

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 14th September, 2015.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Chahal (until 8.14pm), Nazir (until 8.20pm), Pantelic (until 7.55pm), Smith (until 7.55pm), Strutton and Wright (until 7.55pm)

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Munawar

PART 1

24. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

25. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th July 2015

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

26. Children's Services Organisation Decisions - Contract with Children's Services Organisation for the Delivery of Children's Social Care Services

The Strategic Director of Customer & Community Services introduced a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress of the Children's Services transition project and the Assistant Director Finance & Audit tabled a paper with further detail on the budget position and financial implications. Approval was sought to delegate authority to finalise the services contract and recommend to full Council the funding to be transferred for the Children's Services Organisation (CSO) budget. The contract term would be for six years, with a break clause at four years available to the Minister.

The Cabinet were briefed on the background and process undertaken to date to ensure a safe and fit for purpose transfer of children's social care services to the CSO, Slough Children's Services Trust Ltd, in line with the two Ministerial Directions. The transfer was recognised as being complex, with significant risks, and whilst there was more work to be done prior to sign off, both parties shared the aim of resolving critical matters in order to go live with the transfer from 1st October 2015. Some key work streams had not been concluded and these would be completed after the go live date.

The Cabinet noted the position in relation to staffing and TUPE arrangements, pensions, accommodation, support services and governance and were advised that there were three key issues to finalise from the Council's perspective prior to entering into the contract:

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1. The improvement journey – i.e. to meet the commitment in the contract which would require the CSO to achieve a 'good' Ofsted rating within 3 years of go live and 'outstanding' within 5 years.
2. Agreeing a model and budget envelope which delivered the required service more cost effectively, reducing costs and achieving savings over the life of the CSO, meeting the principles from paragraph 7.17 of the report.
3. Exit strategy – the Council remained concerned about several issues including the potential liabilities for redundancy payments for staff that would not transfer back to the Council on termination of the contract.

The Cabinet recognised these key outstanding issues and emphasised the importance of resolving them successfully prior to the finalisation of the contract and requesting full Council to approve the budget transfer. Cabinet Members asked whether Officers were confident that a safe transition could be made in view of the critical issues to be resolved and the limited time available before the go live date. The Strategic Director stated that significant progress had been made since the previous report to Cabinet in July and Officers now had a greater level of confidence for example in the key, permanent appointments made by the CSO to its management team and the involvement of best practice from Achieve for Children that had been used in setting the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Cabinet emphasised the importance of ensuring clear and strong performance management arrangements to enable the Council to effectively monitor services and the improvement journey, particular as the authority retained statutory responsibility for the service.

The Commissioner for Children's Social Care in Slough appointed by the Department for Education (DfE), Eleanor Brazil, and the Chair of Slough Children's Services Trust Ltd, Elaine Simpson, were invited to address the Cabinet and answer questions from Cabinet Commissioners. Ms Brazil drew attention to her letter to Members attached at Appendix E to the report and assured the Cabinet that the new organisation would be ready to deliver from 'day one'. She stated that there was a need to address leadership and management issues which had been identified as a weakness and she was confident the new management team would bring expertise to Slough to accelerate the pace of improvement. Cabinet Members asked about the senior management and Board appointments and it was responded that the recruitment process for several non-executive members of the Board had attracted high calibre interest and it was anticipated that the Minister would confirm these appointments by 21st September.

The supplementary information tabled set out the updated position in relation to the budget of the CSO and the wider financial implications for the Council. It was noted that the CSO had requested a budget of £27.3m for the first year, based on an 18 month budget position, which compared to the baseline budget for the service of £21.8m. Taking into account the current overspend of £1.3m and a further £1.3m risk / rewards share, there was a remaining budget gap of £2.9m. Ms Brazil informed Members that a sum of £2m had been sought from the DfE and a decision was expected by the Minister on or

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before 21st September. The Cabinet emphasised the importance of confirming this decision prior to asking full Council to approve the budget allocation at their meeting on 22nd September. The residual gap of £0.9m was proposed to be filled from SBC funded Invest to Save money, subject to sufficient bids. Over the longer term, the Council contribution to the CSO would reduce as detailed in section 7 of the report, albeit from the higher baseline set in year 1.

