

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

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

**Also present under Rule 30:-** Councillors Dar and Strutton

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Mann

### **PART 1**

#### **22. Declarations of Interest**

Items 10 and 15 (Minutes 31 and 36) – Proposed (Tower & Ashbourne) CPO 2018: Councillor Nazir declared that occupants of one of the properties listed in the Part II Appendix was known to him but he had not had any discussion or engagement with them on the matter.

Items 9 and 10 (Minutes 30 and 31) – Update on Tower & Ashbourne Houses and Proposed (Tower & Ashbourne) CPO 2018: Councillor Hussain declared that her property was in close proximity to Tower & Ashbourne Houses.

#### **23. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th June 2018**

**Resolved –** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018 be approved as a correct record.

#### **24. 2018-2022 Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Director of Finance & Resources introduced a report on the current position on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period to 2021/22.

The MTFS set out the framework for the Council's future financial planning and the projections and assumptions had been updated since the strategy had been approved by Council in February 2018. Approving the revised figures and assumptions would assist the budget planning process leading towards the 2019/20 revenue budget. Further updates would be brought to Cabinet in October and December 2018.

The Council's financial strategy over recent years had sought to make the authority less dependent on Government funding to provide the necessary resilience at a time of substantial funding reductions. The Council was taking a more commercial approach, for example through Slough Urban Renewal (SUR) and James Elliman Homes, and these innovations were proving to be successful. The revised principles proposed in the MTFS included reducing the reliance on revenue receipts from SUR to fund the revenue budget and the Council would seek to increase reserves (excluding schools) towards

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£30m over the next four years to reflect the risks of exposure to higher borrowing arising from the recent increase in the capital programme.

The Council would continue to face significant budget pressures necessitating the need to make further savings. The MTFs model currently showed a revenue funding gap of £2.8m for 2019/20 and service areas would be bringing forward savings proposals that would be subject to internal scrutiny and challenge before being presented to Members for approval.

The Cabinet discussed the proposed budget strategy and discussed a number of specific issues such as the risk analysis, savings profile and the funding of adult social care services in view of the delay to the Government's Green Paper and lack of clarity on the future of the Council Tax precept. The Cabinet welcomed the positive impact that the SUR income had had in supporting the Council's revenue position in the past two years. The principle to ensure the Council did not become overly reliant on such revenue was agreed.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet approved the principles and approach set out in the updated MTFs and agreed to receive further reports throughout the year as part of the process of developing the budget for 2019/20 and beyond.

**Resolved** – That the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2018-2022 as set out in the report be approved.

### **25. SBC Annual Report 2017/18**

The Service Lead Strategy & Performance summarised the Annual Report of the Council's progress and achievements against the Five Year Plan 2017-18.

The priorities were refreshed annually and the report set out the progress made against the outcomes for the 2017-18 reporting period. Key achievements included improved early years provision, the launch of new public health campaigns, Slough being ranked as the best place to work in the country, the opening of new and refurbished leisure facilities, launch of housing companies and taking forward major town centre regeneration schemes.

The Cabinet recognised the progress that had been made in delivering the Five Year Plan this year and welcomed the publication of the Annual Report in detailing these achievements. Lead Members particularly welcomed the inclusion of case studies. One of the key themes of the plan was to provide strategic direction for the future of services, including prevention and early intervention, and the example of substantially improved GCSE attainment was cited as evidence of what could be achieved through strategic planning, prioritisation and partnership working.

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Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton asked for clarification of when the A4 cycle lane would be completed and it was noted this would be done by early Autumn.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Annual Report for 2017-18 was agreed.

**Resolved** – That the Council's Annual Report for 2017-18 be agreed.

### **26. Creating a Slough Regeneration Campus**

The Director of Regeneration introduced the report requested by the Cabinet in June 2018 to take forward the concept of a Slough Regeneration Campus to maximise the skills and employment opportunities arising from the expansion of Heathrow Airport and the other major regeneration projects in Slough.

It was proposed that a study be commissioned to explore the feasibility of creating a regeneration campus to seek to improve the training, skills, apprenticeship and employment offer for local people. The Cabinet emphasised the importance of ensuring that the concept sought to meet the expected local need for the full range of construction and related trades through to planners, architects and other professions. It was recognised that there were already significant skills shortages in the town and this problem was expected to increase given future demand arising from the pipeline of major schemes. The report set out how a regeneration campus could contribute to the delivery of a range of manifesto commitments including bringing a higher education facility back to Slough, which the Cabinet particularly welcomed.

