

## **Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 15th September, 2014.**

**Present:-** Councillors Anderson (Chair), Carter, Mann, Munawar, Parmar and Sharif

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Swindlehurst

### **PART 1**

#### **23. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

#### **24. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th July 2014**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 be approved as a correct record.

#### **25. Slough Mass Rapid Transit Scheme (SMaRT) Phase 1**

The Acting Head of Transport introduced a report seeking approval to progress implementation of Phase 1 of the Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) scheme which aimed to enhance public transport services and reduce congestion in the A4 corridor.

The scheme comprised of a range of highway infrastructure measures to enhance bus journey time and reliability performance, which would facilitate both improved bus services and wider benefits to the highway network. SMaRT would initially extend from the Slough Trading Estate to the M4 Junction 5 via the town centre in Phase 1. The estimated cost was £8.09m of which £5.6m had been committed by central Government via the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Growth Deal. Phase 2 would extend the improvements east of Junction 5 to Heathrow.

Members discussed a number of detailed aspects of the design and issues relating to the operation of the scheme including the improvements required at busy junctions; the increased frequency of services to a bus every 10 minutes at peak time; the use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers; and the need to work closely with businesses on the trading estate to reduce current reliance on shuttle services and private car use. This engagement with the private sector would be important in ensuring the new rapid bus services were commercially viable. Detailed work on design and planning issues would take place prior to the consultation and procurement processes, and the Cabinet agreed to receive a further report prior to the tender being issued. Phase 1 was due to be completed by August 2016.

The Cabinet welcomed the scheme and congratulated officers for securing the major investment from the Berkshire Local Transport Body in view of the significant competition for funds across Berkshire. They also noted the

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funding position as detailed in the report; gave permission to use CPO powers; and agreed funding for improvements to three additional junctions on the A4 Bath Road as part of the scheme.

### Resolved –

- (a) That the offer of the Berkshire Local Transport Body to provide £5.6million towards the cost of the SMaRT major transport scheme be welcomed;
- (b) That the terms of the offer, including the need for the remainder of the scheme cost to be met by local funding contributions, be noted;
- (c) That the local funding contribution outlined in paras 4.4 and 4.5 required from Council revenue and capital resources, supplemented by S106 developer contributions where available, be agreed in principle subject to further consideration of scheme costs;
- (d) That the design of the scheme as outlined in paras 5.6 to 5.17 and Figure 1, be agreed in principle subject to a positive outcome to the public consultation now underway;
- (e) That negotiations be proceeded with to secure land on the frontage of A4 Bath Road required for highway purposes as set out in paras 4.15 and 4.16 and steps be taken, if necessary, to initiate compulsory purchase;
- (f) That funding for the improvements to three additional junctions on the A4 Bath Road west of Dover Road and improvements around Burnham Station and Burnham Lane as described in paras 4.6 and 5.18 to 5.20 be agreed;
- (g) That the tendering process be progressed in due course in line with the procurement strategy set out in para 4.7 of the report;
- (h) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of the CPO of the third party land required to deliver the SMaRT Scheme and the land required to deliver an efficient scheme on the land remaining at 150 – 160 Bath Road (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.);
- (i) That the Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources 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 SMaRT Scheme and associated residential development under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- (j) That the Cabinet receive a further report on progress and detailed design of the scheme prior to the commencement of the tendering process.

## **26. Chalvey Regeneration Strategy Update**

The Head of Asset Management introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress of the projects comprising the second phase of the Chalvey Regeneration Strategy and two emerging projects for a potential further phase.

Members discussed the progress of the following projects since the last report to Cabinet in March 2014:

- The former petrol station at Chalvey Road East – further to discussions with the Council, the private developer expected to submit a full planning application for a 24-unit residential development by October.
- Site of former Cross Keys Public House – the Council, who owned a third of the site, was seeking to work with the owner of the remainder to bring forward mutually agreeable residential development. The use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers remained an option if agreement could not be reached however good progress was being made.
- Chalvey Halt – discussions with railway and other strategic partners continued.
- Redevelopment of land at Ledgers Road – a planning application for a 73 unit residential development, including 23 affordable properties, on the site of the former Town Hall annexe had been submitted in August and were due to be considered by the Planning Committee in October.
- New changing facilities – work was onsite and was due to be completed by November. A budget had been approved to resolve the drainage issues previously discussed by Cabinet.
- Former SSE Depot site – following consultation with the Council a planning application would be submitted in October for a mixed use development including an integrated health facility. The Council had entered into detailed discussions about the potential to provide Extra Care Housing on the site.

