

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 9th February, 2015.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), Carter, Hussain, Mann, Parmar, Sharif and Swindlehurst

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Ajaib

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Munawar

PART 1

82. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

83. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th January 2015

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th January 2015 be approved as a correct record.

84. Financial & Performance Report - Quarter 3 2014-15

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the latest financial forecasts for the 2014/15 year; sought approval for the virement and write off requests; and summarised the performance of key indicators and 'Gold' projects.

The forecast overspend at the end of the third quarter was £0.69m, which was £270k lower than the previous month as a result of remedial actions taken to manage the overspend. The main area of overspend was in the Children's and Families Service which had a forecast overspend of £1.38m and recovery plan was in place for Children's Social Care to reduce in year pressures. The Cabinet noted that the total forecast overspend was reducing and requested that work continue to move towards a breakeven position by the year end.

Commissioners noted that the Council's balanced scorecard to the end of December showed 69% of indicators were 'green' and a further 22% were 'amber'. The only three 'red' indicators related average staff sickness rates; the number of families placed in bed & breakfasts; and the percentage of Single Assessments completed and authorised within 45 working days. However, it was noted that there had been significant improvement in this indicator with 85.9% completed to timescales, which was below the nationally set target of 100% but well above historic local performance. All six 'Gold' projects had an overall status of 'amber'.

Following discussion, the Cabinet noted the financial and performance information and approved the write off and virement requests as detailed in sections 10 and 11 of the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the current financial forecast position, balanced scorecard and update on Gold projects be noted.
- (b) That the write offs and virements contained within sections 10 and 11 of the report be approved.

85. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-19

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2015-19 which set out the background to the Council's current financial position, future estimates and highlighted some of the key strands to deliver a balanced position over the period of the MTFS.

Government spending on local government had reduced by 25% since 2010 which had had a significant impact on the Council's budget, reducing by 14% to date and projected to have declined by 22% by the end of the MTFS period. The Council faced particular financial risks due to its large Business Rate base and rising pressures on services, particularly social care, in comparison to other authorities, however, there was less risk in Council Tax buoyancy with strong growth in the taxbase in recent years.

The Cabinet discussed a number of issues including the contribution of increased Treasury Management investment returns to offset the savings requirement and the longer term revenue position which indicated that the Council's income was projected to level off by 2021. Commissioners discussed the MTFS financial model, as detailed in Table 3.1 of the Appendix, and asked about the savings likely to be required in future years. The Assistant Director responded that significant savings ranging between £6m and £12m would be required each year to 2019. Some of these savings had already been identified and the Five Year Plan provided clear direction about where future savings could be achieved.

After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the MTFS to Council at its meeting on 19th February 2015.

Recommended – That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-19 be approved.

86. Revenue Budget 2015-16

The Assistant Director, Finance & Audit introduced a report setting out the draft Revenue Budget 2015/16 which the Cabinet were requested to recommend to Council on 19th February 2015.

The budget had been developed in the context of increased demand for services and the continuation of significant reductions in Government funding with the Revenue Support Grant falling by nearly a half over the past two years to £23.8m. The Council had generally managed to deliver key

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outcomes whilst protecting frontline services wherever possible, and it was proposed to freeze Council Tax for the third time in the past four years. The total budgeted income for 2015-16 was £107.5m, a reduction from £112.1m in 2014-15, and the savings requirement was £9.8m after adjustments such as inflation and directorate pressures had been taken into account. A majority of the proposed savings had previously been approved by Cabinet and a full list was detailed in Appendix A to the report.

The Assistant Director provided an update on the final Local Government Finance Settlement which had confirmed that the Council would receive an additional un-ringfenced £197k for Local Welfare Provision but £243k less for Discretionary Housing Payments. It was proposed to hold the £197k against potential pressures around from the various Government welfare reforms. The Cabinet were also informed that some adjustments may be made to the figures prior to the full Council meeting once the parish, fire and police precepts were confirmed. Commissioners discussed a number of issues including the positive impact the surplus in the Collection Fund could have in future years and the work being done to increase Council Tax and Business Rates income.

Consideration was also given to the following recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny in relation to the revenue budget:

“The Cabinet is requested to resolve that Officers be authorised to investigate the feasibility of implementing a Residents Card for differential fee rates for Residents and Non Residents, on a range of services, including sport pitch fees”.

The Cabinet welcomed the recommendation and noted that lower fees and charges of up to 20% for Slough residents already existed in some service areas. The recommendation to authorise officers to investigate the feasibility of extending differential charging was agreed. This may not require a full Residents Card system and the most efficient and practical approach would be explored by Officers.