Lead Members discussed a range of issues included the impact on the labour market of the Brexit; the experiences of other local authorities in developing a similar skills offer; and the linkages to existing training provision.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton commented on the wider plans for the regeneration of the town centre and the progress of Slough as a 'digital city'. Lead Members recognised the challenges that the town centre had in the short term and explained the actions being taken, including a 30 day plan to make the town centre cleaner and greener. The Council was actively incorporating digital access to services as part of the proposed office relocation and customer strategy and in terms of the regeneration campus it was confirmed that the feasibility study would explore the options for digital delivery.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed that a feasibility study be commissioned and progressed.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That a programme of work be established and a feasibility study of a Slough Regeneration Campus (SRC) be commissioned.
- (b) That, subject to the outcome of the feasibility study, the Cabinet agrees the development of the Slough Regeneration Campus.
- (c) That the authority to progress the above recommendations be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and the Director of Children, Learning and Skills following consultation Lead Member for Regeneration and Education and Skills.

**27. Slough Borough Council Gender Pay Gap Action Plan**

The Director of Finance & Resources introduced a report to that sought endorsement of the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, which had been produced in response to the gap reported to Cabinet in March 2018.

All organisations with more than 250 employees were required to publish the gender pay gap annually under the Equality Act 2010 and Lead Members were reminded that Slough Borough Council's pay gap of 12.5% was better than the national average of 18.4% and was in line with that of comparable organisations. The Council was not required to produce an action plan, however, the authority had chosen to draft one which detailed the interventions aimed at understanding the causes of the gap and closing it in future years. Implementation would be overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Children, Learning & Skills.

The Cabinet recognised that whilst the pay gap in the Council was below average, it was important that more work was needed and measures which aimed to enhance the progression of women at the Council such as networking and leadership programmes were welcomed.

The Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to take proactive steps to close the gender pay gap and endorsed the action plan. It was agreed that Cabinet would receive a progress report at a future meeting.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That the Council's commitment to improving gender equality within the workforce and reduce the gender pay gap in the future be endorsed.
- (b) That it be noted that the plan would be implemented by the People service area, with oversight from the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group (chaired by Cate Duffy, Director of Children, Learning and Skills).
- (c) That the Cabinet receive a progress report on implementation in 2019.

**28. Review of the Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus**

The Lead Member for Children & Education introduced a report that sought approval of the draft revised Slough Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The draft had been recommended to Cabinet by the Agreed Syllabus Conference at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 for adoption as the Agreed Syllabus for RE in Slough Community and Foundation schools for five years from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

The syllabus had been agreed across the six Berkshire authorities and teachers and representatives of faith groups had been fully involved in its development. It was structured around the themes of 'Believing, Behaving and Belonging' and whilst the syllabus was broadly unchanged from the current version, it was shorter and included provision that a slightly wider range of religions and belief systems be taught as statutory requirements; bringing Islam into the Primary Phase and the study of a non-religious world view at Key Stage 3. In response to a question about the learning model and assessment that would be used it was noted that there was greater flexibility to schools and teachers about how the syllabus would be implemented.

After due consideration, the draft revised syllabus was agreed.

**Resolved –** That the draft revised Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education as submitted be adopted as the Agreed Syllabus for use in Slough Community and Foundation schools for a period of five years from 1st September, 2018.

**29. Osborne Property Services Ltd Trading Partnership and Commercial Initiatives Update**

The Service Lead Neighbourhoods introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the establishment of the Trading Partnership between the Council and Osborne Property Services Limited and a potential new commercial opportunity to establish an Asset Management Services framework.

The Cabinet was reminded that the partnership with Osborne included an initiative to explore the potential for modular homes and significant progress had been made in evaluating twenty-four sites across the borough, as listed in paragraph 5.1 of the report. It was noted that twenty-three of the twenty-four sites would be better suited to permanent housing rather than modular housing, which was consistent with the Cabinet's preference for developing permanent housing where possible. It was reported that there was the potential for a total of 328 new homes and the Cabinet welcomed the work that had been undertaken to bring forward a package of relatively small sites for vital residential development.

There was also an opportunity to develop commercial activity through the partnership by providing a range of asset management and managing agent services as set out in section 5.2 of the report and in Appendix A. The trading

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partnership would manage and operate the activity which would be delivered by a service provided appointed through an open procurement process. The benefit would be to generate income through a profit share arrangement to invest in the community. The Cabinet recognised the potential benefits of taking forward this proposal and agreed to delegate authority to the Service Lead, following consultation with the Leader and Lead Member, to pursue the opportunity.

### **Resolved –**

- (a) That it be noted that the Service Lead Governance, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Finance and Housing and Leader of the Council, had progressed the Articles of Association and Shareholder Agreement to a position of readiness for Osborne to approve or provide the council with enhanced provisions that would add value and benefit to the trading partnership.
- (b) That significant progress had been made with the initial 7 sites identified for the provision of modular homes, and for Cabinet to approve the further 17 sites (listed at 5.1.5) for evaluation for future presentation and proposal to Cabinet.
- (c) That the Service Lead Governance and Service Lead – Neighbourhoods, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Finance and Housing and Leader of the Council, be authorised to pursue the opportunity to develop, OJEU procure and launch an Asset Management Services Framework through the RMI as set out in item 5.2 of the report with supporting briefing paper at Appendix A.
- (d) That it be noted that in advance of the launch of a repairs and maintenance service to the private rented sector through the trading partnership, the RMI has already responded to requests from the private sector to requests to carry out work, generating early additional income and which arose from the publicity surrounding the launch of the new contract. This is being used to test the potential the trading partnership has in offering the repairs service to the private sector.

