

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 17th June, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair, from 6.47pm), Anderson, Carter, Mann, Nazir and Pantelic

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Gahir, Sharif, Strutton and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Sadiq

PART 1

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th April 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th April 2019 be approved as a correct record.

3. Ruling Group Manifesto

The Cabinet received the Slough Labour Party Manifesto for the Borough elections held on Thursday 2nd May 2019.

Lead Members formally agreed to adopt the Manifesto commitments as Council policy for delivery in the next year. It was noted that an update on progress be received by the Cabinet quarterly with the Performance and Projects report.

Resolved –

(a) That the Slough Labour Party 2019 manifesto be formally adopted as Council policy for the period until the next Borough elections in May 2020.

(b) That regular updates on the progress of implementing the manifesto be presented to the Cabinet throughout the municipal year.

4. Cabinet portfolios and responsibilities

The Cabinet formally noted the portfolios and responsible Lead Members appointed by the Leader of the Council, as detailed in Appendix A to the report. It was also noted that the Leader had appointed Councillor Sabia Hussain as Deputy Leader of the Council in accordance with Part 2 Article 7 (10) of the Constitution.

The Leader had made a number of adjustments to the portfolios and responsibilities to reflect key priorities for the year ahead. These included

Cabinet - 17.06.19

merging housing and community safety so that the portfolio could take an holistic approach to neighbourhoods. A new portfolio of Inclusive Growth & Skills had been established to focus on ensuring local people benefited from the employment and skills opportunities arising from future economic growth. Transport and Environmental Services had been brought together to lead on issues such as clean air.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Cabinet portfolios and responsible Lead Members, as appointed by the Leader of the Council, be noted.
- (b) That the appointment of Councillor Sabia Hussain as Deputy Leader of the Council be noted.

5. Revenue Financial Report 2018-19 (Provisional Outturn)

The Service Lead Finance introduced a report that provided the Cabinet with the provisional revenue outturn for the 2018/19 financial year. The Council's approved revenue budget for 2018/19 was £105.422m and the provisional outturn was £105.473m. There was provisional overspend of £0.051m, which was 0.05% of the budget, and this was a significant improvement on the forecast overspend of £3.275m reported at the end of the third quarter of the year.

The main reasons for movement since quarter 3 were summarised and it was noted that areas of overspend during the course of the year, such as temporary accommodation, schools PFI and adult social care had received some base budget growth for 2019/20 that should better reflect the increasing costs and pressures on these services. It was noted that the Council had published its draft statement of accounts and these would be subject to audit by Grant Thornton. The Cabinet welcomed the work that had been done to achieve an effectively break even position by year end, given the significant financial pressures on local authorities.

(Councillor Hussain joined the meeting)

The report also sought approval for virements and write off requests and agreement to commence tendering for residential property leasehold insurance. These were considered and approved.

Resolved –

- (a) That the provisional outturn financial position of the Council for 2018/19 be noted;
- (b) That the budget virements as listed in paragraph 7 of the report be approved;

Cabinet - 17.06.19

- (c) That the write offs as requested in paragraph 8 of the report be approved;
- (d) That the commencement of a procurement process to procure residential leasehold property insurance for a term of three years with an option to extend for another two years, starting 1st April 2020 be approved;
- (e) That the write off of The Age Concern arrears of £154,245.90 (inclusive of VAT) as requested in paragraph 10 of the report be approved.

6. Capital Monitoring Report to 31st March 2019

The Service Lead Finance introduced a report that summarised the spend against capital budgets for the 2018/19 financial year.

The revised capital budget for 2018/19 was £239m of which £177m had been spent on a wide range of projects as detailed in the report and appendix. The Cabinet noted the various reasons for the underspend which included reprofiling and completing projects such as the A332 Widening & Tuns Lane Transport Scheme and the new leisure project under budget. There was some unspent budget from the capital allocated to James Elliman Homes and the Strategic Acquisition Board as suitable properties and investments had not become available during the year. These underspends would be carried forward and available to invest when opportunities were identified. When such reasons were stripped out, slippage was 9.7% which was well below historic levels.

Lead Members commented on the benefits that a number of the capital schemes would deliver in the future including school expansion projects, new homes and investments to generate income to the Council and support frontline services. The Cabinet agreed the importance of investing the allocated resources to James Elliman Homes at the earliest opportunity to address the pressures on temporary accommodation and it was noted that further progress had been made since the end of the reporting period of 31st March 2019.

At the conclusion of the discussion the report was noted.

Resolved – That the capital monitoring report for 2018/19 be noted.

