

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 3rd February, 2020.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Gahir and Sharif

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Mann

PART 1

95. Declarations of Interest

Item 8 (Minute 102) – Revenue Budget 2020/21: Councillor Anderson declared that he was a Member of Britwell Parish Council.

96. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th January 2020

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

97. Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - 2019-20 (Quarter 3 April to December 2019)

The Service Lead Finance introduced a report that provided an update on the financial position of the Council's revenue account for the third quarter of the 2019-20 financial year to the end of December 2019.

The forecast year end position for Council run services at the end of the third quarter was an overspend of £1.102m, an increase of £0.909m since the previous quarter. The reasons included the DSO not meeting income targets and reduced income from bus lane enforcement. Taking into account the exposure to financial risk from Slough Children's Services Trust's position, the potential budget overspend was £2.254m, which was a significant reduction on the second quarter. The Council, Trust and Department for Education continued to work together to address the financial issues. In response to a question, it was noted that the £4.3m provision for SCST advanced payment had been removed from the monitoring report as it would only have crystallised if the company had fallen into insolvency during the financial year. As a result of the work undertaken to stabilise the finances this risk had now reduced and it was not considered likely, although there remained a risk in the next financial year.

Lead Members discussed the actions being taken to reduce the overspend and Directors summarised the key issues in their respective service areas. The Service Lead stated that the aim was to balance the budget for Council run services by year end.

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The Housing Revenue Account was on track to deliver the planned net budget deficit of £2.871m in 2019/20.

Approval was sought for the virement and write off requests detailed in sections 9 and 10 of the report. These were agreed. At the conclusion of the discussion, the report was noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the reported underlying financial position of the Council, including the Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST), as at the third quarter of the year be noted;
- (b) That the management actions being undertaken by the officers to reduce the budget pressures be noted;
- (c) That the potential impact on the Council's general reserves and associated implications for the Council based on the latest financial projections, be noted; and
- (d) That the virements and write offs as requested in Section 9 and 10 of the report be approved.

98. Capital Monitoring Report as 31st December 2019

The Service Lead Finance introduced a report that summarised spend against capital budgets for the 2019/20 financial year as at 31st December 2019 and sought approval to re-profile budgets into future years.

The revised capital budget for 2019/20 was £171m and the forecast outturn was £166m which equated to 97% of the budget. This was a strong overall position and key projects including the hotels development on the Old Library Site and Grove Academy and new Chalvey Hub scheme were reviewed. It was noted that the school was on track to open in August and the hotels were ahead of schedule and were set to open by early 2021.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted and re-profiled budgets agreed.

Resolved – That the report be noted and that the revised 2019-20 budget and the re-profiling of budgets into future years as set out in the report be approved.

99. Five Year Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25

The Service Lead Strategy & Performance gave a presentation on the Council's refreshed Five Year Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. The Cabinet was asked to recommend approval of the revised plan to Council on 20th February 2020.

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The plan refreshed the long-term priorities to achieve the five key outcomes for Slough and it had been developed alongside the budget to ensure the Council's strategic and financial objectives were aligned. This year the plan included more detail on the Council's ambitious transformation programme, Our Futures, which included new ways of working to deliver improved outcomes for residents.

Lead Members emphasised that local people should be at the forefront of the strategy. One of the key themes included in the Leader's and Chief Executive's forewords was the importance of working with communities and partners in a 'One Slough' approach to meet the twin challenges of rising demand for services at a time of reduced resources. The Slough Wellbeing Board had an important role to play and it was noted that it was developing new priorities for the partnership which would be aligned to the Five Year Plan. Work was also underway to develop a longer term twenty year vision for Slough which included key milestones to measure.

At the conclusion of the discussion it was agreed that the revised Five Year Plan be recommended to Council for approval.

Recommended – That the refresh of the Five Year Plan attached as Appendix A be approved.

100. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21

The Leader of the Council gave a comprehensive overview of the Council's budget strategy comprising the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy and Revenue Budget. The key budget headlines were summarised as follows:

- A balanced revenue budget was being recommended for the year ahead.
- Increased investment in demand led growth for front line services - protecting the most vulnerable in Slough (children in need, elderly requiring care and those facing homelessness).
- Commercial income and efficiencies being used to offset government funding reductions and to protect front line services.
- Strengthening the medium term financial position by improving General Reserves towards the Unitary average. As advised by the LGA Peer Review, this would offset risks of future service pressures or loss of Government funding.
- 1.84% increase in the "basic" Council Tax (with an additional 2.0% increase in Adult Social Care Precept).