### **30. Update on Tower & Ashbourne Houses**

Further to the Cabinet resolution of 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, the Service Lead Neighbourhoods introduced a report that updated on progress of the planning position and potential sources of institutional finance for the redevelopment of Tower & Ashbourne Houses to provide circa 200 homes.

Progress had been made towards bringing forward the planning application and public consultation would formally commence on 17<sup>th</sup> July, and it was noted that discussions had already taken place with the Chalvey Community Forum. It was anticipated that a planning application would be submitted in December 2018 for determination in the Spring of 2019. It was noted that the

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Council was still seeking to acquire properties from three leaseholders to complete land assembly and the Cabinet would consider a separate report later in the agenda on potentially using compulsory purchase powers if necessary.

The Cabinet welcomed the progress that was being made and noted the update.

**Resolved –** That the update report be noted.

### **31. Proposed (Tower and Ashbourne) Compulsory Purchase Order 2018**

The Service Lead Strategic Housing Services introduced a report that sought approval, in principal, to use compulsory purchase powers for the acquisition of land necessary for the delivery of the proposed redevelopment of Tower House and Ashbourne House.

The Appendix B, which contained exempt information and was in Part II of the agenda, summarised the status of negotiations with the remaining leaseholder. There were currently three leaseholders and telecoms providers still on site and negotiations had been ongoing since 2015. The Cabinet agreed that it was important to make progress with regards to the negotiations to enable the redevelopment of the site for much needed new housing. It was therefore agreed in principle to make a CPO for the specified land should it not be possible to reach agreement by negotiation.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the recommendations were agreed.

**Resolved –**

- (a) That it be agreed in principle to make a Compulsory Purchase Order (a CPO) for the acquisition of land and rights within the area edged red on the draft plan entitled "Area to be referenced for Proposed (Tower and Ashbourne) Compulsory Purchase Order 2018";
- (b) That authority be given to the Director of Regeneration, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Corporate Finance & Housing to authorise officers to begin preparatory work to use its compulsory purchase powers, including serving requisitions on landowners and appointing land referencing agents to thoroughly investigate all land interests, the preparation of a Statement of Reasons and all other necessary documentation;
- (c) That a further report would come forward to the Cabinet recommending the making of a CPO, if necessary, in relation to specific land;
- (d) That it be noted that a scheme for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Site to deliver in the region of 195 units (the Scheme) will continue to be designed with the intention of full planning permission being applied for later in 2018;

(e) That the CPO stages set out at section 6 of the report be noted.

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

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel made at its meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 regarding the future of the cycle hire and hub schemes, and of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee made at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 on the capital programme.

Following concerns that about the apparent low usage of the cycle hire and hub schemes, the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel had recommended that “the Cabinet to make a decision on the long term viability of the Cycle Hubs scheme.” It was noted that the report to the Panel had included inaccurate data that under-reported levels of use, however, the Cabinet recognised the general concern that more could be done to make the schemes more effective.

The Cabinet agreed that the cycle hire and hub schemes should continue to be promoted to staff, residents, commuters and businesses to make registration and use easier. Cycle lanes should be maintained, kept clear and cycle routes should be promoted. It was agreed the Cabinet would receive a progress report in December 2018.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on the Capital Strategy and recommended: “That Cabinet consider the provision of affordable housing within the context of the Capital Strategy 2018/19 to 2023/24.”

The Cabinet noted the comments of the Committee; reiterated its commitment to increase the provision of social and affordable housing in Slough, for example through the £18m investment in James Elliman Homes in 2018/19; and stated that it was considering applying to the Government to lift the HRA borrowing ceiling.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the recommendation of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel from 25<sup>th</sup> June 2018 regarding the cycle hire and hub schemes be noted.
- (b) That the Cabinet support the continuation of the cycle hire and hub schemes and that action be taken to increase the promotion of the facilities and the ease of registration and use.
- (c) That Slough’s network of cycle lanes be promoted and well maintained and that reported issues of below standard sections be addressed.



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(d) That the recommendation of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from 12th July 2018 on the provision for affordable housing in the Capital Strategy be noted.

(e) That the significant investment included in the Capital Strategy and the wider action plan to address affordable housing issues be noted.

### **33. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions**

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Key Decisions published on 15<sup>th</sup> June 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 Key Decisions for the period between July to September be endorsed.

### **34. 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.

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

### **35. Proposed Disposal of Land at Upton Road**

The Cabinet agreed the approach to dispose of land at Upton Road through the open market via an informal tender process.

### **36. Proposed (Tower and Ashbourne) Compulsory Purchase Order 2018 - Appendix B**

The Appendix in relation to the status of negotiations with interest holders at Tower and Ashbourne Houses was noted in determining the matters in the Part I report.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.34 pm and closed at 8.21 pm)