

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 5th September, 2016.

Present:- Councillors Munawar (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Matloob, Sharif and Sohal

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Anderson, Bains, Brooker, Chahal (part), Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Mann (part), Morris (part), Nazir, Pantelic, R Sandhu (part), Strutton (part), Swindlehurst and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Bal

PART 1

31. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

32. Provision of a Temporary Ice Facility

The Cabinet considered a further report on the potential provision of a temporary ice facility during the nine-month period of closure for a £7.7m refurbishment of the existing arena from November 2016.

Following the resolutions at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14th July and the Cabinet on 18th July, Officers had undertaken further work on the option of full size temporary rink at the Montem site that could cater for the needs of the whole community. The proposal for the Cabinet to consider was for a fully enclosed and secure temporary 20m x 50m rink complete with full operations and management, staffing, seating for 300 spectators, changing area, toilets and skate hire. The Council's role would be to provide the site to the rear of Montem Leisure Centre, temporary car park for 125 cars, enabling works, utility connections and CCTV at a total cost of £336,000.

The Cabinet welcomed the work that had been done to provide a facility suitable for all users at a substantially reduced cost from the £632,000 estimated in the previous report in July. Commissioners asked about the risk of overspend; the measures to ensure the quality of the facility; and the contribution of utility providers. Any major project had an element of risks that unexpected costs would emerge during delivery and a contingency of 10% had therefore been included in the proposed costs. A contract manager from the Council would make regular checks of the facility and seek feedback from service users to monitor quality standards. Discussions had been held with the utility provider but they had not been able to provide direct support in terms of ongoing utility costs. The anticipated period of closure was nine months but the plans and costs for the temporary facility were for twelve months to mitigate any possible delays.

Councillors Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Bains, Anderson and Swindlehurst asked a number of further questions under Rule 30 about how the costs had been reduced from the estimates in July. Several factors were highlighted including the identification of a provider who would operate the facility free of charge; driving down costs such as for the temporary car park by selecting matting rather tarmac; and successful negotiation and partnership working as a community project. The refurbishment was on track to begin in November and the temporary facility was planned to open two weeks after the closure once the ice infrastructure was in place. The proposal was subject to planning approval.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to support the temporary facility. As the costs were not in the approved financial framework, it was agreed that the Cabinet would recommend the proposed expenditure to full Council at the meeting on 27th September 2016.

Recommended – That the provision of a temporary ice facility on the Montem site at a cost of £336,000 be agreed.

33. Treasury Management Annual Report

The Cabinet considered an annual report on treasury management activities for 2015-16 and the first part of 2016-17. Approximately £70m was invested at any one time and the current strategy had been successful in generating £2m last year which was important in supporting services and balancing the revenue budget. A risk averse approach was being taken and the Council was one of the top performing authorities on treasury management amongst comparators.

The Cabinet discussed the changing risk environment following recent financial turbulence, particularly the impact of Brexit. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst raised several issues including how the strategy would be evolved to continue the high level of performance in view of the changing economic position. It was responded that investments were constantly reviewed in line with the principles of the Treasury Management Strategy. Decisions were taken following careful consideration and advice from Arlingclose.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to note the annual update of treasury management activity.

Resolved – That the summary of treasury management activity in 2015-16 and the first part of 2016-17 be noted.

34. Additional Contract in Excess of £250,000 in 2016/17

A report was considered that sought the Cabinet's endorsement to commence tendering for a further contract in excess of £250,000 to be let during the 2016/17 financial year. The contract was additional to those already endorsed by Cabinet in April and July 2016.

The contract would be for the Capita SIMS.net and FMS Support Service which provided a helpdesk, training and information/support to schools. It was proposed to tender for a three-year contract with a total estimated value of £420,000. After due consideration, the Cabinet endorsed the commencement of tendering for the contract.

Resolved – That the intention to commence tendering for the CAPITA SIMS.net and FMS Support Service contract be endorsed.

35. Proposal to establish Housing Company Group Structure

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that sought approval to establish a company group structure to introduce two new wholly Council owned subsidiary housing companies. The principle aims were to improve choice, increase quality and meet varying forms of housing need locally. The two companies would be Herschel Homes to provide market rent properties and Slough Homes (which was a working title) to provide affordable homes and help the Council better discharge its duties to homeless and other groups of people. Approval was sought for officers to develop a full business case and structure and bring a further report to Cabinet by December 2016.