Commissioners asked a number of further questions of DfE and CSO representatives and asked for the justification for the additional investment sought from local taxpayers, given the fact previous inspections had recognised adequate resources had been provided to the service and the expectation that expertise brought to Slough by the new management team appointed by the CSO should be able to deliver service improvements at lower cost. Ms Simpson confirmed that the requested budget had been subject of rigorous analysis and due diligence and that the additional funding was required to improve and transform the service.

Members were also very concerned about the potential and impact of any CSO overspend, and the implications the base budget increase would have on other key services delivered by the Council. In view of the significant potential pressures across all Cabinet portfolios, it was agreed that delegation to the Chief Executive in recommendation (a) of the report be extended so that the contract could only be entered into following consultation with all Commissioners.

Cabinet Members asked to see the CSOs improvement plan to provide assurance that appropriate actions and innovation was in place to improve services. Ms Brazil highlighted that the Council was under intervention and the new organisation was independent of the Council, with continued involvement of the DfE to oversee improvement. Ms Simpson stated that part of this independence was that management team would be accountable to the company board. Reports and key documents would therefore be considered by the CSO and the improvement plan would be shared with the Cabinet portfolio holder for Education & Children after that. The Cabinet acknowledged that they would not see all CSO Board papers, however, in view of the critical importance of the improvement plan both in terms of justifying the additional Council investment in the service and the Council's ongoing statutory accountability, they requested that an overview of the short term improvement plan be shared with the Cabinet Member as soon as possible, and prior to the finalisation of the contract.

Speaking under Rule 30 of the Council's Constitution, Councillor Strutton stated that he felt the transfer to the CSO provided an opportunity for a fresh start for the service and asked whether the KPIs had been agreed by both parties. Ms Simpson responded that the process was almost complete with overall KPIs agreed with further work to finalise some of the baselines yet to be completed. In response to a further question, it was noted that there may be changes to senior management post transfer but the CSO would have robust systems in place to manage costs and liabilities.

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At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to enter into the contract with the Slough Children's Trust Ltd, noting that resolution to several outstanding issues was still required prior to the go live date of 1st October 2015. These included limiting future pension liabilities, exit costs and receipt of an improvement plan. It was also agreed that subject to the satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues, the Cabinet would recommend a budget envelope for the CSO from the Council's budget to full Council on 22nd September which comprised £24.4m base budget, plus £0.9m made available for appropriate Invest to Save projects and £2m of funding from the DfE to support improvement, subject to Ministerial agreement due by 21st September 2015.

Recommended –

- (a) To recommend to full Council the arrangements and agreements for the
 - i. setting from the Council's budget the CSO budget, in line with the funding position detailed in the report, tabled paper and verbal update at the meeting:
 - First year budget funding to a maximum of £24.4m towards the Trust's requested budget of £27.3m.
 - The £2.9m gap to be filled from the £2m requested from DfE to support the service (with a Ministerial decision to be made prior to the Council agreeing the budget on 22nd September 2015), with the remaining £0.9m SBC funded Invest to Save (subject to bids).
 - ii. the Council's pension liabilities arising from the CSO, limiting the future potential liability to the Council to address the concerns expressed by the Cabinet.
 - iii. managing and mitigating the Council's liabilities on exit of the service delivery contract to minimise future costs to the Council.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Chief Executive, following consultation with all Commissioners, be given delegated authority to enter into the following arrangements with Slough Children's Services Trust Limited (CSO):
 - i. the completion of the Services Contract for children's social care and SEN functions on terms which manage the Council's concerns and risks
 - ii. the completion of the following:
 - a. licences to occupy by the CSO of :
 - i. ground floor west of SMP
 - ii. space within Britwell Community Centre
 - iii. Breakaway