7. Regulatory Services Fees Increases

The Lead Member for Planning & Regulation introduced a report that proposed increases in fees to cover the cost of delivery for three discretionary services provided by Regulatory Services. The proposed increases were for the following fees:

Cabinet - 17.06.19

- EU Settlement Scheme – advice from the Government had recently changed to allow local authorities to charge a local cost recovery rate. A rate of £20 per appointment had therefore been established.
- Safer Food Better Business – increased printing cost for the hygiene management pack called ‘Safer Food Better Business’ necessitated an increased fee from £12 to £18.
- Pre-Application Advice, Application Assistance and a ‘Check and Send’ Service – this would provide support to those navigating the often complex license application process and a fee of £75 per hour was proposed which was the same formula as for similar services in the trading standards and food safety teams.

After due consideration the Cabinet approved the fees as set out in the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the fee for EU Settlement Scheme document and identification verification support delivered by the Registration Service be increased from £14.00 to £20.00;
- (b) That the fee for provision of the Safer Food Better Business pack provided by the Consumer Protection Service be increased from £12 to £18; and
- (c) That the fee for the new provision of Pre-Application Advice, Application Assistance and a ‘Check and Send’ Service by the Licensing Team be set at a cost recovery rate of £75 per hour, in line with similar service fees.

8. Performance & Projects Report Q4 2018/19

The Cabinet received a comprehensive presentation from the Performance Insight Manager and the Strategic Programme Management Office Manager on the latest performance information for the fourth quarter of the 2018/19 financial year. The report included progress against the corporate balanced scorecard indicators; the 26 projects in the portfolio; and the delivery against manifesto commitments.

It was noted that of the 16 high level indicators with a RAG status in the corporate balanced scorecard, 10 were rated ‘green’, 2 ‘amber’ and 4 ‘red’. There had been improved performance in the fourth quarter in direct payments, health-checks, temporary accommodation and Business Rates income. The four ‘red’ indicators included the Key Stage 4 attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils, physical inactivity and crime rates. Recently published data showed that there had been a marked increase in the take up of healthchecks following the significant amount of work done by the public health team with partners in the NHS and communities. The Cabinet considered the contextual factors impacting on performance the actions being taken to address the position.

There were 26 projects in Council's portfolio of which 6 were 'red' rated. However, it was noted that there had been positive progress made on several areas since the end of the reporting period at the end of March 2019. Of the 57 manifesto commitments, 94.7% were rated 'green' and the remainder were 'amber', highlighting that good progress had been made. The reporting arrangements for the new manifesto commitments would need to be finalised and Members requested that this include the progress on ongoing actions.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the 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.

9. Homelessness Prevention Strategy

The Lead Member for Housing & Community Safety and the Service Lead Housing Services introduced a report that sought approval for the homelessness prevention strategy which included the rough sleeping and single homeless reduction plan. It was a requirement for local authorities to publish a homelessness strategy every five years under the Homelessness Act 2002.

There was a continued increase in homelessness numbers nationally and locally and the plan addressed the issues by taking a collaborative approach with partners and by allocating resources more appropriately. The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation in Slough has risen sharply in recent years, although the work done including through James Elliman Homes was starting to have a positive impact with a reduction from 470 to 440 in the past year. It was recognised that the Council would need to work closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners more closely and this was a key aspect of the plan. There was also a strong theme of prevention to try to stop households becoming homeless and the plan included a range of actions to support people in this regard.

In relation to the plan to address the problem of rough sleeping the approach included actions to work with private landlords and to extend night shelter provision. The outreach team was in place to provide support and enforcement activity was sometimes necessary to deal with anti-social behaviour issues in certain locations.

The Cabinet welcomed the plan in setting a strategy for dealing with an important and complex issue. Additional funding had been put in place this year and the plan would help to maximise the impact of the available resources. Lead Members had a wide ranging discussion about the factors contributing to the rise in homelessness including high and rising housing costs, benefit changes and the provision of other services to support people with mental health, drug and alcohol issues. It was recognised a number of nearby authorities placed people in Slough and this created pressures on

housing and other services. Officers were working on an out-of-Borough policy for the Council and it was anticipated this would be considered by the Cabinet at a future meeting. Lead Members also commented on the importance of linking up the skills and employment opportunities to the housing strategy as employment was a significant factor in achieving long term, sustainable outcomes for people.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet approved the strategy and plans as set out in the appendices to the report.

Resolved – That the homelessness prevention strategy and the rough sleeping and single homeless reduction plan be approved.

10. HQ Town Centre Relocation Update

The Director of Finance & Resources introduced a report that updated on the HQ relocation project at 25 Windsor Road and the proposed use of different assets.