Commissioners recognised the importance of both seeking to address local housing need and generate income to support the Council's revenue budget. It discussed the differing purposes of both companies and particularly the potential of Slough Homes in improving provision and reducing the cost of temporary housing. The previously considered proposals for a subsidiary housing company differed insofar as that was for a development company for smaller sites and that function was now being taken forward by Slough Urban Renewal.

Councillors Nazir, Bains, Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Swindlehurst and Anderson asked questions and commented on the proposals under Rule 30. It was noted that advice would be sought and best practice used on the governance arrangements and the use of non-executive directors; the rationale for two separate companies was clearly explained; and that the companies would be in scope of the Council's scrutiny arrangements. Slough Homes would offer properties at affordable rents and the balance would be carefully assessed in the business case development. It was recognised that the proposal did not in itself increase the supply of housing, however, it was one part of a wider strategy on housing that was emerging.

The Cabinet agreed the recommendations to take the proposal forward and receive a further report by December 2016 on the business case.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be agreed that officers build a business case and structure for two subsidiary housing companies: a) Herschel Homes, which will provide

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market rent properties and b) Slough Homes, which will provide homes which are affordable to local people and assist the Council better discharge its duties to homeless and other groups of people - these homes will be part of the assets of the Companies and their acquisition will be funded by the Council from the General Fund.

- (b) That it be noted that both Herschel Homes and Slough Homes would be companies limited by shares with the Council being the sole shareholder.
- (c) That the Strategic Director Housing, Regeneration and Resources be given delegated authority to establish a project team to progress the realisation of the proposed company structures.
- (d) That the list of 'next steps' as set out in section 5.33 of the report be noted.
- (e) That an update report on Herschel Homes and Slough Homes be presented to Cabinet by December 2016, which would be supported by a detailed business plan and indicative programme.

36. Old Library Site - Development Options

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that sought approval to build 60 residential apartments on the Old Library Site in addition to the two hotels and a restaurant agreed by Cabinet in June 2016. It was proposed that the entire mixed use scheme be developed by Slough Urban Renewal. Further to the earlier decision on the establishment of two subsidiary housing companies, these residential units would provide an opportunity for the Council to realise a long-term income stream and capital appreciation through renting Herschel Homes.

An options appraisal for the remainder of the site had been undertaken and this was noted in the Part II Appendix 1 without disclosing any of the exempt information. In summary, the credible options were for either residential or office development, with the potential for the Council to utilise some of the office space. The Commissioner highlighted that options appraisal had resulted in a recommendation for the mixed use development to include 60 residential apartments on the remainder of the site. There were already a wide range of plans and projects in the Heart of Slough to stimulate town centre regeneration and it was considered the residential option would best meet both strategic and financial objectives. Subject to the relevant approvals, it was envisaged that work would start on site in 2017 and complete in the third quarter of 2019.

Councillors Swindlehurst, Bains and Anderson raised a number of issues under Rule 30 including the comparative future income from Business Rates or Council Tax receipts; the social value created in the form of apprenticeship opportunities for local people; and the proposed tenancy mix, with concerns expressed about the proportion of social housing as part of the development. The responses were noted and further information would be provided on the significant local benefits that had been committed through the SUR. Further

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detail on the tenancy mix would be provided through the planning process and the Planning Committee would have to consider this matter before making a determination.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to include 60 residential apartments as part of the mixed used development and that it be developed by Slough Urban Renewal.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be agreed that in addition to building two hotels and a restaurant, the mixed-use scheme should include 60 residential apartments.
- (b) That it be noted that having previously granted an option over the land, the entire mixed-use scheme be developed by Slough Urban Renewal.
- (c) That it be noted that a separate report would be presented to Cabinet in spring 2017 that sought approval to dispose of the residential element for a sum that reflects the best value valuation.

37. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between September to November 2016 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 paragraph 3 of Part 1 the Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972 (amended).

Below is a summary of the matters agreed during Part II of the agenda.

39. Old Library Site Development Options - Appendix 1

The Part II Appendix was noted and considered in resolving the matters during Part I of the agenda.

40. Heart of Slough, North West Quadrant/ William St Car Park and Ancillary Land

An approach was agreed, and relevant delegated authority given, to take steps to promote the redevelopment of the North West Quadrant.

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41. Proposals for the Delivery of the Schools Expansion Programme

Delegated authority was given to progress proposals for the delivery of the schools expansion programme.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.24 pm)