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- iv. Mallards
 - b. the completion of a sub lease for Connaught House, High Street by the CSO on terms to be agreed
 - iii. the completion of the services support agreements between the Council, the CSO and other 3rd party suppliers on terms which manage the Council's concerns and risks
- (b) Agree not to implement the decision of Cabinet (December 2014) in relation to the extension of the contract for the provision of education services between the Council and the Mott Macdonald Ltd (Cambridge Education).
- (c) That relevant Commissioners receive an overview of the CSOs improvement plan at the earliest opportunity, prior to finalisation of the contract, to receive assurance of the adequacy of improvement plans.

27. Financial & Performance Report: 1st Quarter 2015/16

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report which provided Cabinet with the latest forecast financial information for the first quarter of 2015/16; summarised the Council's performance against the balanced scorecard indicators and 'Gold' projects; and approve various matters in relation to procurement, write offs and virements.

The Council was forecasting an overspend of £2.803m at the end of the first quarter, with the main service areas showing variation from budget being Children & Families, Adult Social Care, Health Partnerships and Estates & Regeneration. These had been partially offset by some corporate underspends. Plans were in place to bring the budget back into line over the year, other than for the Children's Services budget as agreed under minute 26. In relation to the capital programme, there had been some reprofiling of the TVB Local Enterprise Partnership funded schemes. Commissioners noted the latest performance information, including the balanced scorecard indicators linked to the outcomes of the Five Year Plan. No significant 'red' indicators had been identified, although a number had an 'amber' rating and carried risks as set out in the report.

The Cabinet discussed the current position in relation to next year's budget and the medium term financial position of the Council more generally. It was clear that there would be significant further funding reductions to local authorities from the Revenue Support Grant in the coming years. The level of future reductions, and implications for the Council's budget and savings requirement, would become clearer after the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn.

A Commissioner asked whether the Council's budget provision to support refugees and asylum seekers would be sufficient to cope with any potential increase in the borough. It was responded that it was too early to make any

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assessment of the potential impacts as further detail on the funding and distribution of Syrian refugees under the programme was awaited from the Government. The Cabinet also discussed the proposed commissioning of a portfolio of temporary accommodation units and the possibility of any further in year funding reductions such as those recently announced to public health. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet noted the financial and performance update and agreed the recommendations in relation to procurement, write offs, virements and Council Tax Support Scheme.

Resolved –

- (a) That the virements and write offs contained within the report be approved.
- (b) That the current financial forecast position, balanced scorecard and update on Gold projects be noted.
- (c) That the addition of an administration penalty of £50 within the Council Tax Support Scheme be approved.
- (d) That the re-commissioning be approved of Mental Health Residential Care and Supported Living services and the direct award of the contract for the Pilot project for a Mental Health Supported Accommodation and Step down service to Look Ahead Care and Support.
- (e) That the commissioning of a portfolio of temporary accommodation units from private sector landlords in order to deliver ongoing reductions in revenue expenditure under Part 4 - 4.6 Financial Procedure Rules be approved.

28. Treasury Management Annual Report

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report which summarised treasury activity in 2014/15 and the first part of 2015/16. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2011 recommended that Members be informed of such activities at least twice a year and the report detailed progress in relation to the external context, debt management, investment activity and future outlook.

It was noted that the change in Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15, as approved by Council in February 2014, had yielded a significant increase in the Council's investment returns from 0.5% to almost 2% in 2014/15. The Council was now a top performing local authority in terms of treasury returns relative to its comparators. In addition to improved performance, the strategy to diversify the portfolio had also reduced risk. It was also confirmed that the authority had complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2015/16.

Commissioners discussed a number of issues including future plans for investment activity and the position regarding historic investment of £2.5m

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with Icelandic Banks. A final payment of £75k was expected imminently and this meant the Council would fully recover all of the money originally invested. The Cabinet congratulated the Assistant Director and his team for the excellent performance achieved and agreed to note the report.

