

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 16th October, 2023.

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

Also present:- Councillor Manku

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Chahal and Kelly

PART 1

47. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

48. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th September 2023

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

49. Quarterly Improvement and Recovery progress report

The Leader of the Council introduced the latest quarterly update report on the progress being made by the Council against the Secretary of State Directions issued in 2021 and the overall council recovery plan.

The Leader welcomed the report and highlighted the progress made by the new administration since May 2023. The Commissioners 3rd report and Ministerial response had been published on 14th September 2023 and it was noted. A number of areas of positive progress had been reflected in the report although it was recognised the Council needed to sustain, and in some instances accelerate, the pace of delivery. The Cabinet was committed to continuing to work with the Corporate Leadership Team to deliver the new corporate plan, improve services and respond to the Directions. The regular reporting of progress on the recovery plans, and against performance in the report elsewhere on the agenda, was a clear sign of the approach to openness and transparency from the Cabinet.

The Executive Director, Strategy & Improvement highlighted that the report included a high level 'Directions Progress Summary' which RAG rated the status of the Council's response for each Direction to enable Members to monitor progress and provide the necessary challenge and scrutiny.

The Leader stated that the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee had considered the Improvement and Recovery Progress report at its meeting held on 26th September 2023 at which he and Deputy Leader had attended to answer Members questions and be held to account on progress. The committee had made a number of comments as set out in paragraph 3.13 of

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the report, which included the importance of ensuring action and improvement plans detailed clear outcomes, and these were noted by the Cabinet.

In addition to quarterly reporting to scrutiny, it was proposed that the report be considered by full Council every six months and that the Lead Commissioner and commissioner team be invited to a question and answer session at full Council. This was agreed.

After discussion, the Cabinet welcomed the encouraging progress set out in the report and in the Commissioners 3rd report. The recommendations were agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) That the progress made by the Council since the previous report in addressing the Directions of the Secretary of State be noted;
- (b) That the next steps to deliver improvement as set out in the action plans and other workstreams that had been developed to address the Directions be agreed;
- (c) That the report be referred to full Council for discussion and debate;
- (d) That it be agreed that Cabinet refer recovery items to full Council every six months so every member had oversight and involvement in Slough's recovery;
- (e) Recommend to Council that it invite the lead commissioner and commissioner team to a question and answer session at full Council.

50. Corporate Performance Report

The Leader of the Council introduced a report on the Corporate Performance report. He highlighted that the Cabinet was determined to take decisions based on evidence and that whilst the levels of performance set out in the report reflected the position inherited by the administration, Lead Members were determined to improve performance and regularly report progress to residents.

The Executive Director, Strategy & Improvement stated that this was the first corporate performance report that the Council had produced for some time. The Council had been set a Direction to improve evidence-based decision making and implementing a robust, transparent and regular corporate performance reporting cycle was an important mechanism to achieve this. The report would be presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The performance measures were aligned to and reported against the relevant priority in the Corporate Plan.

It was noted that of the 59 performance indicators in the report, 17% were rated green, 10% amber and 37% red. A further 29% were monitored for

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trends and 7% of the metrics were in development. Lead Members reviewed and asked questions about several individual indicators and Executive Directors responded on the context, progress and further action being taken. These included the number of new Education, Health & Care (EHC) plans issued given the significant backlog that had been built up in previous years. Lead Members were encouraged by the fact that there had been a significant increase in the number of EHC plans issued, although it would take time to address the backlog and bring performance levels up to the required standard.

Members asked about the customer service performance indicators given that it was a high priority for the Cabinet. It was noted that response times were variable as there were significant peaks in activity, for example at times of Council Tax billing. A range of service improvements were being worked on including Telephone Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology and improved prioritisation of enquiries within the Customer Service Centre. Other metrics discussed included the good performance levels reported in determining planning applications; the processing of benefit claims; and the position regarding recycling rates.

The Cabinet was asked to consider whether to refer the performance data to any other member body of the Council. The Leader proposed and it was agreed to refer the Corporate Performance Report to full Council every six months, starting in November 2023, and that it be considered by scrutiny on a quarterly basis. The performance report would be particularly useful in informing the scrutiny work programme as it would help identify areas and topics for more detailed consideration.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet noted the report.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Council's current performance and mitigating actions as measured by the key performance indicators within the corporate management information report and scorecard be noted.
- (b) That the Corporate Performance Report be referred to full Council on a six-monthly basis and to scrutiny on a quarterly basis.

51. References from Scrutiny

The comments of the Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee on the Improvement & Recovery Update were considered and noted during discussion on that item.

There were no other references from scrutiny.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.23 pm)