The Cabinet thanked Officers for the work done in preparing the budget and agreed to recommend the Revenue Budget 2015-16 to full Council on 19th February 2015.

Resolved –

That Officers be authorised to investigate the feasibility of implementing differential fee rates for Residents and Non Residents, on a range of services, including sport pitch hire.

Recommended –

That the Revenue Budget 2015/16 be approved by Council on 19th February 2015, noting that other organisations have yet to set their Council Tax precepts.

Council Tax Resolution – In relation to the Council Tax for 2015/16

- (a) That in pursuance of the powers conferred on the Council as the billing authority for its area by the Local Government Finance Acts (the Acts), the Council Tax for the Slough area for the year ending 31 March 2016 be as specified below and that the Council Tax be levied accordingly.
- (b) That it be noted that at its meeting on 15 December 2014 Cabinet calculated the following Tax Base amounts for the financial year 2015/16 in accordance with Regulations made under sections 31B (3) and 34(4) of the Act:
- (i) 38,462.6 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) as the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Slough area for the year 2015/16; and
 - (ii) The sums below being the amounts of Council Tax Base for the Parishes within Slough for 2015/16:

a) Parish of Britwell	597.0
b) Parish of Coln. with Poyle	1,781.1
c) Parish of Wexham	1,270.3
- (c) That the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with sections 31A to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £437,571,351 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (2)(a) to (f) of the Act. (Gross Expenditure);
 - (ii) £ 392,237,445 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (Gross Income);
 - (iii) £45,333,906 being the amount by which the aggregate at paragraph c (i) above exceeds the aggregate at paragraph c (ii) above calculated by the Council as its council tax requirement for the year as set out in section 31A(4) of the Act. (Council Tax Requirement);
 - (iv) £1,178.64 being the amount at paragraph c(iii) above divided by the amount at paragraph b(i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31B(1) of the

Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, including the requirements for Parish precepts.

- (v) That for the year 2015/16 the Council determines in accordance with section 34 (1) of the Act, Total Special Items of £207,046 representing the total of Parish Precepts for that year.
- (vi) £1,173.27 being the amount at paragraph c (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at paragraph c (v) above by the relevant amounts at paragraph b (i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- (vii) Valuation Bands

Band	Slough Area	Parish of Britwell	Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle	Parish of Wexham Court
	£	£	£	£
A	782.18	44.06	31.80	24.48
B	912.54	51.41	37.10	28.56
C	1,042.91	58.75	42.40	32.64
D	1,173.27	66.10	47.70	36.72
E	1,434.00	80.79	58.30	44.89
F	1,694.72	95.47	68.90	53.05
G	1,955.45	110.16	79.50	61.21
H	2,346.54	132.19	95.40	73.45

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at paragraph c (iv) and c (vi) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amount to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (viii) That it be noted that for the year 2015/16 the Thames Valley Police Authority precept has been provisionally stated in line with previous year increases, in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley £
A	109.14
B	127.32
C	145.52
D	163.70
E	200.08
F	236.46
G	272.84
H	327.41

These precepts have not been formally proposed or agreed by the Thames Valley Police Authority and may be revised when agreed.

- (ix) That it be noted that for the year 2015/16 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has provisionally stated the following amount in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority £
A	40.44
B	47.18
C	53.92
D	60.66
E	74.14
F	87.62
G	101.10
H	121.32

These precepts have not been formally proposed or agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and may be revised when agreed.

- (x) Note that arising from these recommendations, and assuming the major precepts are agreed, the overall Council Tax for Slough Borough Council including the precepting authorities will be as follows:

Band	Slough £	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley £	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority £	TOTAL £
A	782.18	109.14	40.44	931.76
B	912.54	127.32	47.18	1,087.04
C	1,042.91	145.52	53.92	1,242.35
D	1,173.27	163.70	60.66	1,397.63
E	1,434.00	200.08	74.14	1,708.22
F	1,694.72	236.46	87.62	2,018.80
G	1,955.45	272.84	101.10	2,329.39
H	2,346.54	327.41	121.32	2,795.27

- (xi) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 2012 Act.
- (xii) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any Council Tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.
- (xiii) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to collect (and disperse from the relevant accounts) the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rate and that whenever the office of the Section 151 Officer is vacant or the holder thereof is for any reason unable to act, the Chief Executive or such other authorised post-holder be authorised to act as before said in his or her stead.
- (xiv) The above figures assume a council tax freeze for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. If this is not the case this report requests the Section 151 or nominated officer be authorised to adjust the council tax charges in line with final figures following consultation with the leader and leader of the opposition

HRA Rents and Service Charges –

- (e) That the proposed increase in Housing Revenue Account rents and service charges for 2015/16 be as follows:
 - (i) Council house dwelling rents for 2015/16 increase by an average of £2.24 per week (2.2% average increase) with effect from Monday 6th April 2015. This is in line with current

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government guidelines on rent increases, linked to September CPI+1%.