Resolved – That the Treasury Management activities for 2014/15 and the beginning of 2015/16, as set out in the body of the report, be noted.

29. Local Welfare Provision

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report on the position regarding the Local Welfare Provision (LWP) scheme. The scheme was facing in year pressures and approval was sought for an additional £30k for 2015/16 to continue the scheme for the current year.

Government had ceased dedicated funding for the scheme in 2015/16, although some additional Revenue Support Grant had been received, and there was no obligation on Council's to have a LWP scheme. However, Members had previously agreed to continue the scheme which provided emergency assistance for vulnerable people. The 2015/16 scheme had been funded from underspends from previous years, however, demand had risen and a funding gap for the current year had emerged. Commissioners felt that welfare reforms were having a significant impact on some people which was increasing the pressure on other budgets such as temporary housing and crisis care. It was also noted that there were likely to be further impacts from the introduction of Universal Credit in Slough at the end of September 2015.

After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to approve an additional £30k funding for the LWP scheme for 2015/16 and that the future of the scheme would be considered as part of the budget setting process, taking into account the impacts of the introduction of Universal Credit and wider welfare changes.

Resolved –

- (a) That additional funding of £30k for 2015-16 be approved; and
- (b) That the pressures and potential changes for 2015-16 and 2016-17 be noted.

30. Local Authority Partnership Purchase (LAPP)

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit introduced a report which recommended adoption of the Local Authority Partnership Purchase (LAPP) scheme which would provide targeted help to potential home-buyers on a shared ownership basis and deliver a good return on the Council's financial investment. In considering the report, Commissioners noted the further information provided in the Part II Appendices A and C, without disclosing any exempt information.

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The scheme was an extension of the shared ownership model with mechanisms to overcome the negatives of current such schemes, for example LAPP allowed open market purchases and was not restricted to certain shared ownership properties. The basic model was a 70/30 percentage ownership split between the property occupier and the Council, with the Council receiving a revenue income stream and capital appreciation from its investment. The report had been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2015 and it had recommended to Cabinet that key workers and people with local connections, similar to the local eligibility criteria in the Housing Allocations Scheme, be given priority under LAPP. The Committee also recommended that the scheme not be made available to buy to let landlords.

The Cabinet recognised that the scheme potentially had both a positive policy and financial impacts both in terms of supporting local housing need and delivering strong returns on investment. The concept of the scheme was welcomed and the Cabinet endorsed the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that some priority be given the key workers and other target groups. It was agreed to adopt the scheme in accordance with the recommended parameters and that the necessary adjustments to the Capital Strategy be recommended to full Council.

Resolved – That LAPP be adopted in accordance with the outline provided within the report and that the following parameters be approved:

- The maximum local authority purchased (rented) share of £120k
- The split between the two shares of 70% purchased via mortgage and 30% purchased by LA
- The maximum limit for the total indemnity to be offered of £4.4m
- The maximum loan size (based on maximum property valuation) of £266k
- The qualifying post codes in a schedule to the indemnity deed to cover all in SBC area
- Based on these parameters, a maximum investment of £9.3m (£13.7m total costs including repayment interest) would be required (plus a further £4.4m indemnity guaranteed by way of a deed) to provide approximately 100 mortgages via the scheme.

Recommended – That the necessary adjustments to the capital programme be made to provide for the introduction of the LAPP scheme.

31. Fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver and Operators

The Licensing Manager introduced a report which sought approval for the proposed new fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators.

Under the Deregulation Act 2015 changes were introduced to standardise the duration of all driver licences to three years and operator licences to five years. However, licensing authorities could specify a lesser period in such licences as the authority thought appropriate given the circumstances of the case. Following discussions with the trade, the Licensing Committee had resolved to approve this approach if a specific request was made. Fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers and Operators had been reviewed in light of these changes and would, if approved, come into effect from 1st October 2015 other than for the exceptions detailed in the report.

