

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 22nd June, 2015.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (from 7.05pm), Carter, Hussain, Parmar, Sharif and Swindlehurst (in the Chair at the outset)

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Plenty

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Mann and Munawar

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Carter declared a prejudicial interest in item 6 – Voluntary Sector 2015-2020 Partnership in that he provided support to Slough CVS. He therefore withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this item.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th April 2015

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th April 2015 be approved as a correct record.

3. Provisional Financial and Performance Outturn Report: 2014-15 Financial Year

The Corporate Financial Controller introduced a report setting out the provisional financial outturn for 2014-15 and a summary of the Council's performance against the balanced scorecard indicators and 'Gold' projects.

The provisional outturn was a breakeven position, even allowing for a contribution £224k to reserves, revised down from £277k as stated in the report. This would be split evenly between the Transformation Fund and the Future Budget Requirement Fund. The Cabinet approved this transfer to reserves to help mitigate the future impact of significant Government funding reductions. In a challenging financial environment, the Council had successfully contained the financial pressures it had faced during the year and 96% of the £12.5m revenue savings had been achieved.

Capital programme spend had been 62% of the revised budget of £60.8m and the consequent re-profiling for 2015-16 was approved. More intense capital monitoring would be a priority for 2015/16. However, it was noted that the key capital project of the Curve remained on track to be completed within the agreed timescale. Commissioners were concerned about the historic under-spend of capital budgets and asked what further measures were being taken. It was responded that the Capital Strategy Board were working closely with departments across the Council to monitor projects and potentially bring forward other schemes when slippage in the programme was identified.

The latest performance data on the balanced scorecard indicators was noted. 66% of indicators had been rated 'green' with a particular improvement in the Council Tax collection rate which had achieved the annual target 96% and was now rated as 'green'. All 'Gold' projects as at 31st March 2015 had an overall status of 'amber'.

Commissioners discussed a number of issues including the impact of the outturn on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the need to address financial control in over-spending service areas, particularly children's services. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet welcomed the break even position on the revenue budget and achievement of savings targets, particularly in view of both the rising demand for services and Government funding reductions. The key information from the outturn was noted and Members approved recommendations (e) to (i) of the report which included transfers to reserves, re-profiling the capital programme, write off and virement requests and the procurement of the smoking cessation contract.

Resolved –

That the following key information from the Provisional Financial and Performance Outturn 2014-15 be noted:

- (a) That the provisional revenue outturn for 2014-15 was a break even position. This was after allowing for a contribution of £224k to reserves.
- (b) That the provisional capital outturn was expenditure of £37.55m against the capital programme of £60.42m, with £22.0m re-profiled into the 2015-16 financial year.
- (c) That within the Council's balanced scorecard, 66% of indicators were 'green', with the following 'red' indicators:
 - a. % of Single Assessments completed and authorised within 45 working days (in month).
 - b. Number of families placed in Bed and Breakfasts
 - c. Number of Households in temporary accommodation including hostels
- (d) That all 'Gold' projects had progressed overall as 'amber'.

That the following be approved:

- (e) The transfer of £112k to the Transformation fund and £112k to the Future Budget Requirement Fund reserve from the 2014/15 underspend.

- (f) The revised 2015-16 capital programme to take account of re-profiling of previously approved 2014-15 projects into the 2015-16 programme.
- (g) The revenue carry forwards included within the 2014/15 outturn.
- (h) The virements and write-offs detailed within the report.
- (i) The start of the tendering process for the smoking cessation contract.

4. Slough Labour Party's Manifesto

The Cabinet were presented with the Slough Labour Party's Manifesto for the 2015 elections and noted the key pledges that it contained. Commissioners asked for a delivery plan to be produced setting out clear milestones for the various commitments and it was noted that officers had already begun this work.

Implementation was underway in a number of areas and the Commissioner for Environment & Open Spaces highlighted that work had started on the improvements to Baylis Park.

Resolved – That the Slough Labour Party Manifesto 2015 be adopted as Council policy.

5. Cabinet portfolios and Commissioner Responsibilities

The Cabinet formally noted the portfolios and responsible Commissioners as detailed in Appendix A to the report. The Leader had not made any changes to Commissioners or their portfolios since the Borough elections held on 7th May 2015.

Resolved – That the portfolios and responsible Commissioners be noted.

6. Promoting and Supporting the Wellbeing of Residents with the Voluntary Sector 2015 - 2020 Partnership Strategy

(Councillor Carter declared a prejudicial interest in that he provided support to Slough CVS and withdrew from the meeting)

The Acting Director of Adult Social Care introduced a report seeking approval for a new Partnership Strategy with the voluntary sector to promote and support the wellbeing of residents.

