

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 15th March, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Akram (Vice-Chair), Anderson, Bains, Carter, Mann, Nazir and Pantelic

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Ajaib and Hulme

PART 1

118. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

119. Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st February 2021 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 22nd February 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of meeting of the Cabinet held on 1st February 2021 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 22nd February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

120. Future Delivery Model for Slough Children's Services

The Lead Member for Children & Schools and the Interim Executive Director of People (Children) introduced a report that sought agreement for the proposed future delivery model for Slough children's services.

It was proposed to change the governance arrangements for Slough Children's Services Trust to make it wholly owned by Slough Borough Council and to transfer additional services to the organisation in order to aid service coherence. The Cabinet noted the financial, legal and operational issues as set out in the report. The total contract value was still to be finalised but would be circa £35m in 2021/22 which included the additional services proposed to be transferred which were the targeted Early Help and Not in Employment Education or Training services. The recommendations included approving the governance arrangements and change of name to Slough Children First Limited; entering into a five year service delivery contract with the company to begin on 1st April 2021, with an option to extend by two years; and sought to resolve the Trust deficit issues and approve a loan from the Council to Slough Children First of £5m to provide working capital.

Lead Members recognised that this was a significant move forward with the aim of continuing to improve children's services in Slough. The new arrangements would strengthen the relationship with the Council with the aim to improve the resilience and flexibility of the services; financial benefits and efficiencies; improved safeguarding and service delivery leading to better outcomes for children and families.

At the conclusion of the discussion the recommendations were reviewed and agreed.

Cabinet - 15.03.21

Resolved –

- (a) That the Company's articles of association be approved, to make it wholly owned by the Council, including agreeing a change in its name to Slough Children First Limited, and to the reserved matters set out in paragraph 6.4 of the report;
- (b) That it be agreed that the targeted Early Help and Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) services functions being transferred to the Company with a proposed start date of no later than 1 July 2021;
- (c) That the Council enter into the Governance Side Agreement with the DfE setting out details of the consent and consultation rights exercisable by the Secretary of State whilst specified functions are subject to statutory intervention;
- (d) That the Council enter into a five year (extendable by two years) service delivery contract with the Company with a proposed start date of 1 April 2021;
- (e) That the Council enter into formal support services arrangements by 1 September 2021;
- (f) That it be agreed to write off £2.4m of the accumulated Children's Services Trust Company deficit incurred in the initial years of the contract for providing services to Children, with the remainder covered by DfE grant as assumed in the Council's 2021/22 – 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Strategy and the MHCLG Capitalisation Directive;
- (g) That a loan be approved from the Council to Slough Children First Ltd of £5m to provide the company with working capital, to be repaid within 30 days of the final payment to the Company in relation to the contract;
- (h) That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Executive Director of People (Children) and the Leader to:
 - i. finalise the details and commencement date of the service delivery contract and other associated documents, including licences and leases for property, and to implement the arrangements;
 - ii. grant licences for the Company to use Council property as required from 1 April 2021;
 - iii. finalise the terms of the loan agreement.
- (i) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, to:
 - i. agree the final scope of services to transfer to the Company by 1 July 2021 and to agree any further services to transfer to the

Cabinet - 15.03.21

- Company, subject to this not involving the transfer of more than 20 additional staff;
- ii. make decisions on reserved matters as the Council's member representation, including agreeing the adoption of the final agreed version of the Articles of Association;
- iii. finalise the details of the Governance Side Agreement.

121. Youth Offer and Youth Centre Project Progress Report

The Lead Member for Children & Schools introduced a report that updated on the progress of refreshing the 'youth offer' and Youth Centre project in Slough.

The Associate Director, Place Regulation gave a detailed presentation which set out the drivers behind the refreshed offer, including rising youth unemployment, limited social connection and desire to improve mental health; the aims and objectives and the principles that underpinned the approach being taken. The youth offer from 2021 onwards had been developed following engagement with young people and their voice was also central in designing the youth centre. The new youth 'hub' would be aligned with the 2040 Vision for Slough and the Localities Strategy. It aimed to be an inclusive and accessible new centre and be a place where support could be available for housing, training and education, substance misuse, arts and cultural facilities. Work was underway assess suitable sites and develop a business case with a view to the new centre opening in 2022.

The Cabinet welcomed the refresh of the youth offer and particularly the new centre. Lead Members and Officers had visited similar facilities elsewhere to identify good practice but the design of the new building and services would be specific to Slough. Engagement with young people in developing the facility was a key priority for the Cabinet and the Associate Director provided assurance they would be part of the design process and encouraged to take ownership of the project. Early engagement had already taken place but it was recognised that more detailed discussions would be required about the design, services and particularly how to make the building feel a safe and inviting space for young women and all other users.