In response to questions from Commissioners, it was noted that the proposed fees had been prepared to ensure full cost recovery, taking into the account case law that fees must be reasonable and proportionate and the costs of enforcement could not be recovered. After due consideration, the Cabinet approved the proposed fees as recommended in the report.

Resolved – That the proposed fees set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report be approved.

32. Proposed Strategic Acquisition Strategy

The Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration introduced a report which sought approval for the proposed Strategic Acquisition Strategy to enable the Council to accelerate its regeneration objectives and improve financial resilience. It was proposed that a £25m budget be made available for strategic acquisitions and that the financial procedure rules and capital programme be amended accordingly.

The Part II Appendices 2 and 3 to the report were noted during consideration of the item without disclosing any of the exempt information.

The Strategy and associated procedure would enhance the ability of the Council to compete for investment opportunities within commercial timescales, whilst also ensuring high levels of governance. The acquisition of property assets could directly help achieve the Five Year Plan outcomes in terms of regeneration, and a more streamlined decision making procedure proposed would mean the Council could respond more quickly to opportunities than it was able to do at present. Acquiring investment assets which generated a commercial return could also support the Council's financial objectives, particularly during a period of future reductions in Government funding. It was proposed to establish a Strategic Acquisition Board which would make decisions on acquisitions and investments against the criteria set out in the appendices to the report, and monitor the performance of the investment portfolio.

The Cabinet discussed a range of issues including the acquisition procedure and criteria and it was confirmed that acquisitions would be made in Slough, unless there were exceptional circumstances. Commissioners agreed that the Strategy would be a good use of the Council's capital resources to deliver

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strong financial returns at the same time as making significant investments in the town. At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed to recommend the adoption of the Strategy and associated procedures, capital programme adjustments and amendments to the financial procedure rules to full Council at its meeting on 22nd September 2015.

Recommended –

- (a) That the introduction of the proposed Strategic Acquisition Strategy and associated procedure be approved to enhance the ability for the Council to compete for investment opportunities within commercial timescales.
- (b) That in order to accelerate regeneration objectives, realise local economic development outcomes and provide long-term strategic benefits, it be agreed that all strategic acquisitions would normally be made within the Borough of Slough.
- (c) That the Council's Financial Regulations be amended to enable the acquisition of assets by Cabinet up to £25m (inclusive of acquisition costs) and give authority for the capital programme to be amended as required.
- (d) That the Strategic Director for Regeneration, Housing and Resources, following consultation with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewals and the Leader of the Council, be delegated authority to introduce the proposed Strategic Acquisition Board ("SAB").
- (e) That the SAB be given delegated authority to make strategic acquisitions in line with the objectives, criteria and governance procedures set out in the report, following consultation with the with the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods and Renewals and the Leader of the Council.
- (f) That it be noted that in the event that Strategic acquisitions exceed £25m per annum, flexibility be introduced to provide authority to make a bid subject to Council approval.
- (g) That a balanced investment portfolio be created in line with set criteria, generating an independent income stream alleviating some of the pressure enforced by central government funding cuts.

33. Asset Challenge Update

The Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration introduced a report which updated Cabinet on the Asset Challenge process and sought approval for a series of recommendations for the next stage of the process.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy required revenue savings of approximately £36m over the next four years and the Asset Challenge

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process had been established to evaluate the organisations operational property portfolio against a common set of criteria to drive efficiency savings. Annual revenue spending on such assets was £3.5m and the Five Year Plan included a revenue savings target of 40%, which equated to £1.4m over the next four years. From the detailed review of the Council's existing portfolio of 40 operational sites, the Cabinet were asked to approve the list of operational assets to be retained as set out in the Part II Appendix One, which was considered without disclosing and exempt information, and agree that all other operational assets remain within the Asset Challenge process, with a responsibility on service departments to substantiate retention and/or investment in the asset.

