

Cabinet – Meeting held on Wednesday, 24th May, 2023.

Present:- Councillors Smith (Chair), Chahal (Vice-Chair), I. Ahmed, P. Bedi, Kelly, Muvvala and Wright

Also present:- Councillors Mann, Anderson, Hulme, E. Ahmed, Dhillon, Escott, Gahir, Iftakhar, Khawar, Matloob, Shah, Shaik, Stedmond and Tomar

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th April 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th April 2023 be approved.

3. Appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council

In accordance with Article 7, paragraph 10 of the Constitution the Leader of the Council was required to appoint the Deputy Leader of the Council at the first meeting of the Cabinet following the Annual Meeting of Council.

The Leader confirmed that Councillor Wal Chahal had been appointed as Deputy Leader with effect from the Annual Meeting of Council held on 18th May 2023. The Leader also summarised the Cabinet portfolios, which had been reduced from nine to seven in total.

Resolved – That it be noted that the Leader of the Council had appointed Councillor Wal Chahal as the Deputy Leader of the Council with effect from 18th May 2023.

4. Remodelling of Children's Centres

The Lead Member for Education, Children's Services, Lifelong Skills and Governance introduced a report that sought the agreement of the Cabinet to the re-modelling of children's centre services.

The Executive Director for Children's Services provided a detailed overview of the report and recommendations which had been developed following public consultation. The recommendations to Cabinet were to retain Chalvey Grove, Penn Road and Romsey Close as children's centre delivery sites with early years, and to retain Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road for early years

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provision only. The other five current sites would close from September 2023. It was noted that the budget approved by full Council included a planned saving in relation to children's centres. The full year saving of £462k would be delivered from 2024/25 onwards, with part year savings in the current year if the Cabinet agreed that the five sites would close from September 2023. It was also noted that a report and strategy would be brought back to Cabinet in October 2023 on a wider family hub model.

The Cabinet noted the feedback from the public consultation, including a petition that had been launched on Change.Org titled 'Save Slough Children's Centres', that had a focus on any potential impact on Romsey Close and on childcare provision. It was noted that the recommendation was to retain Romsey Close. The Council had undertaken a wide range of supporting work in bringing the report to Cabinet including updating the necessary statutory assessment for childcare sufficiency and a full transportation analysis. Lead Members noted that the consultation had influenced the recommendations put to Cabinet.

The Leader invited Councillors Hulme, Mann and Anderson to address the Cabinet as they had registered to speak. Various concerns about the proposals were made including whether there would be sufficient childcare provision given the viability and workforce issues faced the sector; the impact the closures would have for children with special educational needs, especially as there was rising demand for services; and the deliverability of the savings. The Cabinet noted the points raised and Officers responded that they were confident the savings as presented in the report would be delivered and that following the work on the sufficiency assessment the needs of children with special educational needs could be met.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Leader summarised the recommendations which were agreed by Cabinet.

Resolved –

- (a) That it be agreed to retain Chalvey Grove, Penn Road and Romsey Close as children's centre delivery sites with early years and Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road for only Early Years provision. All other 5 current sites would close from September 2023.
- (b) That it be noted that a report and strategy (following a business case and a feasibility study) would be brought back to Cabinet in October 2023 on a wider family hub model following engagement with the community and partner agencies in Slough.

5. Electric Vehicles Charge Point Tariffs

The Lead Member for Transport, Housing, Highways, The Environment and Environmental Services introduced a report that set out the current infrastructure, usage and costs of the Council's public electric vehicle (EV) charging network and proposed application of a standardised tariff regime

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across the sites and allow all the Council charging facilities to be used by the public.

It was noted that there were currently charges at some sites but not others and standardising the tariff would help ensure the service was self-sufficient and more reliable.

A member of the public, Mr Wayne Strutton, had submitted a question raising numerous issues about the current infrastructure and management of the EV charging network. The Lead Member responded to the question and to Mr Strutton's supplementary question about why several existing charging points had not worked in the past.

The Leader invited Councillor Mann to address the Cabinet having registered to speak. Councillor Mann highlighted that the decision would increase the number of EV points at which charges would apply and queried why the report did not include any information on the widening access to EV charging in the borough. It was noted in response that a comprehensive EV infrastructure strategy would be produced later in 2023.

Lead Members discussed various aspects of the proposal and emphasised the importance of ensuring that a quality service was provided with appropriate maintenance arrangements to ensure it was reliable. After due consideration the recommendations were approved.

Resolved –

- (a) Authorised that the existing electric vehicle charge point fee tariff structure to be rolled out to all charge points on the Council's public EV charging network; and
- (b) Agreed the switch of EV workplace charge points in the basement level at Herschel Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) to public EV charging on the Council's network.

6. Implementation of NEC Housing Phase 2

The Lead Member for Transport, Housing, Highways, The Environment and Environmental Services introduced a report that sought funding approval to complete the delivery of Phase 2 of the NEC housing management project. This would be a virement from the Housing Revenue Account reserve to fund the complete implementation of and was an important element of the housing improvement programme.

The Cabinet discussed the problems in the implementation of Phase 1 of the project which began in 2019 and highlighted the importance of improving the management and oversight of the project to successfully deliver Phase 2 and ensure full functionality of the system would included improved housing case management capability, key online access for residents and integrated housing repairs functionality. The Executive Director for Housing & Property

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stated that overall management of the project had been moved from housing to ICT which would ensure the necessary technical and project management expertise would be in place to deliver Phase 2. The Cabinet discussed the delivery timescale and procurement of licence renewals in the future. Officers responded to the points raised.

The Cabinet agreed the recommendation.

Resolved – That funding of up to £700,000 be approved for Phase 2 of the housing management project, including remediation works outstanding from Phase 1 which would be provided through a virement from the Housing Revenue Account reserves creating an earmarked reserve of £609,000 and utilising existing monies within the General Fund of £91,000.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.32 pm)