The Council currently had a range of contracts with the voluntary and community sector to support vulnerable adults, however there was an overall lack of clarity on key outcomes and it was considered that better value for money could be achieved with a fresh approach. There were four key aims in the new strategy, as detailed in paragraph 5.2 of the report, which included focusing on prevention services to reduce the need for care and supporting people to do more to help themselves. The new contracts were due to begin

in January 2016 and the commissioning arrangements designed to secure the improved outcomes for residents were explained. The level of funding in year 1 would be £1.37m, consistent with current levels, and the levels would reduce to £1.2m in year 2 and £1.03m in year 3. Members were asked to approve the new strategy and delegate authority to conduct the tender process.

Commissioners discussed a number of aspects of the new strategy including communication with the sector and the procurement arrangements. Members recognised that some existing providers may not be funded following the outcome of the procurement process, however it was felt the strategy included a clear set of outcomes and provided a basis for the voluntary and community sector to positively engage with the Council to deliver more effective services for residents. After due consideration, the Cabinet approved the new strategy and gave delegated authority to approve the outcome of the tendering process.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Voluntary Sector 2015-2020 Partnership Strategy, as at Appendix A to the report, be approved.
- (b) That the Director of Wellbeing, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Commissioner for Finance & Strategy, be given delegated authority to approve the outcome of the tender process to deliver this strategy.

(Councillor Carter rejoined the meeting)

7. School Places Strategy

The Chief Executive introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the pressures, emerging risks and progress made in delivering school places in Slough.

(Councillor Anderson joined the meeting)

It was reported that the overall scale of demand pressures for primary places was now less than the corresponding demand for secondary places. Forecasts for the demand for school places had proved accurate to date, and plans were in place to secure the necessary temporary increase in primary forms of entry over the next two years. Concerns were expressed about the short term over-supply of secondary places, with a projected shortfall of places from 2018-19 onwards. The rapid expansion of free school provision was noted and whilst the Council had welcomed the additional provision, it had lobbied to defer some openings to better match the profile of required secondary places. The over supply for Slough usage in 2015-16 was circa 7 forms of entry and had resulted in a lack of applications for the two out of borough schools at Churchmead and Burnham Park Academy. There was also a forecast of an over supply of 3 forms of entry in 2016-17 which could

risk the viability of those schools on which Slough would be reliant in the future. The Cabinet were asked to note the risks presented by the current over supply of secondary places and endorse the approach to school place planning as set out in the report.

The Cabinet expressed their concern about the position in relation to secondary places and noted the risks for future provision. Commissioners discussed a range of issues including the implications arising from the significant increases in the number of schools converting to academies. It was noted that the Council's influence over academies was limited, including over admissions policies, and discussions were held with academies to encourage buy in to the overall strategy. The financial implications were discussed and it was noted that the School Places Capital Programme 2014-20 had £62m available, £26m of which committed and further £30.5m provisionally allocated leaving an unallocated sum of £6m. It was considered that this was a satisfactory position to provide both financial support for the necessary expansion programme and the required flexibility to respond to future opportunities.

Resolved –

- (a) That the present over supply of secondary places and the risks it presented be noted;
- (b) That the projects in progress be noted; and
- (c) That the approach to school places planning as set out in the report be endorsed.

(Councillor Anderson in the Chair)

8. High Speed 2 / Heathrow Express Depot

The Cabinet received a report providing an update on the proposed relocation of the Heathrow Express depot as a direct consequence of the changes being made to the Old Oak Common site as part of the High Speed 2 (HS2) works. Commissioners were asked to agree, subject to the approval of full Council, to raise a petition against the Additional Provision of the High Speed 2 Hybrid Bill which would result in the relocation.

Officers reported that discussions had been held with HS2 on the relocation and whilst a number of alternatives had been considered, HS2 had decided that Langley was the only viable option. The Council had been provided with very limited information on the detailed plans ahead of the depositing of the Additional Provisions and accompanying Environmental Statement in Parliament expected on 13th July 2015. Petitions against the proposals were likely to have to be submitted by early to mid August. Commissioners were very concerned about the likely impacts of the relocation which included increased noise and air pollution, flood risk, additional traffic and the significant loss of housing provision planned for the site. As a Crossrail hub,

there were plans for the site and adjacent areas to develop several hundred homes and businesses, and regeneration opportunities for Langley would be lost if the relocation went ahead. The depot had negligible direct benefit to Slough and the plans would also have a significant impact on the Council in terms of potential Council Tax and Business Rates revenue.

The detailed grounds for the petition could not be determined until full details were published, and it was therefore proposed and agreed to authorise the necessary delegations to develop and submit a petition, subject to the approval of full Council at its meeting in July.

Recommended – That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services, subject to Full Council approval, for a petition to be raised against the Additional Provision in the High Speed 2 Hybrid Bill for the relocation of the Heathrow Express Depot to Langley.