The Cabinet recognised the importance of the process in maximising the performance of operational property assets, and it discussed the process undertaken and next steps. Sites to be retained would have their existing uses reviewed to ensure their potential was maximised and space properly used. A further report would be considered by the Cabinet in December 2015 which included recommendations for the disposal of sites that remain in the Asset Challenge process. The Cabinet agreed the recommendations as detailed in section 2 of the report, with the addition that the delegation to the Strategic Director for Regeneration, Housing & Resources to take forward detailed proposals be carried out following consultation with Commissioners responsible for asset management and disposals respectively.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made to date via the Asset Challenge process be noted and support the review of Council assets to deliver efficiency savings required to meet the requirements of the 5 Year Plan.
- (b) That the list of retained operational assets in listed in Appendix One of the report be approved and agree that all other operational assets should remain within the Asset Challenge process, placing the responsibility with service departments to substantiate retention and/or investment in assets.
- (c) That the progress made via the introduction of the Corporate Landlord model be noted and agree that when service departments are developing business cases for retained assets, property running and maintenance budgets and any income for use of the asset should be transferred to Facilities Management.
- (d) That the implementation principles proposed in section 5.7 of the report be approved and delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director for Regeneration, Resources and Housing, following consultation with the Leader & Commissioner for Finance & Strategy and the Commissioner for Neighbourhoods & Renewal, to take forward detailed proposals to ensure these principles are delivered.

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- (e) That a follow up report be presented to Cabinet in December 2015, which would include a list of assets for disposal.

34. Five Year Plan Outcome Three: Centre of Slough

The Cabinet received a report on the progress made under outcome three of the Five Year Plan and sought agreement to adopt a vision for the centre of Slough and an accompanying strategy – Delivering the Vision “Changing Views”.

The vision, as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report, was intended to change the way the centre of Slough looked and worked in a way which changed people’s perception. The new high level strategy recognised that the centre of Slough consisted of much more than High Street retail and the narrowly defined area of the town centre identified for planning purposes. The new plan would not have any formal status, but would be part an agreed framework for future development and regeneration.

The Cabinet recognised the vital role of the centre of Slough in the wider regeneration of the borough, and the work undertaken to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how the centre of Slough could be reshaped the future was to be welcomed. A number of workstreams had been established to take forward key activities. Commissioners agreed that the vision had an important role to playing in influencing future plans and activity, with a different role for the Council as a ‘strategic enabler’ of development rather than the deliverer as its resources shrank. A range of other issues were discussed including the concept of Smart Cities; anti-social behaviour enforcement in the town centre; the retail footprint and outlook; and the next steps. One of the key steps was influencing the review of the Local Plan for Slough to translate the strategic approach into planning policy and the vision would also help shape strategic acquisitions, disposals, transport policy and wider economic development activity.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made and agreed to adopt the new vision and strategy for the centre of Slough.

Resolved –

- (a) That the vision for the centre of Slough be endorsed.
- (b) That the strategy for delivering the vision be agreed.
- (c) That the workstreams created as part of outcome three of the five year plan be noted and actions taken under those workstreams.

35. Small Sites Development Strategy

The Assistant Director Assets, Infrastructure and Regeneration introduced a report updating Commissioners on the proposal that the Slough Regeneration

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Partnership (SRP) bring forward a package of smaller residential development sites across the borough.

The Cabinet had previously agreed to explore the potential of developing such sites of under 20 units through a Subsidiary Housing Company (SHC), and it was noted that the SRP had subsequently amended their operating model to allow for the development of such sites. Both options had been considered and delivered significant returns on investment of 25% per annum via the SHC and 18% via the SRP. A financial options appraisal included in the Part II Appendix One to the report was considered without disclosing any exempt information.

The risks of the SHC option were substantially higher in terms of internal capacity, possible commercial losses and negative press. Through Morgan Sindall Investments as the Development Manager, the SRP would have the expertise in terms of commercial development, supply chain and construction management and sales and after sales skills to successfully bring forward the package of sites included in the programme. This would reduce the risk to the Council and allow officers to focus on key regeneration schemes. It was therefore recommended that sites be developed through the SRP in line with the operating model set out in section 5 of the report.