- (ii) Garage rents, heating, utility and ancillary charges increase by 2.3% with effect from Monday 6th April 2015. This is based upon the September RPI figure.
- (iii) Service charges increase by 2.2% with effect from Monday 6th April 2015. This is based upon the CPI+1% uplift used for rent setting.
- (iv) 'Other committee' property rents increase by an average of 2.2% from Monday 6th April 2015 in line with the average increase of all housing properties.

Fees and Charges –

- (f) That the proposed increase in Fees and charges outlined in Appendix Fi for 2015/16 be as follows:
 - (i) Sports Pitch fees and Allotment fees increase by the benchmark plus 4.2%
 - (ii) The sports pitch fees will be implemented from the 1st April 2015 but the allotments will take effect from the 1st December 2017 as the allotment holders are normally given a year's notice and the fees for 2016 have already been set.

87. Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan Interim Update Report

The Strategic Director, Regeneration, Housing and Resources introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress of the Trelawney Avenue Redevelopment Plan.

Extensive discussions had been held with NHS England and the Slough Clinical Commissioning Group about the potential for GP and other health facilities located in a new community hub on the Merrymakers site, however, at the time of writing the report both of these organisations had indicated that they were unable to support the proposal as they felt the Langley area was already well served by existing GP practices. Members were informed that since the report it had been written, further discussions had been held which left open the possibility of such facilities and Officers therefore suggested a change to the recommendation to continue discussions with health partners with the outcome the subject of a further report to Cabinet in June 2015.

The Cabinet reaffirmed their ambition for a community hub in the area and therefore agreed to continue discussions with health partners to seek to achieve this outcome. It was also agreed to delegate authority to Officers, following consultation with the relevant Commissioners, to take further steps on the housing elements of the plan that could be progressed without compromising the option for a community hub on the Merrymakers site.

Resolved –

- (a) That further discussions be held with NHS England and Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regarding the provision of an additional GP practice or satellite practice at a new community hub on the Merry Makers site (Area A) as part of the wider redevelopment plans.
- (b) That Thames Valley Police (TVP) remain interested in working collaboratively with the Council to re-locate into new or refurbished premises.
- (c) That following consultation with community groups, internal departments and TVP, the option of remodelling existing retail is being considered. In addition to giving TVP a greater presence within the local area, this option would allow the Council to develop residential-led proposals for the site of the existing police station (an HRA site owned by SBC) as part of the overall strategy.
- (d) That subject to (c), the Strategic Director of Regeneration, Housing & Resources and the Head of Asset Management, following consultation with the Commissioners for Neighbourhoods & Renewal and Community & Leisure, be authorised to take necessary steps prior to a further report in June 2015 to progress residential development schemes that provide a mix of affordable housing with a range of house types be pursued on part of the Merry Makers Site (Area A), subject to pursuing the option of the Cabinet's ambition for a community hub; and at the 324 Trelawney Avenue site (Area B); and Trelawney Avenue Residential Infill site (Area C).
- (e) That the proposals to introduce new sporting facilities in Langley Academy part funded by the Council that will support local sports clubs, promote improved health and well being and meets a need identified by the community be noted.
- (f) That a follow-up report be presented to Cabinet in June 2015.

88. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet received a report detailing recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to the 2015-16 budget.

The recommendation in relation investigating the possibility of further differential charging for a range of services was resolved during consideration of the Revenue Budget (Minute 86 refers).

The following recommendation had also been received in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16:

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“The Cabinet is requested to recommend that investment in the property fund portfolio increase from £7 million to £10 million.”

It was noted that the Cabinet had already agreed on 19th January to recommend the Treasury Management Strategy 2015-16 to Council which included provision for increasing investment in the property fund portfolio. It was therefore agreed to support the recommendation from scrutiny when recommending the Treasury Management Strategy to Budget Council on 19th February 2015.

Recommended – That investment in the property fund portfolio increase from £7 million to £10 million.

89. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered the published Notification of Key Decisions for forthcoming three month period. A number of amendments had been made since publication and these were noted before the published plan was endorsed.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between February and April 2015 be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.37 pm and closed at 7.05 pm)