Slough Regeneration Partnership, Partnership Business Plan

Councillor Nazir, the Member representative on the SRP Board, and the Strategic Director Regeneration, Housing and Resources introduced a report which sought approval of the Slough Regeneration Partnership (SRP) Partnership Business Plan (PBP) for the period January 2014 to December 2018.

The PBP was the core document of the SRP which set out the strategic direction, governance arrangements, operational business arrangements and a rolling 5-year plan of activity. Commissioners considered a range of issues including the key sites as set out in Appendix A and the working arrangements with Morgan Sindall. The Cabinet welcomed the progress made to date, for example bringing forward 200 new homes at Ledgers Road and Wexham Nursery sites; the indication that the Council was expected to

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receive £9m in capital receipts between 2015-16 and 2018-19; and the fact that the area around the Slough Canal Basin and land adjacent to Mercian Way and Lavendar Farm would be brought forward for investigation and possible development.

The Cabinet approved the Partnership Business Plan and thanked Councillor Nazir and officers for the work they had done to progress the initiative.

Resolved – That the Slough Regeneration Partnership, Partnership Business Plan (Appendix B to the report) be approved.

109. Option Appraisal - Subsidiary Housing Company

The Assistant Director Housing and Environment introduced a report setting out the options for the potential establishment of a subsidiary housing company and seeking approval to progress the plans to the next stage.

The Cabinet was advised that the ‘freedoms and flexibilities’ provided by the Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the opportunity to explore new arrangements to maximise the value of their assets. This included the potential establishment of a subsidiary housing company, or another special purpose vehicle, to develop and rent or sell properties on existing council owned land. Members were advised of the circumstances in which such development may be appropriate, which included for example smaller or difficult sites of less than 20 units, and the dual benefit of bringing forward development to meet housing need and maximising the financial benefit of the asset to the Council. Commissioners were asked to approve the establishment of a corporate working group to further investigate the options and to approve an ‘invest to save’ bid of up to £50,000 for specialist legal and financial advice.

Members discussed a range of potential activities within the scope of a subsidiary housing company and it was noted that these would form part of the feasibility work to be undertaken. It was agreed to proceed with the necessary work on the outline business case and a further report would be brought to the Cabinet in July 2014.

Resolved –

- (a) That officers establish a corporate working group to fully develop an outline business case for establishing a Subsidiary Housing Company (SHC), or other vehicle, to develop, acquire, manage and sell market and affordable cross tenure properties to assist in meeting local housing need.
- (b) That an ‘invest to save’ bid be approved to fund initial specialist, legal and financial advice up to a maximum of £50,000.

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- (c) That a further report be brought to the July Cabinet meeting with an outline business case, including financial modelling and, if appropriate, indicative timescales for the launch of the company.

110. Development of Council Owned Land - Interim Update Report

The Interim Head of Asset Management introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress made with regards to ongoing regeneration activities at Windsor Road, Trelawney Avenue, Bath Road and Gurney House.

Windsor Road Regeneration Scheme

Commissioners noted the current position in relation to the scheme which aimed to reduce congestion by providing a four lane road and the infrastructure to facilitate associated regeneration projects. The Cabinet welcomed the fact that following detailed design, the objectives of the road widening scheme could be achieved without the demolition of properties between 97-127 Windsor Road although a thin strip of ground running through the front gardens would be required from 101, 107 and 109 Windsor Road by Compulsory Purchase Order, under regeneration powers, to deliver the Windsor Road Regeneration Strategy.

The Cabinet agreed the recommendations in the report, with the addition of the words “following consultation with the lead Commissioner” to recommendation (i), and further agreed that the Asset Management and Highways Engineering departments work closely together to ensure the design enhanced the public realm as far as possible.

Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan

The Cabinet were informed of the progress made since the last report on the Redevelopment Plan in September 2013. It was noted that the consultation with internal departments and other public bodies had taken place and a public consultation would be taking place in May to seek views on the options of high quality housing and/or a community hub potentially including the co-location of a dental practice, GP practice, other NHS services, Police and community space. Commissioners discussed the progress made to date in terms of securing health facilities as part of the development; the consultation strategy; and potential delivery arrangements. The Cabinet renewed their commitment to the provision of community facilities within the redevelopment plan and noted that a further report would be received in September 2014 with the outcomes of the consultation and subsequent options appraisal.

