

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 18th January, 2016.

Present:- Councillors Anderson (Chair), Carter, Hussain (from 6.35pm), Mann, Munawar, Parmar (from 6.33pm), Sharif and Swindlehurst

Apologies for Absence:- None

PART 1

74. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

75. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th December 2015

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

The Chair varied the order of the agenda to consider Item 6 – ‘Leisure Strategy – Capital Development Programme’ first.

76. Leisure Strategy - Capital Development Programme

The Cabinet received a comprehensive presentation from Officers, Slough Urban Renewal and consultants on the proposals to deliver Phase 2 of the Arbour Park community sports facility (CSF), a new leisure centre at The Centre site on Farnham Road and the major refurbishment of the Ice Arena.

(Councillors Parmar and Hussain joined the meeting)

The proposed investment in the core leisure facilities was an important part of the wider Leisure Strategy to get “more people, more active, more often”. The estimated total cost of the three schemes was £33.4m and Commissioners attention was drawn to the financial implications in terms of funding the capital investment and the indicative revenue costs as detailed fully in the report. The Council’s current leisure contract was due for renewal on 1st June 2017 and it was noted that whilst consideration was being given to the scope of the contract, it was anticipated that the CSF, new leisure centre and refurbished ice arena would sit within the new contract. It was recommended that the Council operate the CSF in house for the period up to June 2017 when the new leisure provider would take over operational management of the facility.

Work on Phase 1 of Arbour Park CSF was underway and was scheduled to be completed by 15th August 2016 to enable Slough Town Football Club to play home matches from the start of the 2016/17 football season. Phase 2 would deliver the first floor accommodation of the main stand to provide covered seating and the hospitality facilities. The design would deliver a high quality facility providing flexible space including a function room with capacity to seat 160 people, suitable for a range of community uses as well as

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matchday facilities. The construction of Phase 2 would not interrupt the opening and operation of Phase 1 from August 2016.

The proposals were presented for the new leisure centre on the Farnham Road Centre site to replace the existing Montem Leisure Centre. A masterplan for the site had been undertaken in partnership with Slough Urban Renewal for a phased approach including a new leisure centre with residential development and potentially a health centre at a later stage. The leisure centre was scheduled to be delivered in the autumn of 2018 and was proposed to include an 8 lane swimming pool with separate training pool, 5 court sports hall, 132 station gym, 3 exercise studios, dry and wet side changing facilities, facilities for consultation/treatment rooms, a café and car parking. The total capital funding package for this development was £17.8m. The earliest demolition of Montem Leisure Centre would minimise the cost of essential repairs and maintenance and allow the proposed residential scheme on the site which would generate a significant capital receipt.

The design of the refurbished ice arena would create an extended and more active frontage onto Bath Road. The capital cost of £7.7m included the extension to the building frontage, external cladding, new refrigeration and heating systems, new seating, a new reception and café area as well as major improvements and redecoration to the internal facilities. Full consideration had been given to the future provision of ice in the borough, and it was found that the ice arena served a wide catchment and was a particularly popular facility for young people, including females, whose levels of activity were important priorities in the delivery of the wider leisure strategy.

The Commissioner for Community & Leisure commented that the renewal of core facilities provided a significant opportunity to get more people, more active and highlighted that the costs of physical inactivity were very high in Slough both in terms of the health impacts on residents and the costs to public bodies in term of health, care and community safety. It was felt that the quality and accessibility of the facilities would promote high usage. Commissioners asked a number of questions about the proposals for each of the facilities including the capacity and flexibility of the function room at Arbour Park and whether any contingency arrangements were in place if the timetables for Phase 2 Arbour Park and the Ice Arena slipped, given the potential consequences for the availability of the facilities. It was responded that measures were in place to adhere to the timetable and that Arbour Park would be able to open on completion of Phase 1. In relation to the ice arena, further survey work was required to fully understand the exact refurbishment requirements and this would provide confidence that the planned timetable was realistic.

Several Commissioners suggested additional facilities that could be incorporated into the schemes within the overall financial envelope, such as a sauna and jacuzzi in the leisure centre and mini-gyms at the ice arena and Arbour Park to increase local provision. Commissioners also requested that further consideration be given to alternative design options within the overarching concept of the leisure centre and ice arena. It was therefore

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agreed that the design, facility mix and timescale for the leisure centre and ice arena be agreed in principle, and that the finalisation of the design and facility mix be delegated to the Strategic Director for Customer and Community Services following consultation with the lead commissioners. The proposals for Phase 2 of Arbour Park were agreed in line with the recommendations set out in the report, and it was agreed to recommend the development of each of the three schemes to full Council for approval on 26th January 2016.

Recommended –

- (a) Arbour Park community sports facility (CSF)
 - i. That the phased development of the CSF and funding for Phase 2, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.
 - ii. That the operating recommendations for the CSF set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted; taking account of the need to put in place temporary management arrangements up to June 2017.

