

## **Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 16th April, 2018.**

**Present:-** Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Anderson, Carter, Mann, Nazir, Pantelic and Sadiq

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Hussain

### **PART 1**

#### **114. Declarations of Interest**

Item 8: Heathrow Express Depot Update - Councillor Swindlehurst declared that he represented the Council on the Heathrow Community Engagement Board.

#### **115. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th March 2018**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be approved as a correct record.

#### **116. Slough Urban Renewal Partnership Business Plan 2018-23**

The Director of Regeneration introduced a report that updated on the performance of Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) and sought approval for the Partnership Business Plan 2018-2023. The Cabinet noted the Part II appendix, which was the draft Plan, during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any of the exempt information.

The Plan was the core document for the SUR and set out the strategic, operational and governance framework. It had first been agreed in 2013 once the Council entered into the agreement with Morgan Sindall and was reviewed annually for approval by both partners. Good progress had been made on planned activity over the past year on a range of housing and community schemes. The key performance targets for 2018/19 were summarised including the residential development of 104 homes at Wexham Green and master-planning for the redevelopment of the Thames Valley University site on which SUR had secured an option to be the developer.

The Cabinet welcomed the completion of key schemes such as the Ice Arena refurbishment and the Milestone development on Ledgers Road as well as the significant number of apprenticeships and employment opportunities. Members discussed a number of issues including the flexibility in the plan to be revised if market conditions significantly worsened and the need to ensure that delivery continued at pace to secure the benefits for the town. It was noted that the Business Plan recognised market conditions and the Council had sufficient controls in the governance arrangements to adjust the plans accordingly.

## **Cabinet - 16.04.18**

At the conclusion of the discussion, the performance update for the SUR was noted and the revised Partnership Business Plan, as at Appendix A to the report, was approved.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the performance of SUR as set out in Section 5.4 of the report be noted.
- (b) That the performance targets for SUR for 2018/19 as set out in Section 5 of the report be agreed.
- (c) That the Partnership Business Plan for the period to December 2023 be agreed.
- (d) That it be noted that the SBC board representatives for SUR would be subject to review.

## **117. HRA Asset Management Strategy**

The Lead Member for Corporate Finance & Housing and the Service Lead, Neighbourhoods introduced a report that sought approval for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy. The document had been drafted in the context of the current housing option appraisal and the HRA Business Plan and it set out a structured basis for sustainable investment in Council housing. The housing stock was a significant asset of circa £1.5bn and the strategy would shape the management of the asset and inform future investment decisions.

The Cabinet agreed that the strategy provided a framework to shape future decisions on upgrading and investing in the Council housing stock. Previous experience of bringing homes up to Decent Homes standard had underlined the importance of engagement and social cohesion when planning major investment programmes. It was also agreed that a clear plan and timetable of future works was required and needed to be regularly reviewed. At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet agreed the strategy and requested that an update be received in twelve months time.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the draft be adopted as the Council's HRA Asset Management Strategy
- (b) The HRA Asset Management Strategy be implemented following consultation with the Cabinet Member through the guidance of the Neighbourhood Services Lead, through his role of contract administrator of the RMI contract with Osborne Property Services Limited (OPSL) and with the support of the Strategic Director.

## **Cabinet - 16.04.18**

- (c) That the HRA Business Plan be updated to include the HRA Asset Management Strategy, and to offer a review of the strategy after the first two years of the RMI contract.
- (d) That the Cabinet receive a report to update on progress in 12 months.

### **118. Revised Housing Allocation Scheme 2018-22**

The Lead Member for Corporate Finance and Housing and the Service Lead, Strategic Housing introduced a report that sought approval for a revised Housing Allocation Scheme 2018-2022.

The Housing Strategy had specified that a formal review of the scheme adopted in 2014 would take place. A consultation exercise had taken place and all Council tenants had received a letter seeking their views. The Neighbourhoods & Community Services Scrutiny Panel had led the Member involvement in the review. The scheme gave priority to groups such as those living in Slough for a continuous period of five years and Looked After Children and there were no plans to change the priority groups.