Bath Road

Further to the Cabinet decision in February 2013, it was noted that the properties at 150-160 Bath Road had been demolished and the proposals for a rapid transport system along the A4 continued to be developed. Members were advised of the potential to introduce a residential development on the

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available land behind the road widening line and a feasibility study to consider the options was proposed. The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made and agreed to proceed with a feasibility study for option which would improve the landscape in the locality, provide some additional residential accommodation and maximise the financial potential of the asset. Members asked that the feasibility study included options for the land immediately adjacent to 150-160 Bath Road to ensure any proposals took into account the wider surroundings.

Gurney House

Further to the Cabinet report of January 2014, Members were informed that the site at the former Gurney House care home had been cleared and detailed planning design was being undertaken in regard to the size, number and layout of the new homes that could be provided on the site. Further feasibility work had been undertaken which concluded that 10 x four bedroomed semi-detached properties was the most financially attractive design and a tender exercise was underway to select an architect with a full planning application expected in the summer. The Cabinet agreed to proceed in the manner proposed and considered the potential of a subsidiary housing company developing the site, subject the feasibility study discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made to date to redevelop or regenerate the sites included and appended to the report be noted.
- (b) That the recommendations as listed specific to each site be approved:

Windsor Road (Appendix A)

- (i) That the Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing and Resources, following consultation with the lead Commissioner, be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of the CPO of the third party land at 101, 107 and 109 Windsor Road under regeneration powers and the land required to deliver the Windsor Road Regeneration Strategy (following statutory process set down in the Highway Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.) including;
 - Publication and service of all notices
 - Advertise the Order and submit it to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.
 - Negotiation with landowners.
 - Setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO.
 - Where appropriate, seeking exclusions of land from the CPO

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- Making arrangements for the presentation of the Council's case for confirmation of the CPO at any Public Inquiry.
 - Exercising the compulsory purchase powers authorised by the CPO by way of general vesting declaration and / or notices to treat and notices of Entry.
 - Acquiring third party interests in the site by private treaty.
 - Making any third party payments of compensation due pursuant to the national Compensation Code as a result of the implementation of the CPO. Compensation due to unidentified owner can be paid to the Crown.
- (ii) That the Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing and Resources, following consultation with the lead Commissioner, be authorised to appropriate to planning purposes the land in the ownership of Slough Borough Council which is no longer required for the purpose for which it was previously used, for use in connection with the Windsor Road Regeneration Strategy under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (iii) That subject to (i) and (ii) above, an update report is presented to Cabinet by September 2014 that identifies the preferred option for the housing development site between 81 and 111 Windsor Road.
- (iv) That the Asset Management and Highways & Engineering departments work closely together to bring forward a detailed design which maximises the potential for improvement of the public realm as part of the scheme.

Trelawney Avenue (Appendix B)

- (v) That it be noted that consultation has been undertaken with internal departments and other public bodies in relation to the option to create a community hub in Area A.
- (vi) That it be noted that consultation has commenced with local residents, New Langley Community Group, Customer Senate and other stakeholders.
- (vii) That an options appraisal that includes financial modelling be undertaken following the completion of the consultation process with a view to taking a report with recommendations to Cabinet by September 2014.
- (viii) That the Cabinet confirms its commitment to the provision of new community facilities within the Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan.

Bath Road (Appendix C)

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- (ix) That officers undertake a feasibility study and develop options to introduce residential development on the area of land that is located behind the road widening line.

Gurney House (Appendix D)

- (x) That following completion of the procurement exercise, officers complete the submission of a full planning application for the Gurney House site to bring about the development of new, high quality family housing.
- (xi) That a further report is brought to the September Cabinet meeting to advise members of the outcome and to determine a delivery mechanism for the scheme.

111. Council Tax and Business Rates Policies

The Assistant Director Finance and Audit introduced a report which sought approval for four new policies in relation to revenue collection: Council Tax discounts for flooded properties; Business Rate Relief for flooded properties; Retail Rate Relief; and Reoccupation Relief for business properties.

The Prime Minister had announced in February that relief would be made available to homes and businesses that had been affected by the recent floods, and discretionary powers under the Local Government Finance Act had been utilised to bring the changes into effect as quickly as possible. The Government had agreed to reimburse local authorities for any Business Rates reliefs paid out and had set aside funding to reimburse local authorities for Council Tax relief. There were therefore no direct financial implications to the Council as any costs arising from these policies would be reimbursed at a later stage. Members were advised that the scheme had recently been extended from the initial three month discount and residents would now be eligible to claim relief for as long as they were unable to return to their homes.

