

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 18th March, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (from 6.38pm, Chair from minute 129 onwards), Hussain (from 6.38pm, Vice-Chair), Anderson, Carter, Mann, Nazir, Pantelic (in the Chair for minutes 125-128) and Sadiq (from 7.14pm)

Apologies for Absence:- None.

PART 1

125. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

126. Election of Chair

In the absence of the Leader and Deputy Leader at the beginning of the meeting, it was proposed, seconded and agreed that Councillor Pantelic take the chair.

Resolved – That Councillor Pantelic be agreed as the chair for the first part of the meeting.

(Councillor Pantelic in the Chair)

127. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th and the Extraordinary meeting held 25th February 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th February 2019 and the extraordinary meeting held on 25th February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

128. Performance & Projects Report: Quarter 3, 2018/19

The Performance & Information Manager and the Programme Management Lead gave a presentation on the latest performance information for the third quarter of 2018/19; updated on the progress of key projects; and delivery against manifesto commitments.

Almost half (47%) of the Council's performance indicators were achieving the desired results and were rated 'green' with a further 23% close to target. This was a reduction from 53% in the previous quarter. The following indicators had shown improvements during the quarter:

- adult social care direct payments had now risen to 536;
- the number households in temporary accommodation had fallen to 428 and its status had been moved from 'red' to 'amber'; and

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- the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others at Key Stage 2 had improved with Slough now in the top quartile nationally for performance.

(Councillors Swindlehurst and Hussain joined the meeting)

The Cabinet noted the four 'red' rated indicators – the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 4, uptake of targeted healthchecks, crime rates and business rates income. Lead Members asked about the reasons for underperformance in each case and discussed the actions to improve performance. Detailed work was undertaken where required to better understand the underlying reasons for performance, for example why take up of healthchecks was relatively low in Slough. Lead Members agreed that it was important that indicators were regularly reviewed to ensure they were the right ones to measure progress against the Council's key outcomes.

Progress on key projects was reviewed and 83% were rated as either 'green' or 'amber'. Two school expansion projects were 'red' rated, however, it was noted that planning permission had since been secured for the Grove Academy which was a significant milestone. Assurance was provided that the risks and issues for 'red' rated projects were actively tracked and managed. 55 of the 57 manifesto pledges were rated 'green' with 10 delivered during the quarter.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the projects and performance report was noted.

Resolved – That the Council's current performance as measured by the performance indicators within the balanced scorecard, the progress status of the gold projects and the manifesto commitments be noted.

(Councillor Swindlehurst in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting)

129. Statutory Equalities Report (including Gender Pay Gap Report) 2018/19

The Leader of the Council introduced the Equality and Diversity Report which included the 2018 gender pay gap figures. The report was produced in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

The report demonstrated that the Council continued to make steady progress against its main equality objectives. The independently calculated gender pay gap for 2018 showed that the gap between men and women's average pay at the Council had fallen to 4.7% compared to 12.5% in the previous year. There were still fewer women than men in the most senior roles, but notable female appointments had been made including for the position of Chief Executive. It was recognised that the both pay gap and equality outcomes were influenced by both external factors such as varied educational attainment of different groups and organisational factors such as restructures and service redesign.

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The Cabinet reiterated its commitment to closing the gender pay gap and addressing the wide range of equality issues to ensure the Council's workforce was reflective of Slough's population and services met the needs of the diverse communities across the town. Lead Members emphasised the importance of following through on commitments by taking proactive action to further close the pay gap and promote equality. A number of specific projects were planned which would help to encourage women progress in the organisation and Lead Members would discuss with their Directors the steps being taken in their portfolio responsibilities.

The Statutory Equalities Report 2018/19 and gender pay gap figures for 2018 were noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the annual developments and progress with the council's current equality objectives be noted:
 - (i) To have a representative and inclusive workforce
 - (ii) To reduce inequalities in service access and outcomes
 - (iii) To improve equality of opportunity through fair and evidence-based decision-making
 - (iv) To help foster good community relations and community cohesion

- (b) That the independently calculated and verified results of the 2018 gender pay gap for Slough Borough Council employees and progress with the associated action plan be noted.