Members were also informed of two emerging projects – workshop premises in Chalvey Road East and the potential for residential development at the garage site on Turton Way – for consideration in the next phase of the strategy. The Cabinet welcomed the significant progress that had been made and agreed to receive a further report at a future meeting.

**Resolved –** That the progress made with the various projects since March 2014, as set out below, be noted:

- (a) Slough Regeneration Partnership submitted the full planning application for the 73 unit redevelopment of Ledgers Road in

August 2014, which was scheduled to be considered by the Planning Committee in October 2014.

- (b) The owners of the former petrol station site had refined their proposals following a pre-application meeting and intended to submit a full planning application for a 26 unit development by October 2014.
- (c) Positive feedback had been received from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in relation to the proposed integrated health facility. As a consequence the full planning application would be submitted by October 2014.
- (d) The proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) had been completed.
- (e) Work to provide changing rooms at Chalvey Recreation Ground were already underway and would be completed by November 2014.
- (f) A survey had been undertaken and a budget set to resolve drainage problems at Chalvey Recreation Ground within the current calendar year.
- (g) Discussions had commenced with the partial owner of the Crosskeys site regarding a collaborative approach to redevelop the site.

## **27. Financial & Performance Report - Q1 2014-15**

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced the Financial and Performance Report for the first quarter of 2014/15.

The Cabinet noted the performance against the balanced scorecard indicators and 'Gold' Project updates for the year to date. The Council was forecasting an overspend of circa £1m at Month 3 and appropriate action was taking place to mitigate this by the end of the financial year. The forecast spend of the capital programme was 80% against a revised budget of £60.979m.

Commissioners considered the proposed changes to the capital programme which comprised investment of £50k in the Municipal Bonds Agency; increased budget for Extra Care Housing Scheme; and the inclusion of a previously approved traffic scheme. It was noted that additional capital expenditure of £900k in extra care housing was expected to realise £500-£600k revenue savings by 2016-17 as well as helping to provide the appropriate care for local people. In response to a question, the Strategic Director of Wellbeing confirmed that feedback from service users had been very positive and this provision delivered high quality outcomes. Following discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommended changes to the Capital Programme as detailed in the report.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the following changes to the capital programme be approved:
  - i. Investment of £50k in the Municipal Bonds Agency
  - ii. Increasing the budget for an Extra Care Housing scheme over the existing budget in 2014-15 by £400,000 and £500k in 2015-16, with £805k of funding coming from Adult Social Care grant
  - iii. Inclusion of a previously approved traffic light scheme that was funded from a revenue reserve to be included in the capital programme
- (b) That the virements and write offs contained within the report be approved.
- (c) That the transfer of funds from the NHS to the Council in respect of the Better Care Fund be noted.
- (d) That the current financial forecast position, balanced scorecard and update on Gold projects be noted.

**28. Council Tax Support Scheme 2015-16**

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced a report regarding potential changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015-16.

Legislation required the scheme to be reviewed annually by Members and the options for 2015-16, as detailed fully in Appendix A to the report, were explained. Any changes to the scheme, other than uprating the standard percentages, would require the Council to undertake consultation. It was proposed that a review be undertaken to look at what changes could be made to improve the financial position for the Council for 2015-16. During discussion, Members were informed that the overall cost of the scheme was £8.8m and it was noted that pensioners remains a mandatory protected group.

After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to pursue Option 2 whereby review and consultation would take place on the scheme with a further report on the proposed scheme to be considered by Cabinet in December 2014. The review should seek to explore any potential financial improvements to the Council arising from any changes, whilst ensuring the scheme continued to protect the most vulnerable residents.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That Option 2, as detailed in section 9 of the report, be pursued whereby the Council consults on some revisions to the Council Tax

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Support scheme if these are financially beneficial following review of the modelling with the Leader.