- (b) New Leisure Centre, Farnham Road (Centre site)
 - i. That the design, facility mix and timescales for delivery of the new leisure centre, detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed in principle and that the Strategic Director of Customer & Community Services be given delegated authority to finalise the design and facilities mix following consultation with the Leader & Commissioner for Finance & Strategy; Commissioner for Community & Leisure and Commissioner for Neighbourhoods & Renewal.
 - ii. That the funding detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, for the development of the new leisure centre is agreed.
 - iii. That options for the future operation and management of the new leisure centre detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.

- (c) Ice Arena
 - i. That the design, facility mix, funding and timescales for the refurbishment works for the ice arena development be agreed in principle, as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, and that the Strategic Director of Customer & Community Services be given delegated authority to finalise the design and facilities mix following consultation with the Leader & Commissioner for Finance & Strategy; Commissioner for Community & Leisure and Commissioner for Neighbourhoods & Renewal.

- (d) That the development of Phase 2 of the CSF, permission to commence on the development of the leisure centre and Slough Ice Arena be recommended for approval by Full Council on 26th January 2016.

77. Medium Term Financial Planning Update Including Savings Proposals for the 2016/17 Financial Year

A report was considered that set out the latest medium term financial position and the options for closing the 2016-17 financial gap following the draft Local

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Government Finance Settlement. The report also proposed changes to the schools funding formula following consultation with schools.

The Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 17th December 2015 and the key provisions were summarised in Appendix B to the report. One of the key changes was the timing of funding reductions compared to November's Spending Review with a further £1m of additional loss of grants in 2016-17 putting even further pressure on the savings requirement. The main Government grant had reduced from £40m in 2013-14 to £24m in 2015-16 and would fall to £6m by 2019-20. The Government had announced that it would allow Councils to raise an additional Council Tax precept of 2% to support Adult Social Care which would mean relevant authorities could raise Council Tax by up to 4% without the requirement for a referendum.

The Cabinet had previously identified savings totalling £9.45m for 2016-17 and with the updated financial assumptions the residual savings requirement was £2.59m. The report set out the available options to close the gap and present a balanced budget to Council on 25th February, which included further savings across service areas; increasing Council Tax (noting that the financial models currently assumed a 2.94% increase, including the 2% Adult Social Care precept, and would be determined by Council in February); utilising the new provision to use capital receipts to fund revenue expenditure; and utilising capital receipts to fund restructuring costs.

The Leader reported that a delegation from all six Berkshire authorities had met the Minister to discuss the settlement and they gave a clear view of the implications on services and financial planning of the higher than anticipated funding reductions in the next financial year. The Cabinet noted the options to close the residual gap and were mindful that utilising capital receipts for revenue expenditure was an opportunity in terms of balancing the budget but should be used cautiously and with a clear strategy.

The Cabinet considered the proposed changes to the schools funding formula used to allocate the Dedicated Schools Grant as detailed from paragraph 5.7 of the report. The Cabinet considered the options and the results of the consultation carried out with schools, noting that 64% agreed with the Council's preferred option 3. In relation to paragraph 5.17 of the report, further detail was provided to clarify that some schools could lose more than 1.5% of funding from one year to the next, for example if there was a loss of pupils, and that some funding for schools was outside of the formula. After due consideration, the Cabinet noted the latest financial planning assumptions and approved option 3 for changes to school funding.

Resolved –

- (a) That option 3 for changes to school funding, as detailed in paragraphs 5.7 to 5.17 of the report, be approved.
- (b) That the latest financial planning assumptions contained within the report be noted.

78. 2016/17 Housing Rents & Service Charges

A report was considered on the changes to housing rents and service charges for 2016-17. It was proposed that Council house rents decrease by 1%, in line with current government legislation and guidelines, and that garage rents, service and other charges increase by 0.8% based on the September's inflation figure.

The Council house rent reduction was in compliance with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill which required providers of social housing to reduce rent by 1% each year for the next four years. The impact was a reduction in the average weekly rent from £104.70 in the current year to £103.66 next year. The total estimated loss in potential rental income was £9.7m and an average decrease of 3.9% in weekly rent over the next four years.

Noting that the recommendations were in line with legislative requirements and government guidance, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the proposed changes to housing rents and service charges to Council on 26th January 2016 to enable tenants to receive notification well within statutory timescales.

Recommended –

- (a) That Council house dwelling rents for 2016/17 decrease by 1% over the 2015/16 rent with effect from Monday 4th April 2016, in line with current government guidelines and legislation.
- (b) That garage rents, heating, utility and ancillary charges increase by 0.8% with effect from Monday 4th April 2016, based upon the September RPI figure.
- (c) That service charges increase by 0.8% with effect from Monday 4th April 2016, based upon the September RPI figure.
- (d) That 'Other committee' property rents increase by an average of 0.8% from Monday 4th April 2016 in line with the September RPI figure.