130. Parental Leave Policy for Councillors

A report was considered that sought the Cabinet's endorsement for a new policy of parental leave for councillors. The policy had been discussed by the Member Panel on the Constitution and Audit & Corporate Governance Committee prior to a recommendation being made to Council.

There was no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office and as at 2017 only 4% of local authorities had such a policy in place. Lead Members commented that they anticipated the policy would encourage a diverse group of councillors and remove some of the barriers that may prevent more people coming forward to serve as members. The draft policy appended to the report covered Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances. It also included special circumstances for perinatal bereavement.

Discussion had been held across the Council about the principle of introducing such a policy and it was hoped that it could be agreed on a cross-party basis. The Cabinet fully supported the principle of the policy and endorsed the proposal.

Resolved –

- (a) That the principle of a policy for Parental Leave for Councillors be agreed.
- (b) That the proposed Policy as set out in Appendix A be noted and that the Monitoring Officer report any necessary and consequential amendments to the Constitution to the Member Panel on the Constitution and Audit and Corporate Governance Committee prior to a recommendation to Council.

(Councillor Sadiq joined the meeting)

131. Local Welfare Provision Policy

The Lead Member for Corporate Finance & Housing introduced a report that sought approval for the revised Council policy for Local Welfare Provision (LWP) in 2019/20.

LWP provided support such as vouchers for food and essential purchases to people when they were experiencing extreme financial difficulties and hardship. Schemes had initially been funded by the Department for Work & Pensions until 2016 but in recent years local authorities had to support them from their own resources if they decided to continue with them. The Cabinet noted recent data from the Centre for Responsible Credit that 26 authorities had scrapped their schemes entirely and many others had reduced funding substantially. It was proposed that Slough's scheme be maintained at the current level of £300,000 for 2019/20 and the details of the scheme were set out in the appendix to the report.

Lead Members reviewed the operation of the scheme in the past year and it was noted that the number of claims had risen slightly since the previous year. A total of 1,662 applications had been received between April 2018 to January 2019 of which 1,232 had been approved. The impact of Universal Credit was discussed and it was reported that there had been an increase in the number of people requesting help with their day to day living costs, primarily as they were waiting for their payment.

Members asked whether the funding available was sufficient to meet the demand for support. The spend for 2018-19 was in line with the budget and the Cabinet had previously agreed a contingency reserve although it had not been necessary to utilise it so far. The level of funding proposed was therefore considered to be sufficient although the position was continually reviewed.

The Cabinet agreed the importance of continuing to support its most vulnerable residents at times of hardship, particularly given the pressures faced by many people from the roll out of Universal Credit. The LWP policy as at Appendix D to the report was agreed.

Resolved – That the policy for Local Welfare Provision 2019-20 as set out in Appendix D to the report be approved.

132. Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2019-20

The Lead Member for Corporate Finance & Housing introduced a report that sought approval for the revised Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) policy 2019-20.

The policy aimed to support local people mainly affected by welfare payments by helping them maintain their home or find cheaper alternative accommodation. The latest figures for 2018-19 showed that there had been 530 applications for support of which 321 had received an award. The Council proposed to maintain spend within the current grant allocation from Government of £650,504. The policy was reviewed annually and the proposed changes for 2019-20 were set out in paragraph 5.17 of the report.

After due consideration, the Cabinet agreed the policy for 2019-20.

Resolved – That the policy for Discretionary Housing Payments as set out in Appendix A be approved.

133. Proposals for Private Rented Property Licensing

The Lead Member for Corporate Finance & Housing and the Housing Regulation Manager introduced a report on the Additional and Selective Licensing Schemes for private rented properties. A full consultation had been carried out and it was proposed to introduce Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation covering the whole of the borough and a Selective Licensing Scheme covering the majority of the Chalvey and Central wards.

The introduction of such a scheme had been a manifesto commitment since 2014 and detailed work had been done since to design, consult and draft the scheme proposed. The Cabinet took into account the results of the comprehensive consultation that had taken place with residents, landlords and other stakeholders. There had been a consensus to tackle poor housing and the environmental conditions that existed in Chalvey and Central wards. A majority of residents supported the scheme whereas most landlords were against, although it was noted that a significant minority of responsible landlords welcomed the scheme which could raise standards in the sector. It was noted that the proposal had been supported by statutory partners as well as several charities operating in the housing sector.