Lead Members were informed that the fit out of 25 Windsor Road was progressing well and the building may be available to begin a phased move from July 2019. The construction, technology, access and transport issues were progressing and the main IT transformation would begin once the Council had control of its assets after November 2019. Since the decision to acquire the property in May 2018 a number of decisions such as bringing Arvato services back in-house had impacted on the original business case. It had been decided that the 180 staff transferring back to the Council would primarily be based at the new HQ.

It was also noted that front of house staff currently based at Landmark Place would be transferred to Cornwall House when the existing lease for LMP expired in May 2020 and the opportunities to move some provision into other satellite buildings would be explored through the Localities Strategy. East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group had expressed an interest in leasing space at St Martin's Place which may provide an opportunity to retain the building as a Community Hub. This option was being explored and was anticipated to come back to Cabinet for a decision in the Autumn.

The Cabinet discussed the plans and was reassured that the revised costs and benefits had been reviewed and the overall financial outcome was not adversely impacted from the business case approved by Cabinet in 2018. Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton raised a number of issues about the impact of reduced rental income at 25 Windsor Road, insurance and IT issues. The Director responded to the points raised and confirmed the appropriate insurance was in place. The update was noted.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress in making 25 Windsor Road (25WR) available to use as the Council's HQ be noted;

Cabinet - 17.06.19

(b) That it be noted that the remainder of the Ground Floor and the entire 4th Floor at 25WR were being fitted-out to support the requirement to accommodate:

- approximately 180 staff being transferred back in-house from Arvato;
- a Post Room and an IT Workshop.

(c) That it be noted that the 5th floor would continue to be made available for commercial let to a third party.

11. Proposed Commercial Committee

The Project Manager, Regeneration introduced a report that proposed the introduction of a new Commercial Sub-Committee.

The Council had a range of boards, strategies, joint ventures and commercial companies in place to deliver regeneration and generate income that supported front line services. These included Slough Urban Renewal, the Strategic Acquisition Board, James Elliman Homes and the DSO/Teckal. There was not currently a single strategy to align this activity and a Commercial Strategy was being prepared to direct activity. The introduction of a Commercial Sub-Committee would strengthen the governance structures to oversee the strategy and performance. It would be a sub-committee of the Cabinet composed of four Lead Members with the relevant portfolios. If it was agreed to established the Sub-Committee, the terms of reference and Commercial Strategy would be considered by Cabinet in September 2019.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton asked if the Sub-Committee would be open and transparent. The Chief Executive confirmed that as Cabinet Sub-Committee it would operate in much the same way as other committees with non-executive Members able to attend as per the Access to Information procedure rules and the Sub-Committee would only meet in private where exempt information was likely to be disclosed.

The Cabinet welcomed the establishment of the Sub-Committee and approved the recommendations.

Resolved –

- (a) That to recognise the important role that Commercialisation would make in financing high quality outputs, outcomes and services in the future, a Commercial Committee comprising four elected members be established.
- (b) That it be agreed that the fundamental role of the new Committee would be to maximise existing and future commercial and business development opportunities in accordance with the contents of the report.

Cabinet - 17.06.19

- (c) That it be noted that the Commercial Committee would develop a Commercial Strategy and Action Plan that would be subject to Cabinet approval.
- (d) That the Service Lead Governance be instructed to arrange for any necessary changes to the Constitution to be presented to Council for adoption, following approval by the Monitoring Officer, to enable the work of the Committee to begin as soon as possible.
- (e) That it be noted that induction would be arranged for the members of the Committee in accordance with the contents of the report following their appointment, including training on commercialisation and business development.
- (f) That the proposal to introduce a dedicated finance resource associated with the role of the Commercial Committee and emerging Commercial Strategy be agreed and that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance to resource this proposed new post.
- (g) That it be noted that an update report be brought to Cabinet by September 2019 that would include the proposed Commercial Strategy and Action Plan. The report would also include the Terms of Reference which will, if approved, be reported to Council.

12. LEP's Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy Consultation Response

The Director of Regeneration introduced a report that set out the proposed response to the consultation on the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS) Framework Document.

Local Enterprise Partnerships had been tasked with producing Local Industrial Strategies in the 2017 White Paper to seek to boost economic competitiveness. Thames Valley Berkshire LEP had framed the BLIS around three 'locally-defined imperatives' as set out in section 5.2 of the report. The key themes and issues for Slough were set out and it was proposed that these form the basis of the Council's response. Lead Members supported the proposed response and it was agreed that delegated authority be given the Service Lead Economic Development to finalise and submit the response.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy, as at Appendix A, be endorsed.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Service Lead, Economic Development to respond to the consultation based on themes set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report.

Cabinet - 17.06.19

13. References from Overview & Scrutiny

There were no references from Overview & Scrutiny.

14. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 19th May 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 May to August 2019 be endorsed.

Chair

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