Commissioners welcomed the progress that had been made in bringing forward a proposal which could deliver 24 homes for sale and approximately 113 affordable housing across 34 sites by the end of 2017 and agreed that delivery through the SRP provided the most appropriate balance between risk and financial return. It was emphasised that the model was to develop a package of sites, as set out in Appendix Three, and that the most commercially viable sites could not be 'cherry picked'. The Cabinet agreed that the Small Sites Development Strategy would be delivered via the SRP and that an update report be received in March 2016.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be noted that SRP has substantially amended its operating model to allow the development of HRA and General Fund sites with a works cost that exceeds £75,000.
- (b) That the Small Sites Development Strategy be agreed to be delivered via SRP.
- (c) That it be agreed that Council officers should proceed on the basis that the sites at Upton Road and Alpha Street will be disposed to and developed by Slough Regeneration Partnership, subject to Cabinet approval for a sum that represents no less than the best value valuation.
- (d) That the initial list of sites and outline programme for the Strategy, as set out in Appendices One and Two of the report, be agreed.

- (e) That an update report be provided to Cabinet in March 2016.

36. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet considered a reference from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Call-in of the Significant Officer Decision on Burnham Train Station and Road Network Improvements.

Following the assessment of a wide range of options, the scheme involved the closure of Station Road, Burnham under an experimental traffic regulation order along with a range of other traffic measures as part of a scheme to improve Burnham Station ahead of the arrival of Crossrail services. The decision had been called in by four Members and the Committee had recommended the following:

1. *“That Option 1 – implementation of a one way system – as outlined in the Significant Decision (attached at Appendix A to the report), be trialled as an Experimental Order for a period of 6 months.”*
2. *“That monitoring data regarding the effectiveness of the scheme and its impact on the road network, local residents and businesses be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee after a three month period.”*

The Commissioner for Neighbourhoods & Renewal, who had addressed the scrutiny meeting, summarised the key points that had been raised. In relation to the recommendation to trial a one way system (option 1 of the Significant Decision), it was highlighted that the benefits of the wider redevelopment of the station could not be achieved by adopting this option as it was not release the land required for development and closure would therefore have to be trialled at a later stage. A one way scheme would also not enable the additional car parking spaces to be delivered which risked adding to parking pressures on residential streets as demand rose when Crossrail services were introduced. The Commissioner therefore proposed that scrutiny recommendation 1 should not be accepted.

In relation to recommendation 2, it was proposed that this could be accepted and further strengthened by taking two reports to scrutiny after three and six months; by monthly meetings of the working group to review and react to the implications of the closure; and by officers meeting monthly with councillors from the most affected wards and other local representatives, Burnham Parish Council and Think Burnham, to ensure strong communication and engagement during the period of the experiment. It was also noted that there would be extensive consultation on the scheme as soon as it went live.

The Commissioner also proposed that the scrutiny recommendations and response of the Cabinet be forwarded to all Members ahead of the full Council debate on 22nd September about the petition received on these matters.

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The Cabinet asked a number of questions of officers about the scheme including how the baseline would be measured and data monitored to assess the traffic impacts of the scheme. It was responded that data would be collected before the experiment was introduced to establish a clear baseline and arrangements were in place to collect and monitor traffic data at appropriate locations in the locality to measure the impacts of the scheme. The Cabinet asked about the wider traffic management measures to be introduced in response to the anticipated increase in traffic on other routes. It was responded that the experiment would not begin until both the Leigh Road and Stoke Poges Lane bridges reopened; that traffic signals at the likely diversion routes would be altered; the direction of traffic flow under the Burnham Lane bridge be reversed to allow southbound access to the A4 with a mini-roundabout at the Burnham Lane / Buckingham Avenue junction to improve access; and adjustments to bus stops and parking restrictions to assist traffic flow and avoid additional parking pressure on residential streets. The experimental order would also include the option to trial the Station Road one way option if the full closure did not work after an appropriate period of experimentation.