A 'light touch' approach would be taken towards reputable landlords and the schemes would enable the Council to focus enforcement activity on non-compliant and irresponsible landlords. The Cabinet agreed that the licensing schemes would provide a much needed effective policy framework to properly regulate the private rented sector; protect the most vulnerable tenants; and help tackle anti-social behaviour.

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The proposed fees proposed in Table 1 to the report were discussed and it was noted that they had been revised following the consultation. The fee income would be ring-fenced to fund activity to tackle poor housing and anti-social behaviour. After discussion, the Cabinet agreed that the Part A Selective License fee be set at £200. Lead Members requested that there be some flexibility in payment methods, potentially to stagger payments where appropriate and it was noted that this would be taken forward in the payments process for portfolio landlords that would be developed following approval. The Cabinet wanted to work with responsible landlords and agreed that it was important to encourage them to buy in to the scheme. To enable a smooth introduction of the scheme it was agreed that implementation take place from 1st October 2019.

After due consideration, the Cabinet welcomed the scheme and agreed the recommendations set out in the report and appendices. It was agreed to receive an update on how the scheme had worked a year after it had been adopted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the representations received in response to the consultation on the Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Selective Licensing Schemes (as attached at Appendix 4) be considered;
- (b) That it be agreed to introduce Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This will cover the whole of the borough as delineated in the map at Appendix 1a, to be cited as Slough Borough Council's Designation for an Area for Additional Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, No 1, 2019 and that this additional licensing designation shall come into force on 1st July 2019;
- (c) That it be agreed to introduce a Selective Licensing Scheme, which covers the majority of Chalvey and Central wards delineated in red on the map at Appendix 1b. This is to be cited as Slough Borough Council's Designation for an Area for Selective Licensing, No 2 2019 and that this selective licensing designation shall come into force on 1st July 2019;
- (d) That the schemes be publicised as required by regulation before enforcement starts and deliver a comprehensive publicity campaign, which will begin after this decision;
- (e) That the mandatory license fee be brought into line with the proposed additional license fee and to introduce a per room additional fee for the larger HMOs;
- (f) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Housing, the authority to agree minor changes to the proposed

implementation and delivery, including administration, fees and conditions where necessary and ensure that all statutory notifications are carried out in the prescribed manner for the licensing designation, noting the Cabinet's view that Part A Selective License fee being set at £200 and that implementation take place from 1st October 2019.

(g) That the Cabinet receive an update report in July 2020.

134. Transport for the South East

The Service Lead Major Infrastructure Projects introduced a report that sought approval for Slough Borough Council's involvement in Transport for the South East (TfSE).

The principal function of TfSE would be to develop a transport strategy for the region and could in time draw down specific powers from central government. The organisation was current operating in shadow form and was in the process of seeking statutory status as a sub-national transport body. It was a requirement to have the consent of its constituent authorities and it was noted that the six Berkshire authorities currently operated collectively through the Berkshire Local Transport Body. It was noted that authorities could decide to take up individual membership at a later stage. TfSE had to potential to support the Council's strategic transport objectives by improving connectivity on major routes, supporting economic growth and addressing cross boundary issues such as air pollution.

A further stage of consultation would take place after the local elections to formulate the transport strategy for the region and it was envisaged that the Cabinet receive a further report in the summer to agree to Council's response. Lead Members commented that authorities with clear transport plans would be well placed to shape the emerging strategy and there was an opportunity to align it to Slough's recently agreed Transport Vision.

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

Resolved –

- (a) That Slough Borough Council join Transport for the South East in the capacity of Local Transport Authority, as a constituent authority.
- (b) That membership be exercised via the existing joint committee (Berkshire Local Transport Body). In this capacity, Slough Borough Council will be a joint and equal member of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB), which will effectively be treated as a county authority within the TFSE organisation.
- (c) That the establishment of TFSE as a subnational transport body be supported.