Lead Members reviewed and approved the recommendations and agreed to receive a further report in the summer of 2021 on the site options and business case for the new Youth Centre.

Resolved – That the progress towards the project aims be noted and that the Cabinet receive a further report in summer 2021 on the site options and business case.

122. Performance & Projects Report - Quarter 3 2020/21

The Lead Member for Governance & Customer Services and the Strategic Programme Management Office Manager introduced a report that provided

Cabinet - 15.03.21

Cabinet with the latest performance information for the third quarter of the 2020/21 financial year to the end of December 2020.

It was noted the updates relating to education should be read with caution given the fact exams were cancelled in 2020 meaning these indicators were not directly comparable with previous years. The report also showed the other ongoing impacts of Covid-19, which had significantly influenced several indicators. The Cabinet noted that eight key performance indicators were rated 'green', eight were 'amber' and five were 'red'. In terms of projects twenty-four were 'green' or 'amber' and just two were 'red'. Performance improvements included a 2.2% year-on-year improvement in the recycling rate and 36 more Houses in Multiple Occupation being licenced compared to the previous quarter. There had been performance deterioration in areas including Business Rates and Council Tax collection due to the pandemic, unemployment had risen to 8.4% and crime levels remained relatively high since restrictions were eased after the first Covid lockdown.

The Cabinet discussed the crime figures and community safety issues facing the borough, both in terms of short term trends impacted by Covid lockdowns and longer term underlying issues that had been consistently reported for several years. The Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing commented on the 'national conversation' about crime and safety for women that had begun following the recent murder of Sarah Everard in London. It raised a number of wider issues which directly related to some of the concerning crime statistics in the report such as the increase in violent crime. Members discussed the fear of crime, measures that were needed to tackle the culture of harassment of women, the work of the Safer Slough Partnership and the need to ensure the design of place and buildings took safety fully into account. It was agreed that that Cabinet would receive a report in the summer of 2021 on safety in public places in Slough, particularly in the town centre, which set out the work being done and the further improvements that could be made.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard, the progress status of the gold projects, and progress against the Manifesto commitments be noted.
- (b) That the Cabinet receive a report in the summer of 2021 on safety in public spaces, particularly in the town centre.

123. Covid-19 Decisions Update

The Cabinet received a report which set out the further significant decisions taken by Officers in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and it was agreed that the Executive decisions be ratified.

Cabinet - 15.03.21

A further appendix was tabled that set out the significant decision that would shortly be taken by the Returning Officer regarding the locations of polling stations for the borough, police and crime commissioner and Wexham Court Parish elections on 6th May 2021. The Government had decided that polls should proceed with additional measures in place to make the elections Covid-19 secure. It had also been necessary to review a number of polling stations to minimise the use of school sites and avoid further disruption to education. The revised list of polling stations had been discussed by Silver in relation to Covid-19, and whilst the final decision was for the Returning Officer the list was published and noted as an appendix to the report in the interests of transparency.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the Significant Decisions taken by Silver as set out in Appendix A to the report be ratified;
- (c) That the Significant Decision on polling station locations for the elections on 6th May 2021 as considered by Silver on 9th March and to be made by the Returning Officer (Appendix B), as tabled at the meeting be noted.

124. References from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Cabinet considered a reference from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group that had been commissioned by the Neighbourhoods & Community Services (NCS) Scrutiny Panel.

The chair of the Task & Finish Group, Councillor Ajaib, and the Chair of the NCS Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Hulme, addressed the Cabinet and summarised the findings and recommendations. The aim had been to identify actions that would provide better and more intensive support for some of the most vulnerable people in Slough. The Task & Finish Group had made a wide range of recommendations set out fully in paragraph 5.3 of the report relating to strategic partnerships, collaboration & funding; communications; commissioning, complex needs and supply; health and mental health; skills and strengths; localities and customer services; and safety.

The Cabinet welcomed the report from the Task & Finish Group and the Panel. The Executive Director of Customer & Community commented that Officers also welcomed the report and had already started to implement some of the findings. It was noted for example that the debt welfare team had been expanded to provide the necessary support to try to prevent homelessness. The Cabinet was advised that the recommendations could therefore be accepted.

It was agreed to adopt the recommendations as set out and to receive an update report in November 2021 on the progress in implementing the

Cabinet - 15.03.21

recommendations. It was suggested that that update be considered by the scrutiny panel before coming to Cabinet.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Task & Finish Group be welcomed.
- (b) That the recommendations as laid out in section 5.3 of the report be endorsed.
- (c) That the Scrutiny Panel receive an update report in September 2021 and the Cabinet be updated in October 2021.

125. Notification of Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Key Decisions published on 12th February 2021 which set out the key decisions expected to be taken by the Cabinet in the next three months.

Resolved – That the published Notification of Decisions be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.12 pm)