A report was considered that requested Cabinet to recommend approval to Council of the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21. The strategy set out

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how the Council would manage the treasury risks and fund the capital programme.

The Council currently had £569m of borrowing and an average investment balance of £45m throughout the year. Officers worked closely with treasury advisors Arlingclose. The Cabinet noted that the highest forecast of Capital Financing Requirement during the next three years was £833m and the total debt for 2020/21 was expected to be £732m. It was therefore confirmed that the Council would be operating within its borrowing limits for the year ahead.

Lead Members discussed the activity undertaken as part of the Strategic Acquisitions Strategy. The capital investment of £106m in the programme was projected to generate £5.3m in 2019/20 and £5.8m in 2020/21 and the strong returns on investment helped support the Council's revenue budget. Members requested that Appendix 2 include a note confirming that the strategic acquisition investments were within the ceiling agreed by Council and that the business cases had been thoroughly assessed before the acquisitions were approved.

After due consideration, it was agreed to recommend approval of the Treasury Management Strategy to Council on 20th February 2020.

Recommended – That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 be approved.

101. Capital Strategy: 2020 to 2024

A report was considered that set out the proposed capital strategy 2020 to 2024 and the Cabinet was asked to recommend the strategy and 2020/21 programme to Council on 20th February 2020.

The core principles of the strategy were to be affordable, support the Five Year Plan priorities and maximise the Council's assets. A programme of £259m was proposed to 2024 which included £42.3m for improvement in the Council's housing stock, £23.6m investment in schools, £32.3m in highways & transport schemes, £29.6m for James Elliman Homes and £20m for hubs as part of the Localities Strategy. There was also provision to continue the Community Investment Fund to invest in neighbourhood level projects identified by Ward Members.

The Cabinet welcomed the ambitious programme which would help deliver the strategic priorities in the Five Year Plan. The financing of the programme was discussed including the impact on borrowing. It was noted that the total revenue financing required to fund the capital strategy's borrowing requirements of £171.0m was £5.916m over four years. The strategy was closely aligned to the Treasury Management Strategy to ensure the financing was in place to support the programme.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was agreed to recommend approval of the Capital Strategy and capital programme to Council.

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The Director of Finance & Resources reported that an opportunity had recently arisen to potentially acquire a site in 2019/20 through the HRA for housing. Officers were proactively seeking to purchase the site and a further report was due to be provided to Cabinet. It would require a change to the in year borrowing limits and it was agreed that delegated authority be given to the Director, following consultation with the relevant Lead Members, to adjust the in year HRA borrowing limits to enable the potential acquisition.

Recommended –

- (a) That the capital strategy of £259.0m and the associated Minimum Revenue Provision be approved.
- (b) That it be noted that the notional costs of borrowing for the capital programme to the revenue budget would be an increase of up to £5.916m per annum - commencing during the period of the capital strategy to fund borrowing.
- (c) That the principles underpinning the capital programme in paragraph 5.1.2 of the report and the Minimum Revenue Provision principles in Section 7 be approved.
- (d) That the appendices A and B detailing the capital programmes for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account be approved.

Resolved –

- (e) The delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance & Resources, following consultation with the Lead Member for Housing & Community Safety and the Leader of the Council, to adjust the in year HRA borrowing limits to enable the potential acquisition of a HRA site for new housing.

102. Revenue Budget 2020/2021

The Cabinet considered the revenue budget as set out in the report and appendices which it was proposed be recommended to Council.

The key proposals had been summarised. The budget included £8.0m of savings during the financial year and major areas of increased demand included adult social care (£1.2m), children's social care (£1.6m); and homelessness / temporary accommodation (£0.9m). A number of service improvements were proposed such as Slough Academy, support for the Business Improvement District (BID), offering skills training to Slough residents to improve employment opportunities and consolidating town centre management posts into the base budget.

The Council Tax implications would produce a total 3.84% increase, comprising 1.84% for "basic" Council services and 2% adult social care

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precept permitted by the Government due to the funding gap for such services. The rise was equivalent to 90p per week increase on a Band C property.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Cabinet agreed to recommend the Revenue Budget 2020/21 to Council on 20th February 2020.

Recommended – That the budget, as set out in the report and appendices, be approved.