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- (d) That the geographical extents of the TFSE region, and the governance structure of TFSE including membership status, voting rights and responsibilities be noted.
- (e) That the importance of TFSE in achieving success in the following ways be noted:
- Increasing transport connectivity across the South East, maximising the benefit of cross-boundary links and regional travel;
 - Increasing economic growth across the South East;
 - Improving air quality in the South East
 - Endorsing and contributing to the subnational transport body's ability and powers to lobby central government and seek increased funding, over and above the opportunities that would otherwise be available to Slough Borough Council as an individual authority;
 - Supporting the Slough Borough Council Transport Vision, the SBC Low Emission Strategy, the overall SBC Local Plan and all related core transport and environmental policies.
- (f) That it be recognised that the recent and ongoing success of membership of the Berkshire Local Transport Body, within the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), with reference to Slough's status as a constituent member of these partner organisations and the resultant success in terms of enhancements to the borough in terms of enhanced infrastructure, transportation, economic growth and all areas of sustainability.

135. Slough Mass Rapid Transit Phase 2 including A4/Sutton Lane Park and Ride

The Service Lead Major Infrastructure Projects introduced a report that sought approval to progress the implementation of Phase 2 of the Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) scheme and the associated A4/Sutton Lane park and ride facility.

The scheme was a key element of the Council's Transport Vision and the aim was to enhance public transport services and reduce congestion along the A4 corridor. Phase 2 was the section between the town centre and Heathrow. It was an important part of the Local Plan to support the comprehensive redevelopment of the centre of Slough. The outline plans for the proposed park and ride were explained and Lead Members emphasised the importance of ensuring there was a sufficient buffer between the facility and the adjacent housing. This issue would be taken forward in the detailed design stage.

In response to comments made by Lead Members it was confirmed that as well as improving public transport services it included the enhancement of cycling and pedestrian facilities. It was also suggested that bus lanes be made available to electric vehicles and be subject to appropriate enforcement.

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The Cabinet also requested that the park and ride site be 'future proofed' to provide sufficient capacity for electric charging points.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed the recommendations subject to clarification in recommendation (b) that the detailed design should include a buffer to nearby houses and to recommendation (f) to emphasise the importance of actively facilitating walking and cycling as part of the scheme.

Resolved –

- (a) The offer of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) to provide £13.3million from the Business Rates Retention Pilot funding stream towards the cost of Phase 2 of the SMaRT major transport scheme be welcomed;
- (b) The design of the scheme as outlined in paras Section 4, be agreed in principle subject to the development of the designs through the detailed design process including an adequate 'buffer' between the Park & Ride and neighbouring properties;
- (c) The results of the consultation exercise completed on Friday 1st February 2019 are accepted and the installation of the scheme be approved, including the continuation of the Park and Ride element.
- (d) Negotiations be proceeded with, to secure land to the northeast of the A4/Sutton Lane junction, required for installation of the Park and Ride facility (see Section 5.6 for further details);
- (e) The Director of Regeneration be authorised to take all necessary steps, if necessary, to secure the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of the CPO of the third party land required to deliver the Park and Ride facility (following statutory process set down in the Highway Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.)
- (f) Officers investigate further opportunities, made possible by implementation of the scheme, to work towards the aims of the recently released Transport Vision document; in particular to reduce congestion and improve air quality by promoting cleaner vehicles, proactively facilitating improved pedestrian and cycling facilities and reducing the dominance of the car as a mode of travel.

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136. Disposal of Former Chalvey Youth & Community Centre, Darvills Lane, Chalvey, Slough, SL1 2PH

The Cabinet agreed to consider an urgent report on the disposal of the former Chalvey Youth & Community Centre on Darvills Lane, Slough.

The Cabinet had agreed in December 2018 to dispose of the property to the Pakistani Welfare Association. However, the completion deadline of 16th March 2019 as stated on the Head of Terms had not been achieved and it was recommended that the deadline be extended to 10th May 2019. Lead Members asked about the reasons for the delay and the Principal Asset Management Officer stated that officers were confident that completion could be achieved by the new deadline. The extension was agreed.

Resolved – That the deadline to complete the disposal of the former Chalvey Youth & Community Centre, Darvills Lane, be extended to 10th May 2019.

137. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

138. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 15th February 2019 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 March to May 2019 be endorsed.

139. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items in Part II of the agenda as they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority hold that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 the Schedule 12A the Local Government Act 1972.

140. Part II Minutes - 4th and 25th February 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the Part II meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th February 2019 and the extraordinary meeting held on 25th February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.35 pm and closed at 8.31 pm)