

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 15th July, 2019.

Present:- Councillors Swindlehurst (Chair), Hussain (Vice-Chair), Anderson, Carter, Mann, Nazir and Pantelic (from 6.43pm)

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Ajaib

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Sadiq

PART 1

15. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

16. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th June 2019

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2019 be approved as a correct record.

17. SBC Annual Report 2018/19

The Service Lead Strategy & Performance introduced the Council's draft Annual Report for 2018-19 which set out the progress and achievements against the Five Year Plan.

The Five Year Plan was reviewed and refreshed each year and was aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Annual Report tracked performance and included a range of performance measures and case studies to demonstrate progress. The key headlines from the past year were summarised including financial stability with a balanced budget position to 2022; the supply of 846 new dwellings; improved quality of children's services; the Business Improvement District for the town centre; and adoption of key policies including the Low Emissions Strategy and 20-year Transport Vision.

The Cabinet welcomed the document and commented that it was evidence that good progress was being made on the Council's strategic priorities. The case studies helped to show the difference that Council services were making to improve resident's lives. Lead Members highlighted a number examples of further progress since the end of the reporting period of the end of March, such as the recent planning approval for the redevelopment of Tower and Ashbourne Houses.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the Annual Report at its meeting on 11th July 2019 and had commented on some of the statistics and statements. The comments would be taken into account in the final textual amendments prior to publication.

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The Cabinet was agreed to recommend approval of the Annual Report to Council on 23rd July 2019.

Recommended – That the draft Council's Annual Report for 2018-19 be approved, subject to any final textual amendments.

(Councillor Pantelic joined the meeting)

18. Charter for Cleaner Air

The Cabinet considered a report that recommended that the Council sign up to the Oxford City Council Charter for Cleaner Air to support the call for the UK Government to do more to improve poor air quality.

The Charter had been launched by Oxford City Council, Greenpeace UK and Friends of the Earth and it called on the Government to place the health of communities first. The problem of air pollution was significant in Slough and it was recognised as a major public health issue. The Service Lead Major Infrastructure Projects highlighted that the Charter was in line with Slough's ambitions to improve local air quality as set out in the Low Emissions Strategy approved in 2018 and the Transport Vision agreed by Cabinet in February 2019.

It was noted that the Labour Group had tabled a motion on climate change at the next Council meeting on 23rd July 2019. The Cabinet recognised that whilst the Charter was principally aimed at calling on the Government to take further action to address the problem of air pollution, it was important that the Council showed local leadership for example by investing in public transport and improving the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.

After discussion it was agreed that Slough Borough Council sign up to the Charter.

Resolved – To sign up to the Oxford City Council Charter for Cleaner Air and agree a press release announcing the sign up to the Charter.

19. Transport for the South East - Transport Strategy Consultation

A report was considered that set out the main elements of Slough Borough Council's formal response to the Transport for the South East (TfSE) consultation on the TfSE proposal to become a sub-national transport body. The Cabinet had agreed in March 2019 that Slough Borough Council join TfSE. It was noted that the Government had decided not to formally award statutory status to any more sub-national transport bodies at the present time, however, work would continue to prepare for such status in the future.

The TfSE consultation, 'Proposal to Government', set out the transport vision for the south east, which was broadly consistent with the vision and wider interests of Slough Borough Council. The draft response was included in the Appendices to the report and set out both the areas of agreement and

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challenge where the Council believed the proposals could be strengthened. These included greater emphasis on the role and opportunities of Heathrow Airport and greater acknowledgement of supporting the higher performing places in the south east where there was greatest economic potential.

Lead Members welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the strategy and agreed that it was important to take a wider strategic approach across the south east to support local and sub-regional objectives. The links with the Clean Air Charter were noted in that it was important both to promote clean vehicles to reduce pollution and also take action to address the problems of congestion.

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

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress in the establishment of the TFSE sub-national body be noted;
- (b) That the formal consultation response submitted by Slough Borough Council, as a constituent member and part of the Berkshire Local Transport Group, to TFSE's draft proposal to Government to establish the body be noted;
- (c) That the main areas of agreement with TFSE's proposals be highlighted and to recommend ongoing support for the development of the TFSE strategy with prioritisation for the following specific areas:
 - Increasing transport connectivity across the South East, maximising the benefit of cross-boundary links and regional travel; developing and maintaining the resilience of strategic corridors, enhanced partnership arrangements, and support for Public Transport including smart-ticketing innovations and similar technological solutions.
 - Increasing economic growth across the South East;
 - Improving air quality and related environmental benefits in the South East.
 - Improving accessibility within the South East, leading to greater social equality.
 - Endorsing and contributing to the sub-national 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 individual local authorities.
- (d) That any challenges to the proposal be noted, and specifically the areas where further research and engagement by TFSE are required, including:
 - Increased reference to the role and potential opportunities associated with Heathrow Airport, Transport for London and all

other neighbouring regional authorities and organisations of significance.