As the billing authority, approve the Council Tax amounts for each band in the borough including precepts from The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Parishes - whilst noting that these are still to confirm their final council tax precept requirements;

Council Tax Resolution – In relation to the Council Tax for 2020/21

- (a) That in pursuance of the powers conferred on the Council as the billing authority for its area by the Local Government Finance Acts (the Acts), the Council Tax for the Slough area for the year ending 31 March 2021 is as specified below and that the Council Tax be levied accordingly.
- (b) That it be noted that at its meeting on 16 December 2019 Cabinet calculated the following Tax Base amounts for the financial year 2020/21 in accordance with Regulations made under sections 31B (3) and 34(4) of the Act:
- (i) 42,918.1 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) as the Council Tax Base for the whole of the Slough area for the year 2020/21; and
- (ii) The sums below being the amounts of Council Tax Base for the Parishes within Slough for 2020/21:
- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Parish of Britwell | 868.6 |
| Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle | 1,912.9 |
| Parish of Wexham Court | 1,416.5 |
- (c) That the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with sections 31A to 36 of the Act:
- (i) £382,396,185 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (2)(a) to (f) of the Act.

(Gross Expenditure);

- (ii) £321,271,305 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act.

(Gross Income);

- (iii) £61,124,880 being the amount by which the aggregate at paragraph c

(i) above exceeds the aggregate at paragraph c (ii) above calculated by the Council as its council tax requirement for the year as set out in section 31A(4) of the Act.

(Council Tax Requirement);

- (iv) £1,424.22 being the amount at paragraph c(iii) above divided by the amount at paragraph b(i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year, including the requirements for Parish precepts.

- (v) That for the year 2020/21 the Council determines in accordance with section 34 (1) of the Act, Total Special Items of £203,925 representing the total of Parish Precepts for that year.

- (vi) £1,419.47 being the amount at paragraph c (iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at paragraph c (v) above by the relevant amounts at paragraph b (i) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

- (vii) Valuation Bands

Band	Slough Area £	Parish of Britwell £	Parish of Colnbrook with Poyle £	Parish of Wexham Court £
A	946.31	44.07	32.93	24.48
B	1,104.03	51.41	38.42	28.56
C	1,261.75	58.75	43.91	32.64
D	1,419.47	66.10	49.40	36.72
E	1,734.91	80.79	60.38	44.89
F	2,050.35	95.47	71.36	53.05
G	2,365.78	110.16	82.33	61.21
H	2,838.94	132.19	98.80	73.45

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at paragraph c (iv) and c (vi) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amount to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

(viii) Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020/21 (excluding Parish precepts) is £60,920,955.

(ix) That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 it is assumed that the Thames Valley Police Authority precept will increase by £10 for a Band D property (the maximum allowed by the Home Office). The police funding settlement was only announced on 22 January. The Police and Crime Panel are provisionally meeting on the 14th February to consider the Police & Crime Commissioner's precept proposals. The following amounts are stated in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley £
A	144.19
B	168.22
C	192.25
D	216.28
E	264.34
F	312.40
G	360.47
H	432.56

(x) That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has proposed increasing its precept by 1.99% in accordance with section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Band	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority £
A	45.07
B	52.58
C	60.09
D	67.60
E	82.62
F	97.64
G	112.66
H	135.20

These precepts had not been formally proposed or agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and were agreed subject to further revision.

- (xi) Note that arising from these recommendations, and assuming the major precepts are agreed, the overall Council Tax for Slough Borough Council for 2020/21 including the precepting authorities will be as follows:

Band	Slough £	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Thames Valley £	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority £	TOTAL £
A	946.31	144.19	45.07	1,135.57
B	1,104.03	168.22	52.58	1,324.83
C	1,261.75	192.25	60.09	1,514.09
D	1,419.47	216.28	67.60	1,703.35
E	1,734.91	264.34	82.62	2,081.87
F	2,050.35	312.40	97.64	2,460.39
G	2,365.78	360.47	112.66	2,838.91
H	2,838.94	432.56	135.20	3,406.70

- (xii) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised to give due notice of the said Council Tax in the manner provided by Section 38(2) of the 2012 Act.
- (xiii) That the Section 151 Officer be and is hereby authorised when necessary to apply for a summons against any Council Tax payer or non-domestic ratepayer on whom an account for the said tax or rate and arrears has been duly served and who has failed to pay the amounts due to take all subsequent necessary action to recover them promptly.

