

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 6th February, 2017.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Anderson, Chahal, Nazir, Plenty, Strutton and Swindlehurst

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

105. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bal declared that his daughter worked for Slough Borough Council.

106. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January 2017

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23rd January 2017 be approved as a correct record.

107. Financial Report - Month 9 2016-17

The Leader of the Council introduced a report that provided Cabinet with the forecast financial information for 2016/17 to the end of December 2016. The overspend had been further reduced to £0.837m and it was anticipated that a breakeven position would be achieved by year end.

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit highlighted that the previously reported overspend in adult social care had been reduced to an estimated £0.859m by year end, a fall of £0.14m on the previous month, and the department was continuing to scrutinise expenditure and explore underspends elsewhere in the directorate. There had been an increase in the forecast overspend in Housing and Environment due to a corporate pension adjustment which was being examined.

The main area of underspend remained in Customer and Community Services, which helped offset overspends elsewhere in the Council. The improved delivery of the capital programme had continued with expected spend of £119m against the budget of £134m. The slippage of 11% was a considerable improvement on historic trends. The Housing Revenue Account continued to show a forecasted surplus of £0.396m.

The Cabinet considered and approved the write off requests detailed in paragraph 9 of the report. Commissioners noted that £0.7m of council tax credits had been written back into the accounts during the period.

Resolved –

- (a) That the current financial forecast and the ongoing work by departments to reduce the overspend be noted.
- (b) That the write offs contained in section 9 of the report be approved.

108. Treasury Management Strategy 2017-18

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which sought approval to recommend the draft Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 to full Council on 23rd February 2017. It was a requirement to produce a strategy in line with Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) codes and through regulations; and the Council was assisted by treasury management advisors Arlingclose.

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit reported that the Council currently had £209m of borrowing, and investments of between £72m and £82m on average throughout the year. It was confirmed that the Council's need to borrow, measured by the Capital Financing Requirement, complied with the relevant provisions of the CIPFA prudential code. The Council's treasury management performance had been strong in recent years and no major changes to the current policy were being proposed for 2017/18.

Commissioners discussed a number of issues including the balance of risks and controls, particularly in relation to the strategic acquisitions programme. The Cabinet was assured that the relevant controls were in place and the Assistant Director was comfortable with the risk profile.

Councillors Anderson and Swindlehurst addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and commented on the increase in borrowing in the past six months totalling £32m; the revenue pressure of this additional borrowing; housing issues; and the imminent maturity of two loans. A request was made for benchmarking information on the Council's comparative treasury management performance and it was agreed that this would be circulated to Members in attendance.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 to full Council on 23rd February 2017.

Recommended – That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 be approved.

109. Capital Strategy: 2017/2023

The Leader of the Council introduced a report that sought agreement to recommend the Capital Strategy 2017/23 to full Council on 23rd February 2017. The programme totalled £297m worth of investment, comprised of £221m of General Fund expenditure and £75m in the Housing Revenue Account.

The Assistant Director Finance & Audit explained the key elements of the programme and detailed how it would be financed, including the revenue implications of borrowing and the use of £11m in Section 106 receipts. The new items in the programme included expansions to primary and secondary schools; the new leisure centre development and refurbishment of other facilities; a major housing investment programme; and regeneration schemes such as two new hotels on the Old Library Site and the development of the Thames Valley University site. The Community Investment Fund (CIF) budget for 2017/18 was proposed to increase to £1.050m to spend on neighbourhood enhancements and other schemes identified by Members. It was noted that the CIF figure in Appendix A would be amended to the revised figure of £1.050m.

Commissioners' attention was drawn to the proposed change in Minimum Revenue Provision policy set out in section 6 of the report. The changes to move to the annuity asset life method had been proposed following a review and had been recommended by the Council's financial advisors. The effect was a credit of approximately £3.6m over 10 years arising from previous overprovision. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Anderson asked for clarification of the figures stated in the Capital Strategy report and provision made in the Revenue Budget and this was explained by the Assistant Director Finance & Audit.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Swindlehurst queried why the proposed Cippenham Community Centre extension had been removed from the capital programme. It was responded that the business case had not been approved and the Member was invited to contact the Leader directly for further information.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the Capital Strategy 2017/23 to full Council.