Councillor Strutton, one of the signatories to the Call-in, addressed the Cabinet to explain his concerns about the proposed closure which included the lack of prior consultation; failure to take into account the impacts on home care visits and on other health and education provision; the difficulties caused by previous closures of the bridge due to adverse weather and repairs; flood risks; and the fact improvements to the Five Points junction would not take place until or unless a permanent scheme was introduced. Commissioners and officers responded to each of these points in turn, noting that the reason for consulting during the scheme rather than before it was to listen to experiences and views on the real impacts, rather than perceived impacts; and that there would be engagement with internal departments, including social care, and local organisations such as schools during the experiment.

Commissioners recognised that there was an existing problem with traffic congestion in the area, and that the funding attracted to the scheme and future Crossrail services provided an opportunity to address these longstanding issues and regenerate the station and wider area. They emphasised that the measures would be trialled as an experiment with sufficient flexibility to react depending on how the scheme worked in reality. After consideration of all of the points raised by the Committee and during the meeting, it was agreed not to accept recommendation 1 (implement a one way scheme), but to agree and extend recommendation 2 to strengthen communication and engagement during the experiment. It was also agreed that the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet response would be reported to full Council prior to their debate on the petition on 22nd September 2015.

Resolved –

- (a) That Recommendation 1 – “That Option 1 – implementation of a one way system – as outlined in the Significant Decision, be trialled as an

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Experimental Order for a period of 6 months” not be accepted for the following reasons:

- It made no reference to how the Council would deliver the wider regeneration scheme.
 - Should this regeneration scheme go ahead then a full closure of the road would have to be trialled in 2/3 years anyway, and it was considered appropriate to trial this option whilst the order was in place.
 - Implementation of a one way scheme would make it impossible to deliver the additional car park required for the regeneration scheme and would see the extra Crossrail parking pushed back onto residential streets.
 - The rigid timeframe of leaving one order in place for a full 6 months would not be feasible and would not provide the freedom to adapt as and when needed, and potentially run multiple experiments.
- (b) That Recommendation 2 – “That monitoring data regarding the effectiveness of the scheme and its impact on the road network, local residents and businesses be reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee after a three month period” – be accepted and that it further be agreed that:
- Two reports be taken to scrutiny, one after 3 months and a further one after 6 months at the end of the scheme.
 - The working group would meet monthly during the trial period to react and review the data.
 - SBC officers would hold a monthly meeting during the course of the experiment with councillors from affected wards (Haymill & Lynch Hill, Britwell & Northborough and Cippenham Green), and one representative from each of ‘Think Burnham’ and Burnham Parish Council.
- (c) That the recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee along with Cabinet’s response be forwarded to full Council on 22nd September 2015 to be discussed as part the petition debate.

37. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between September to November 2015 be endorsed.

38. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item in Part II of the agenda as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in

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paragraph 3 of Part 1 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.

39. Local Authority Partnership Purchase (LAPP) - Appendices A and C

The Part II Appendices A and C, which included further background and legal information relating to the scheme, were considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any exempt information.

40. Proposed Strategic Acquisitions Strategy - Appendices 2 & 3

The Part II Appendices 2 and 3, which included further information on the proposed scoring criteria for investment assets and strategic land acquisition criteria were considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any exempt information.

41. Asset Challenge Update - Appendix 1

The Part II Appendix 1, which included the list of retained assets, was considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any exempt information.

42. Small Sites Development Strategy - Appendix 1

The Part II Appendix 1, which included further information on the options appraisal for the delivery vehicle, was considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any exempt information.

43. William Street Car Park and Ancillary Land

The Cabinet agreed an approach in relation to the disposal of William Street Car Park and ancillary land.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.35 pm and closed at 10.29 pm)