79. Council Tax Support Scheme 2016-17

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016-17. The scheme main items of the scheme, set out fully in Appendix A to the report, were not recommended to change significantly from previous schemes. A paper was tabled which proposed a number of minor amendments to clarify some of the wording and it was agreed to incorporate these into the scheme.

The scheme had remained unchanged since it was introduced in 2013, other than for annual uprating. Due to a number of changes to welfare benefits that impact on the scheme, a consultation was carried out in October, November and December 2015. The scheme for next year needed to be approved by

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the end of January. Commissioners noted that the roll out of the Universal Credit would potentially have a major impact on the scheme and this would be considered in the scheme for future years. The Cabinet approved the scheme for 2016-17 as proposed, including the incorporation of the textual amendments detailed in the tabled paper.

Resolved – That the Council Tax Support scheme be approved, as detailed in appendix A to the report and incorporating the amendments as tabled at the meeting.

80. Five Year Plan 2016-2020

The Cabinet considered a report on the refresh of the Five Year Plan which set out the focus of the Council's work over the next five years. The plan had been in place for a year and it had therefore been a 'light touch' refresh focused on ensuring the actions being taken under the eight outcomes remained the right ones and that forward planning was aligned with the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The eight outcomes had not been changed. The refresh included a summary of the types of success measures used to track progress and Commissioners agreed that these were crucial to enable the council to communicate with residents what was being achieved and why actions were being taken.

The plan was central to setting out the strategic narrative for the Council and prioritising resources and would be reviewed annually. An Annual Report would be produced and be considered by the Cabinet in March and it was proposed that a more extensive refresh of the plan be undertaken in the autumn, which would involve Members. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Panels were involved in providing challenge to the progress made against the eight outcomes. Commissioners asked that the Annual Report be easy to read, accessible and supported by evidence to demonstrate the progress made for example in tackling anti-social behaviour. It was responded that a combination of quantitative and qualitative information and case studies would be used. Commissioners requested that they see a draft version before publication and it was suggested communicating the Annual Report in a modern, interactive way including the use of digital technology. It was considered important to design a format which clearly showed progress year by year when future reports were published.

The Cabinet agreed to recommend the refreshed Five Year Plan to full Council on 26th January 2016.

Recommended – That the refresh of the Five Year Plan, as at Appendix 'A' to the report, be agreed.

81. 'Slough Caring for our Carers' - Joint Carers' Commissioning Strategy 2016-21

The Cabinet received a report on the draft Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy – Slough Caring for our Carers – for the Council and the Slough

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Clinical Commissioning Group for the period 2016-2021. The new document updated the interim Joint Carers Strategy 2014-15 in light of the implementation of the Care Act 2014 and built on recent progress to support carers. It was estimated there were 11,000 carers in Slough and the Care Act had extended rights and entitlements of carers to the same as those cared for.

The development of the strategy had involved carers, including the Slough Carers Partnership Board, and key stakeholders and the draft had been considered by the Health Scrutiny Panel and Health Priority Delivery Group. The four key priorities of the strategy aligned to the national priorities and were identification and recognition; realising and releasing potential; a life outside caring; and supporting carers to stay healthy.

Commissioners welcomed the new strategy and particularly the role carers had played in developing it. A number of key aspects of the strategy were discussed including the potential to further use technology to improve care and it was noted that this was key part of the transformation programme. After due consideration, the Cabinet approved the strategy.

Resolved – That the Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2016-21, including the resource allocation, be approved.

82. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet considered reference from the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Panel from its meeting on 3rd December 2015 in relation to safeguarding audits that had been resolved during consideration of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report.

The matter of safeguarding audits had been discussed by the Panel and Section 11 of the Children's Act 2003 set out a series of standards by which public bodies, including local authorities, would be assessed. The Cabinet was asked to note that the Panel had endorsed the following policy:

“All contracts with outsourced service providers must stipulate that they conduct a safeguarding audit to Section 11 (Children's Act 2004) standards to underpin SBC's responsibilities in the area.”

The Cabinet recognised the importance of a strong audit and assurance process in relation to safeguarding and therefore agreed that the policy be endorsed.

Resolved – That the ECS Scrutiny Panel's endorsement of the following policy be noted:

“All contracts with outsourced service providers must stipulate that they conduct a safeguarding audit to Section 11 (Children's Act 2004) standards to underpin SBC's responsibilities in the area.”

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83. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between January to March 2016 be endorsed.

84. 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 the Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972.

85. Part II Minutes - 14th December 2015

Resolved – That the minutes of the Part II meeting of the Cabinet held on 14th December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.31 pm and closed at 7.45 pm)