Recommended –

- (a) That the capital strategy of £297m and the Minimum Revenue Provision be approved and Recommended to full Council.
- (b) That it be noted that the notional costs of borrowing for the capital programme to the revenue budget would be an increase of up to £4.2m per annum commencing during the period of the capital strategy to fund borrowing.
- (c) That the principles underpinning the capital programme in paragraph 5.1.2 and the Minimum Revenue Provision principles be approved.
- (d) That Appendices A and B to the report detailing the capital programmes be approved (subject to these having approved Final Business Cases by the Capital Strategy Board).

110. Revenue Budget 2017/18

The Leader of the Council introduced a report and appendices detailing the proposed Revenue Budget 2017/18 that set out how the Council would achieve a balanced budget for the coming year. The Leader stated that the proposed budget, to be recommended to Council on 23rd February, was balanced, realistic and fit for purpose. It protected front line Council services despite the continued significant reductions in Government grants.

It was proposed that the level of Council Tax for 2017/18 increase by 4.71% which was comprised of passing on the 3% Adult Social Care precept and 1.71% for the Council to invest in other services. Commissioners recognised the pressures nationally on social care budgets attributed to historic underfunding and noted that the budget included growth of £1.1m to reflect demographic change and to help meet the increasing demand of people with complex needs. The savings proposals detailed in Appendix A to the report were reviewed and Commissioners commented on the use of profits from Slough Urban Renewal and the capitalisation of highways maintenance.

The Assistant Director reported that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had scrutinised the budget papers on 2nd February 2017 and had recommended that the Cabinet reconsider the proposed increases of up to 20% in some burial and cemetery fees. The Commissioner for Regulation & Consumer Protection responded that the increases had been previously built into the budget and had followed a benchmarking exercise with neighbouring authorities. The costs in Slough would generally remain below neighbouring areas and the Commissioner provided the Cabinet with details of comparative rates. The Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, Councillor Nazir, explained the concerns of the Committee, and the Cabinet gave careful consideration to the points raised. It was proposed and agreed that further consideration be given to addressing the concerns regarding the increases in some of the burial and cemetery fees and that a specific ring-fenced reserve be set aside for this purpose.

Councillors Anderson, Strutton and Swindlehurst addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and made a number of comments on various aspects of the budget including the relative growth and savings in adult social care and the use of the precept; the use of income from Slough Urban Renewal to offset other savings; the impact of the capitalisation of the highways repair budget and the revenue costs of higher borrowing. The Director of Adult Social Care clarified the position on the adult social care budget within the context of the four year transformation programme. In response to a question from a Member, specific assurance could not be provided about free transport for service users but the service would work with each person on an individual basis to best meet their needs. The Assistant Director Finance & Audit responded to the other matters raised before the Leader summarised the discussion.

At the conclusion of the debate, it was agreed that the Revenue Budget 2017/18 be recommended to full Council on 23rd February 2017, noting that

further consideration would be given to address the concerns raised about the fee increases for some burial and cemetery services.

Recommended –

That the budget as set out in the report be approved, noting that the Thames Valley Police Authority and the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority are still to confirm their final council tax precept requirements and:

Council Tax Resolution – In relation to the Council Tax for 2017/18

- (a) That in pursuance of the powers conferred on the Council as the billing authority for its area by the Local Government Finance Acts (the Acts), the Council Tax for the Slough area for the year ending 31 March 2018 is as specified below and that the Council Tax be levied accordingly.
- (b) That it be noted that at its meeting on 19 December 2016 Cabinet calculated the following Tax Base amounts for the financial year 2017/18 in accordance with Regulations made under sections 31B (3) and 34(4) of the Act:
- (i) 41,174.7 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) as the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Slough area for the year 2017/18; and
 - (ii) The sums below being the amounts of Council Tax Base for the Parishes within Slough for 2017/18:

a)	Parish of Britwell	840.7
b)	Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle	1,866.4
c)	Parish of Wexham	1,329.6
- (c) That the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2017/18 in accordance with sections 31A to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £406,981,084 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (2)(a) to (f) of the Act. (Gross Expenditure);
 - (ii) £ 354,279,115 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (Gross Income);
 - (iii) £52,701,969 being the amount by which the aggregate at paragraph c(i) above exceeds the aggregate at paragraph c (ii) above calculated by the Council as its council tax requirement for the year as set out in section 31A(4) of the Act. (Council Tax Requirement);

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- (iv) £1,279.96 being the amount at paragraph c(iii) above divided by the amount at paragraph b(i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, including the requirements for Parish precepts.
- (v) That for the year 2017/18 the Council determines in accordance with section 34 (1) of the Act, Total Special Items of £223,349 representing the total of Parish Precepts for that year.
- (vi) £1,274.54 being the amount at paragraph c (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at paragraph c (v) above by the relevant amounts at paragraph b (i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.
- (vii) Valuation Bands

Band	Slough Area	Parish of Britwell	Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle	Parish of Wexham Court
	£	£	£	£
A	849.69	44.06	32.93	24.48
B	991.31	51.41	38.42	28.56
C	1,132.92	58.75	43.91	32.64
D	1,274.54	66.10	49.40	36.72
E	1,557.77	80.79	60.38	44.89
F	1,841.00	95.47	71.36	53.05
G	2,124.23	110.16	82.33	61.21
H	2,549.08	132.19	98.80	73.45

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

- (viii) That it be noted that for the year 2017/18 the Thames Valley Police Authority precept has been increased by 1.99%. The following amounts are stated in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley £
A	113.52
B	132.44
C	151.36
D	170.28
E	208.12
F	245.96
G	283.80
H	340.57

These precepts had not been formally proposed or agreed by the Thames Valley Police at the time of the report being presented.

(ix) That it be noted that for the year 2017/18 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has been increased by 1.99% as the following amount in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority £
A	41.66
B	48.60
C	55.55
D	62.49
E	76.37
F	90.26
G	104.15
H	124.98

These precepts had not been formally proposed or agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority at the time of the report being presented.

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

Band	Slough	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
A	849.69	113.52	41.66	1,004.87
B	991.31	132.44	48.60	1,172.35
C	1,132.92	151.36	55.55	1,339.83
D	1,274.54	170.28	62.49	1,507.31
E	1,557.77	208.12	76.37	1,842.26
F	1,841.00	245.96	90.26	2,177.22
G	2,124.23	283.80	104.15	2,512.18
H	2,549.08	340.57	124.98	3,014.63

- (xi) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 2012 Act.
- (xii) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any Council Tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.
- (xiii) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to collect (and disperse from the relevant accounts) the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rate and that whenever the office of the Section 151 Officer is vacant or the holder thereof is for any reason unable to act, the Chief Executive or such other authorised post-holder be authorised to act as before said in his or her stead.

Fees and Charges –

- (e) That the increase in Fees and Charges as outlined in Appendix F to the report for 2017/18 be approved, noting that further consideration would be given to addressing the concerns raised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding the increases in some of the burial and cemetery fees and that a specific ring-fenced reserve be set aside for this purpose.

Pay Policy –

- (f) That the Pay Policy outlined in Appendix M to the report be noted for Council approval.

111. Reference from the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee - Risk Management Strategy

The Cabinet considered a reference report from the Audit & Corporate Governance Committee recommending that the revised Risk Management Strategy be approved. This set out how the Council would identify, assess and manage risk to meet both legislative requirements and best practice. After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed to approve the document as set out at Appendix A to the report.

Resolved – That the Risk Management Strategy, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

112. Regulation of Investigative Powers Act (RIPA) Revised Policy and Activity Report

The Commissioner for Regulation & Consumer Protection and the Head of Consumer Protection & Business Compliance introduced a report that sought approval for the revised Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy and updated Members on the activity during 2016.