- Greater acknowledgment of the economic benefits being delivered in the most successful and highest performing areas within the region.
- Clarification on a number of matters relating to voting procedures and dispute resolution
- Reference to the importance of Travel Demand Management, focusing on practical and technological solutions.

(e) To further recognise the synergies between the TFSE proposal for the region and key policies in Slough, including 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) To maintain overall support for the establishment of TFSE as a sub-national transport body.

20. Approval of Service Plans

The Lead Member for Regulatory Services introduced a report that sought approval for the Health & Safety and Trading Standards Services Plans and agreement to recommend approval of the statutory Food Service Plan to Council on 23rd July 2019.

The plans set out the key activities and targets for the next year for these and the Cabinet received a comprehensive presentation that detailed the work being undertaken. The Food Safety, Health & Safety and Trading Standards teams worked to ensure national priorities and standards were addressed and to meet the needs of the local community. Key points raised during the presentation are summarised as follows:

- Health & Safety – There had been a reduction in accident notifications with 41 investigated during the year, a decrease of 31%. The plans included proactive work to raise awareness of accident report. 6 Improvement notices and 4 Prohibition notices had been served. Plans for the next year included projects on welfare conditions in nail bars and supporting compliance amongst skin piercers and tattooists.
- Food Safety – 100% of high and medium risk food inspections had been carried out resulting in 350 written warnings, 17 Improvement Notices, 1 prosecution, 1 emergency closure and 2 voluntary closures. Future plans included preparing for Brexit and changed food safety regulations.
- Trading Standards – the team had dealt with over 2,500 enquiries and achievements included 3 criminal investigations into underage sales and 124 consignments of unsafe goods being stopped from entering the UK. The Trading Standards Manager had been recognised with the Chief Constable's award.

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The impact of Brexit was amongst the issue discussed and assurance was given that the implications were being monitored and assessed so that appropriate plans could be put in place. The Cabinet thanked to team for the excellent and important work they did to protect vulnerable residents and wider community and the plans were approved. The statutory food safety plan would be recommended to Council for approval.

Resolved – That the Service Plans in relation to Health & Safety and Trading Standards be approved.

Recommended – That the Service Plan in relation to Food Safety be approved.

21. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Draft Action Plan

The Service Lead Strategy & Performance introduced a report on the draft Action Plan in response to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge that took place between 5th to 8th February 2019.

The Council had invited peers from local government to visit Slough and speak to a wide range of staff, councillors and stakeholders to identify areas for potential improvement. The LGA team had focused on areas such as whether the Council had a clear vision and priorities for the town; whether there was a strong financial plan in place; did it have the capacity to deliver on its priorities; and were the organisational leadership and governance processes sufficiently strong. The LGA report made 29 recommendations and the draft Action Plan set out the Council's proposed response.

The Leader commented that some of the feedback had already been incorporated in reshaping the Cabinet portfolios to link transport and the environment and prioritise inclusive growth so that Slough's communities could benefit from the opportunities being created in the town. Steps had also been taken to improve governance, including the recent establishment of the Cabinet sub-committee focused on the authority's commercial activities. The Chief Executive commented that the recommendations would also be incorporated into the delivery of the transformation programme. The Cabinet discussed a number of aspects of the report including the themes of leadership, governance and communication.

The Cabinet noted the report and endorsed the draft Action Plan.

Resolved –

(a) That the draft Action Plan at Appendix B be considered and noted.

(b) That the timetable for an LGA led Governance Review Appendix C be noted.

22. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet considered the recommendations from the Health Scrutiny Panel from 27th June 2019 in relation to its report on the Disability Task & Finish Group.

The Policy Insight Manager reviewed the key aspects of the Task & Finish Group's report which were set out fully at paragraph 5.3 of the report. The group had worked closely with Healthwatch Slough and had held meetings with a wide range of Council departments and interested parties to seek to understand the key issues and identify areas for action. Recommendations included measures to improve the information available on services; improvements to the accessibility and safety of public transport; and ensuring full accessibility to Council buildings. The actions to delivery the recommendations were detailed in the report alongside a timetable for implementation.

The Cabinet welcomed the work undertaken by the Task & Finish Group which would help achieve the ambition to make Slough a disability friendly town. The members and contributors to the Task & Finish Group were thanked and the recommendations were considered and agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the seven over-arching recommendations of the Disability Task and Finish Group laid out in section 5.3 of the report be endorsed.
- (b) That the implementation of the Group's specific proposals that underpin the recommendations, along the timescales laid out in section 5.5 of the report be approved.

23. Notification of Forthcoming Decisions

The Cabinet considered and endorsed the Notification of Decisions published on 14th June 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 July to September be endorsed.

24. Exclusion of Press & 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.

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Below is a summary of the matters considered during Part II of the agenda.

25. Compulsory Purchase Orders for Long Term Empty Properties

The Cabinet gave approval to make and pursue Compulsory Purchase Orders under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 in respect of four empty properties to bring them back into residential use.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.34 pm and closed at 7.53 pm)