It was considered that although the scheme was working well overall a number of proposed changes were summarised including greater priority for homeless, assistance to key workers and a reduction from two to one reasonable offer of accommodation. The Cabinet discussed the definition of a key worker which for the purposes of the scheme was a teacher or social worker dealing with vulnerable adults or children. The principle of moving to a single reasonable offer policy was supported as it would improve the efficient management of the scheme and assist in housing people more quickly. It was noted that the Equality Impact Assessment needed to be updated and the Cabinet requested that it be reviewed annually to ensure it was kept up to date.

At the conclusion of the discussion the revised Housing Allocated Scheme as at Appendix A to the report was adopted.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the revised Housing Allocation Scheme 2018-2022 be adopted as the policy by which Council and other social housing will be allocated as set out in the Housing Act 1996, Part V1 and Localism Act 2011.
- (b) That the main changes made to the Housing Allocation scheme be agreed as set out in para 5.4 of the report in response to the public opinion expressed during a consultation exercise.
- (c) That the Equality Impact Assessment be refreshed on the anniversary of the new Allocations Scheme going live and annually thereafter.

**119. Additional Highways Repairs/Maintenance (Potholes) following Recent Severe Weather**

The Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to make available additional funding to repair potholes and to undertake additional planned maintenance resurfacing works on the highway network following the recent severe weather.

After an unprecedented period of cold and wet weather, it was estimated that an additional £500k may be required to fix the potholes and carry out necessary repairs. Members expressed disappointment that there was very limited extra Government funding for Slough as the system for allocating funding effectively penalised local authorities that had invested in road maintenance historically. The Leader proposed that a mixture of the Community Investment Fund (CIF) underspend from 2017/18 and some of the Cabinet allocation from 2018/19 be used to supplement the £91,000 Government grant and underspend on last years highways budget. To reflect the need to deliver community benefit from the use of CIF funding, the Cabinet requested that a more flexible approach than usual be taken to make repairs to some unadopted roads in particularly poor condition such as the Westfield Estate in Colnbrook and Broad Oak in Farnham.

The Cabinet agreed the importance of ensuring that roads were maintained to a good standard and the funding profile for the additional £500k was agreed.

**Resolved –**

(a) That the allocation of the additional funding as set out below be approved to enable the highway maintenance team to undertake the works as required.

- £221,000 from Community Investment Fund (CIF) underspend in 2017/18.
- £110,000 revenue and £110,000 capital from the Cabinet budget in the 2018/19 Community Investment Fund.
- £61,000 from the 2017/18 underspend in the highways budget.
- Government grant of £91,000.

(b) That as the extra funding was partially comprised of CIF funding, the Cabinet expressed the wish that a generous approach be taken toward parking areas and roads in residential areas that may not be adopted e.g. the Westfield Estate in Colnbrook and Broad Oak in Farnham.

(c) That samples of the pothole repair locations and other resurfacing work locations be published for public access onto the Council's website.

**120. Leisure Facilities Reprovision Programme Update**

## Cabinet - 16.04.18

The Lead Member for Environment & Leisure and the Leisure Services Manager gave a presentation on the progress being made on the major capital development programme for leisure facilities in Slough.

The Arbour Park Community Stadium had been completed and was operating successfully. The refurbished Ice Arena was due to reopen imminently and would be followed in the coming months by the Salt Hill Activity Centre and Langley Leisure Centre. The new leisure centre on Farnham Road was on schedule to open early in 2019. It was confirmed that the capital development programme was being delivered on time and budget. The Council had a Leisure Strategy Board that was focused on managing the programme and developing future plans to increase usage and activity and achieve health benefits for local residents. The total capital investment was £62m, although it was noted that there would be a high cost of repairs to the older existing facilities that were reaching the end of their life.