- (b) To update the relevant applicable amounts included in appendix A.
- (c) That officers explore the different scheme options available and bring these back to Cabinet for a subsequent decision in respect of the 2016-17 financial year.

### 29. Treasury Management Annual Report

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced a report which summarised treasury activity in 2013-14 and the first part of 2014-15, in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice.

The report detailed the position in relation to the Council's borrowings and investment activity and confirmed that none of the Prudential Indicators had been breached. Members noted that external debt had been reduced during 2013/14 and investment income of £0.542m had been achieved, with a rate of return of 0.59%. The Treasury Management Strategy 2014/15 adopted by Council in February 2014 increased diversity in the portfolio, whilst continuing to prioritise security and liquidity over yield. Investments in a number of longer term treasury instruments were discussed, as detailed in section 4 of the report, from which was hoped a higher rate of return could be achieved to contribute to the Council's wider budget objectives. The current rate of return for the 2014/15 strategy was 0.79% across an investment portfolio of £90-£100m.

Commissioners discussed the approach to debt repayment; the outlook for interest rates; and the range of strategies that local authorities were taking in relation to treasury management. The Cabinet also welcomed the fact that it had been confirmed that the remaining balance due from its previous investment in Icelandic Banks.

**Resolved** – That the Treasury Management activities for 2013-14 and the beginning of 2014-15, as set out in the body of the report, be noted.

### 30. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 - New Anti-Social Behaviour Powers

The Head of Consumer Protection & Business Compliance and the Community Safety Manager introduced a report setting out important new measures for tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) contained within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Members considered a change to the recommendation which was tabled to clarify the delegation of powers under the Act and were informed that it would come into force on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The Act sought to place the victims of ASB at the centre of the response and it streamlined the current ASB toolkit

by consolidating the number of orders from 19 down to 6. The key changes included the introduction of a new 'Community Remedy' utilising restorative justice to deal with low level crime and ASB and a 'Community Trigger' which imposed a duty on statutory partners to take action where victims made repeated complaints about ASB.

The way in which residents in Slough reported ASB would remain the same and communications activity would take place to ensure the new powers were properly understood. Commissioners discussed the scope of the new orders in relation to issues such as littering and fly-tipping and felt the practical implementation of the powers would be the key to their effectiveness.

**Resolved –** That the powers conferred by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to local authorities be delegated by Cabinet to (i) the Customer & Community Services directorate and (ii) the Regeneration, Housing & Resources directorate.

### **31. Family Placement Allowance Scheme**

The Strategic Director of Wellbeing introduced a report which proposed changes to the Slough Special Guardian's Allowance policy.

It was proposed that the policy be amended to make the Special Guardianship Allowance the same as for Adoption and Residence Order Allowances and that they be subject to the same up-rating as fostering allowances. Commissioners were informed that the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) had investigated a complaint on these matters and their recommendations had led to a review led by the Family Placement Service who were proposing the changes to the policy as detailed in Appendix A to the report. The proposal would result in additional costs of c. £14,000 which would be met from existing budgets. The Cabinet agreed the proposed changes to ensure the allowances met the LGOs recommendations and were equitable for those people supporting children in Slough.

**Resolved –** That the following changes be made to the Special Guardianship Allowance Policy:

- (a) That the maximum allowance payable to be the same as for Adoption and Residence Order Allowances.
- (b) That any annual up-rating to be consistent with the up-rating of fostering allowances and to form the basis for the required means test.
- (c) That all allowances that have been in place since 1st April 2012 be adjusted to the current Fostering Network rate.

### **32. References from Overview & Scrutiny**

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

**33. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions**

**Resolved** – That the published Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

**34. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved** – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items in Part II of the agenda as they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to individuals and to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I the Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972.

Below is a summary of the decisions of the Cabinet taken during Part II of the agenda.

**35. Windsor Road Regeneration Scheme**

The Cabinet agreed further steps to facilitate the Council's aspirations to regenerate Windsor Road and bring forward a road widening scheme.

**36. Agreement of the Heads of Terms for Two Free School Sites**

The Cabinet approved steps to agree the Heads of Terms for two free school sites in Slough as detailed in the Part II report.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.34 pm and closed at 8.30 pm)