The Government's Autumn Statement in December 2013 announced relief for certain retail premises for 2014-15 and 2015-16 of up to £1,000 to all occupied retail premises with a rateable value of £50,000 or less; and a 50% discount for reoccupying empty retail premises to try to reduce the number of empty shops. Local policies needed to be adopted for these schemes and local authorities would be reimbursed for any reliefs paid out under the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Council's had the option of including additional discretionary relief in their policies if they chose to do so, however, they would have to meet the cost of any such enhancements.

The Cabinet welcomed the support available to residents and businesses who had experienced flooding and agreed to adopt the local policies to bring these schemes into effect. In relation to the policies for retail relief and reoccupation relief, Commissioners considered the types of businesses whose activities conflicted with strategic and corporate priorities, for example the recent work

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done by Scrutiny on tackling childhood obesity. The reoccupation relief policy as drafted would exclude betting shops, payday loan shops and pawn brokers and it was agreed that hot food takeaways, licensed sex establishments and off licenses should also be ineligible. In order to ensure consistency between the two policies, hereditments being mainly used for these activities would also not be eligible for Retail Rates Relief.

Resolved –

That the following policies, as set out in appendices A to D of the report, be approved:

- (a) Council Tax Discounts for Flooded Properties.
- (b) Business Rates Relief for Flooded Properties.
- (c) Retail Rate Relief for Business Properties, subject to the exclusion of discretionary relief for betting shops, payday loan companies, pawnbrokers, off licences, licensed sex establishments and takeaways.
- (d) Reoccupation Relief for Business Properties, subject to the exclusion of discretionary relief for betting shops, payday loan companies, pawnbrokers, off licences, licensed sex establishments and takeaways.

112. Arrangements for New Free Schools

The Chief Executive introduced a report which sought approval to fund specific school facilities and delegate authority to the Chief Executive to progress the necessary agreement to deliver approved secondary Free Schools in Slough.

The Cabinet considered the request to allocate £300,000 from the Basic Needs Grant to construct a 27 place new Special Education Needs (SEN) unit within the new SASH school and to give in principle agreement to provide a contribution to the funding of an all weather pitch at Langley Academy. Commissioners recognised the importance of providing additional SEN places and felt that the proposal offered excellent value for money. In relation to the facilities at Langley Academy, Members supported the proposal in principle, subject to ensuring the all weather pitch would be available for community use. It was noted that discussions were at an early stage and it was agreed to delegate the final agreement to the Chief Executive. It was also agreed to give the Chief Executive delegated authority to take any necessary steps on the delivery of the approved secondary Free School programme, following consultation with the appropriate Commissioners.

Resolved –

- (a) That £300,000 of grant funding (Basic Needs Grant) be allocated to fund construction of a new 27 place Special Education Needs resource unit within the SASH Free School; and
- (b) That in principle agreement be given to grant fund (Basic Needs Grant) a contribution to an all weather pitch at Langley Academy on condition that the value for money of the education and community use benefits could be demonstrated and to delegate to the Chief Executive agreement of the amount following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet member.
- (c) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet member, be given delegated authority to enter into an agreement and or facilitate discussions to deliver approved secondary Free Schools and associated facilities in Slough.

113. Contracts in Excess of £250k

The Cabinet were advised of the contracts with an estimated value of over £250,000 that were proposed to be let in 2014/15. After due consideration, the list of contracts as set out in Appendix A to the report was endorsed.

Resolved – That the list of contracts attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

114. References from Overview & Scrutiny

Commissioners considered a recommendation from the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel regarding apprenticeships at the Council and a recommendation from the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel in relation to the progress of the Transport Working Group.

The Cabinet reaffirmed their support for steps to increase the number of apprenticeships at the Council and approved the recommendation. Commissioners also recognised the importance of ensuring the Transport Working Group was effective and therefore supported the recommendation to ensure engagement with all relevant parties.

Resolved –

- (a) That a piece of work be commissioned to investigate the options for increasing the number of apprentices employed by the council and/or its sub-contractors and report back to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel on proposals in six months.
- (b) That engagement of all parties in the Transport Working Group is vital to its success and that attendance by the Cabinet representative and local business community is an important part of this.

115. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet for the period between 1 April and 30 June 2014.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.38 pm and closed at 8.20 pm)