*(Councillor Sadiq joined the meeting)*

The Cabinet also discussed community provision and welcomed the investment in new facilities such as multi-use games areas, green gyms and the parkour park in Salt Hill Park which was proving to be popular. It was recognised that the neighbourhood facilities could play a crucial role in increasing activity, as well as the wider use of parks and open spaces, and the Cabinet highlighted the need for a properly coordinated and well promoted programme of activity.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet noted the report.

**Resolved –** That the report updating the Cabinet on the good progress being made on the delivery of the Council's leisure capital development programme be noted.

### 121. Heathrow Express Depot Update

The Director of Regeneration introduced a report that informed the Cabinet of the decision of the Department for Transport and High Speed 2 (HS2) that there was no longer a requirement to construct a new maintenance depot at Langley for the Heathrow Express service.

The Cabinet was reminded that the Council had made strong representations at the time that there were better options for the depot and it had now been decided that one of them, GWR maintenance at Reading, would be used. The Council therefore welcomed the decision as it would remove a potential risk to the costs and timescales for the Western Rail Link to Heathrow scheme and the fact the land would be available for other uses including housing. It was noted that the Council would no longer be able to claim the £6.25m earmarked in the mitigation package. The Council would seek to recoup costs and legal fees expended as part of the petitioning process and the Cabinet requested that this be extended to all costs incurred on this matter, including officer time.

## **Cabinet - 16.04.18**

The Leader welcomed the decision and gave an update more generally on discussions with Heathrow following the concerns the Cabinet raised about the airports expansion plans in its recent consultation. It had been agreed to hold a workshop to address the issues for Colnbrook, to conduct a study on historic buildings and work with Pippins School on a mitigation package.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That it be noted that following negotiations with the DfT and Great Western Railway (GWR) there would no longer be a requirement to build a new maintenance depot at Langley.
- (b) That it be noted that the Heathrow Express service would continue to operate at least until 2028.
- (c) That it be noted that the maintenance would be managed by GWR at Reading.
- (d) That the Council would no longer be able to claim £6.25m as part of the assurance letter.
- (e) That the Council would pursue the availability of the land for housing to meet the Local Plan requirements.
- (f) That the Council would pursue the reimbursement of legal fees and other costs expended through the petitioning process of the AP2 and AP4 process.

## **122. Contaminated Land Strategy 2018-23**

The Cabinet considered a report that sought approval of the updated version of the Contaminated Land Strategy 2018-2023 which set out the approach to the review of land in the borough that was potentially contaminated.

The current strategy had been published in 2001 and extensive work had been undertaken to update the risk prioritisation procedure and Developers' Guide, take account of implementation of the existing strategy and reflect changes to legislation and statutory guidance since 2001. There were approximately 1000 sites identified in Slough with some form of industrial use. The principle mechanism to bring about improvements to contaminated land was achieved through the planning process and 100 sites had been remediated since 2001 in this way.

The Cabinet discussed the methods use to identify sites, the risk based approach and the categorisation process for sites. It was recognised that the strategy was an important tool in bringing about improvements to contaminated land and agreed that the strategy be adopted.

## **Cabinet - 16.04.18**

**Resolved** – That the proposed updated Strategy be agreed and suitable for the purpose of informing planning officers, applicants, developers and consultants regarding Council approach to dealing with contaminated land, according to the latest Regulations.

### **123. Contracts in Excess of £250,000 in 2018-19**

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the contracts with an estimated value of over £250,000 that were proposed to be let in the 2018/19 financial year and any exemptions to competitive tendering.

The contracts listed in Appendix A to the report were included in approved budgets and all contracts would be let in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules. After due consideration, the Cabinet endorsed the list of contracts.

**Resolved** – That the list of contracts attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

### **124. References from Overview & Scrutiny**

In response to the recommendation from the Health Scrutiny Panel made at it's meeting on 26th March 2018 the Cabinet confirmed it's commitment in principle to take further action to make Slough a 'disability friendly town' and would welcome considering specific proposals from the Panel's Task & Finish Group in the summer.

### **125. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions**

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Key Decisions published on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 which set out the key decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet over the next three months.

**Resolved** – That the published Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.37 pm and closed at 8.31 pm)