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- (xiv) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to collect (and disperse from the relevant accounts) the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rate and that whenever the office of the Section 151 Officer is vacant or the holder thereof is for any reason unable to act, the Chief Executive or such other authorised post-holder be authorised to act as before said in his or her stead.
- (xv) That in the event that there are any changes to the provisional precept of the Fire or Police Authority, the Section 151 Officer is delegated authority to enact all relevant changes to the Revenue Budget 2020/21, Statutory Resolution and council tax levels.

Fees and Charges

- (d) Resolve to increase the Council's fees and charges as outlined in Appendix E for 2020/21.

Statement on The Robustness Of Estimates & Reserves

- (e) Note the statutory advice of the Chief Finance Officer outlined in Appendix G, the Section 25 statement. This is required to highlight the robustness of budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

School & Pupil Funding

- (f) Ratify the Schools Forum proposals to transition to 85% of the National Funding Formula; set the Minimum Funding Guarantee at +0.5%; retain the maximum 5% early years funding centrally; transfer £0.250m from the Central Schools Service (CSSB) Block to the High Needs Block; and, the proposed use of the CSSB.

Use of Flexible Capital Receipts –

- (g) Resolve to agree the Use of Flexible Capital Receipts Strategy outlined in Appendix J.

Pay Policy –

- (h) Note the Pay Policy Statement agreed at the Employment & Appeals Committee on 23 January 2020 as detailed in Appendix K.

Local Taxation Issues

- (i) Note that existing policies on court costs, empty property relief and public room booking have not changed and fees and charges for these areas are as at (d) above.

103. Regeneration Update Centre of Slough (Square Mile)

The Service Lead Major Infrastructure Projects introduced a report that sought approval to test a series of guiding principles for traffic reduction and commence work on some of the key infrastructure planning that would help to shape and inform the emerging Regeneration Framework to support future Town Centre development.

The Council's aim was to produce a Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework that established a vision for the redevelopment of the Square Mile in the centre of Slough that would inform the best allocation of uses between key regeneration sites and dovetail with an updated masterplan for the North West Quadrant. Both documents would be presented to Cabinet in the next year and would also show the integration of the proposed MRT route and car parking sites as per the emerging Car Parking Strategy.

The report proposed a series of high level guiding principles for traffic reduction, which would be an integral part of the Regeneration Framework. The propositions to be tested included bus lanes being introduced along the entire length of the A4, subject to further detailed modelling; junction upgrades along the A4 to accommodate bus priority; the removal of guard-rails along the A4, subject to risk assessments, to facilitate better access for pedestrians, cycling and public transport; a reduction in car parking ratios on commercial and residential developments in the Town Centre; and a new Multi-Storey Car Parking ("MSCP") Strategy to inform and support the regeneration framework and planning policy for the town centre.

Lead Members noted that to deliver the strategic objectives of the Regeneration Framework, it was critically important that the Transport Strategy, Car Parking Strategy and Car Parking Standards were considered in tandem at the appropriate time. As a consequence, work on these workstreams has been realigned.

The Cabinet agreed that it was important to complete the modelling and testing of the proposals to deliver the Council's approved Transport Vision and wider regeneration plans for the town centre. The recommendations were approved.

Resolved –

- (a) That the inter-dependency between the Centre of Slough Regeneration Framework and the emerging Transport Strategy and Car Parking Strategy be noted.
- (b) That the Car parking Strategy and Transport Strategy be scheduled for approval by Cabinet in Q3 2020/21.
- (c) That the Framework Masterplan should test the following propositions to reduce the impact of traffic on the highway network:

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- i. Subject to further detailed modelling, bus lanes be introduced along the entire length of the A4;
- ii. Junctions along the A4 are upgraded to accommodate bus priority.
- iii. Guard-rails along the A4 be removed, subject to risk assessments, to facilitate better access for pedestrians, cycling and public transport.
- iv. car parking ratios be reduced on commercial and residential developments in the Town Centre and around the borough to ensure the objectives of the Regeneration Framework and the Transport Strategy are met.
- v. A new Multi-Storey Car Parking (“MSCP”) Strategy be introduced to inform and support the regeneration framework and planning policy for the town centre.

104. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or scrutiny panels.

105. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 3rd January 2020 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 February and April 2020 be endorsed.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.33 pm and closed at 7.48 pm)