It was noted that the surveillance powers under the Act were rarely used, but they were essential to enable the Council to investigate and enforce where appropriate to protect residents and businesses from the impacts of crime. The powers had only been used once in 2016. The policy set out a clear process to grant such powers and no major changes were proposed to the previously agreed policy.

After due consideration, the Cabinet approved the revised policy and noted the activity report.

Resolved – That the revised policy and guidance be approved and that the RIPA activity during 2016 be noted.

113. Slough Basin Option Report

The Commissioner for Housing & Urban Renewal introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the consultation process relating to the grant of a conditional option to Slough Urban Renewal over Council land at Slough Basin for a 243 unit housing development.

The relevant public notices had been placed and it was confirmed that no objections had been received. Commissioners were therefore asked to reaffirm the decision taken at the meeting held on 17th October 2016 to grant the conditional option. It was noted that a follow up report would be presented to Cabinet later in 2017 on the design and tenure mix and to seek approval to dispose of the site on the basis of a best value valuation. In view of the fact that no objections had been received, the Cabinet reaffirmed the decision and agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be noted that the council exchanged in December 2016 on the conditional acquisition of Stoke Wharf builder merchants from Travis Perkins Plc for the existing industrial use value with anticipated completion in June 2017;
- (b) That having received no objections in response to notices made in the local newspaper, to reaffirm the decision to grant of an option to SUR in regards to part of the Public Open Space at Bowyer Playing Fields;
- (c) That the decision be reaffirmed to delegate authority to the Interim Strategic Director of Housing, Regeneration and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing & Urban Renewal and the Leader of the Council, to negotiate an SBC option over any potential Private Rented Sector (“PRS”) units promoted within the scheme; and
- (d) To note that a report will be presented to Cabinet towards the end of 2017 that clarified the design and tenure mix and would seek approval to dispose of the site on the basis of a best value valuation.

114. References from Overview & Scrutiny

Reference from Overview & Scrutiny, 2nd February 2017: Revenue Budget 2017/18

The Cabinet considered the recommendation to review proposed increases to burial and cemetery fees and charges during item 6 of the agenda (Minute 110 refers).

Reference from Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, 17th January 2017: Slough Road Network – Alternative Provisions to Market Lane

The Cabinet considered the following matters referred from the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel from it's meeting on 17th January relating to the closure of Market Lane:

1. The Panel recommend that, given the fact that only permanent counters are currently collecting data relating to the impact of the bridge closure, Cabinet ends the experimental scheme at the first opportunity.
2. The Panel recommend that Slough Borough Council develop a package based on the reopening of Market Lane and a realigned bridge (as offered by High Speed Two Limited (HS2)).

The Commissioner for Transport & Highways commented that recommendation 1 was effectively redundant as the road had reopened at the end of January following the six month period of closure previously agreed by the Cabinet. In relation to recommendation 2, the Commissioner provided assurance that the Council would continue to negotiate with relevant bodies to

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secure the best possible mitigation package. In response to a question from the Leader, the Commissioner reiterated that any funding secured would directly support schemes for Langley.

The Chair of the Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Plenty, and Councillor Swindlehurst addressed the Cabinet under Rule 30 and highlighted a number of issues including the inadequacy of the information provided to the scrutiny panel; perceived lack of engagement from Transport for Slough; and the need to work with local MPs to lobby for improvements that would resolve long standing traffic issues in the locality. The Leader confirmed that he would be happy to engage with MPs and other relevant parties to secure the best outcome for Langley and Slough more widely. The Leader and the Commissioner confirmed that the Council would continue negotiations with HS2 and Western Rail Link to Heathrow and the Cabinet noted the recommendations from the Panel.

Resolved – That the recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel (17th January 2017) on the matter of the possible alternative provisions for the local road network in the Market Lane area be noted.

115. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 6th January which set out the decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet over the next three months.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions for the period between February and April 2017 be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.03 pm)