9. Scheme of Delegation to Officers - Executive Functions

Commissioners considered a report seeking formal approval for the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution insofar as the scheme related to executive functions.

The Council had approved amendments Scheme of Delegations at its meeting on 27th January 2015. Commissioners noted that as executive functions could only be delegated by the Cabinet, not by full Council, it was a requirement for the Cabinet to formally adopt the scheme as it related to executive functions.

Resolved – That the Scheme of Delegations to Officers set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution (as amended at the Meeting of the Council held on 27th January 2015) be adopted insofar as the scheme relates to executive functions.

10. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet considered a number of recommendations from the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee and from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group on Town Centre Car Parking.

References from Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

A report was received on the Council's strategy and policy for raising pupil achievement and the protocol for working with academies and free schools. Commissioners noted that the strategy, policy and protocol had been considered in detail and endorsed by the Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet accepted their recommendation to adopt these documents as at appendices A, B and C of the report.

References from the O&S Task & Finish Group on Town Centre Car Parking

The Cabinet considered the report from the Task & Finish Group on Town Centre Car Parking and the comments and proposed actions from officers in relation to the nine recommendations it had made. Commissioners welcomed the work that the Task & Finish Group had done on these matters and recognised the importance of ensuring car parking policy and practice supporting the Five Year Plan outcome of a thriving town centre. The covering report set out which recommendations were proposed to be approved, noted or taken forward as part of the review of the Local Plan. Two recommendations from the Task & Finish Group were not proposed to be taken forward, namely a review of the “Free from 3pm” parking trial on the basis this initiative had already been trialled and evaluated.

There was considerable discussion about current limit of 5,000 parking spaces in the town centre, and the inclusion of parking at Slough railway station in this allocation. The Chair of the Task & Finish Group, Councillor Plenty, addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 on this matter and explained the reasons the Group had recommended that station parking be removed from the allocation. These were to ensure future parking need would not be hampered by the limit and any increased parking demand arising from Crossrail/WRLtH would not negatively impact of the optimum spaces required for core town centre use. Officers responded by setting out the rationale for the limit to control the number of temporary car parks and noted that there was significant unused capacity in several car parks.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet noted that the limit would be reviewed as part of the review of the Local Plan. Commissioners asked that this review take forward the thrust of the Task & Finish Group’s recommendations to ensure the limit was sufficient to meet appropriate demand for town centre parking and considering the inclusion within this limit of car parks such as the railway station which served to meet wider parking need. The Cabinet also agreed that the work undertaken to improve the quality of town centre car parks continue to be supported and further measures to promote quality car parks, including maximising the potential of the electronic signs and variable message boards.

Resolved –

Recommendations from the Education & Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel:

- That the SBC Raising Pupil Achievement Strategy and Policy, as at Appendices A and B to the report, be adopted.
- That the SBC Protocol for working with Academies and Free Schools, as at Appendix C to the report, be adopted.

Recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Town Centre Car Parking Task & Finish Group:

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- (a) That recommendations 4 and 8 be approved, namely:
 - 4. That land adoption be used to increase SBC's control of parking (e.g. Kittiwake House, the area in Mill Street outside Foundry Court).
 - 8. That the size of loading and unloading bays be reviewed to facilitate their use by larger vehicles.
- (b) That it be noted that recommendations 1 and 5 would be taken forward as part of the review of the Local Plan.
 - 1. That the current policy of zero parking be reviewed, with a future ratio to be specified subject to further research by Slough Borough Council (SBC) and justification.
 - 5. That the current limit of 5,000 parking spaces be reviewed, using the justification for at the time of its creation and variations in the situation since this time (e.g. parking at Tesco's, Crossrail) to reappraise the figure.
- (c) That officers responses and actions detailed in the report on recommendations 2, 3 and 7 be noted, namely:
 - 2. That the potential hire of, or use of parking permits with time restrictions in neighbouring parking facilities (e.g. Tesco car park) be researched;
 - 3. That the time restrictions on areas with single yellow lines be reduced to 6pm in suitable areas (subject to research by SBC); and
 - 7. That the potential expansion of car parking facilities at Slough railway station be investigated.
- (d) That no further immediate action be taken in relation to Recommendations 6 and 9, namely:
 - 6. That the parking at Slough railway station be removed from SBC's allocation of parking spaces.
 - 9. That further research be conducted into the continuation of free parking after 3pm, or cheaper parking through the use of a 'Slough Card', with a view to a potential increase in high street trade.

11. Notification of Decisions

Commissioners considered the published Notification of Decisions which set out the key and non-key decisions expected to be taken by Cabinet to the end

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of August. Since publication of the statutory notice, a number of items originally scheduled for June had been deferred until the Cabinet meeting in July and it was also noted a report was likely to be added on education places.

Resolved – That the the published Notification of Forthcoming Decisions for the period between June to August 2015 be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.39 pm)