

Cabinet (Extraordinary) – Meeting held on Tuesday, 17th May, 2022.

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

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Strutton

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Anderson and Hulme

PART 1

105. Declarations of Interest

Item 2 – Update on procurement of services with the voluntary sector for prevention and carer support:

- Councillor Carter declared that he provided some IT services and corporate social responsibility with Slough CVS and that he would not therefore participate or vote on the item. He did remain in the Chamber.
- Councillor Akram declared that she had been appointed by Council as the outside representative for SBC on Slough CVS.

106. Update on procurement of services with the voluntary sector for prevention and carer support

The Lead Member for Social Care and Public Health introduced the report which provided an update on commissioning and contract management activity concerning the voluntary and community sector since the previous report to Cabinet in December 2021.

Approval was being sought to award a further contract for a period of 12 months from July 2022 to allow for a new model for the voluntary and community sector to be developed which aligned with the work being undertaken on the 'Front Door' as part of the adult social care transformation programme.

In response to a question about the monitoring arrangements and the targets set out in the report, the officer explained that there was an action plan that was being carefully monitored and additional targets have been set for the project. A dedicated contracts officer has been appointed for this contract, and the Lead Member also played a role to monitoring to ensure Cabinet oversight. The Officer explained that the new model provided an opportunity to review the components of the service and therefore reach out to wider areas of the community.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor Strutton stated the importance of improving support to young carers. The Officer commented that the decision

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before Cabinet was to extend the existing contract to provide sufficient time to develop a new model which would include a review of service provision including for young carers. Scrutiny would have the opportunity to comment on the proposals later in the year.

After due consideration the recommendations were agreed.

Resolved –

- (a) Agreed to award a one-year contract to SCVS for a period of 12 months from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. This would be at a maximum cost of £473,251, which must not be exceeded, funded through the Better Care Fund and Public Health grants.
- (b) Noted the update on commissioning activity provided in this report, including detailed performance information.
- (c) Noted that a report concerning the proposed model for the voluntary and community sector will be presented to People Scrutiny Committee for its comment and consideration in Autumn 2022.
- (d) Noted that the proposed model for the voluntary and community sector and a procurement strategy would be presented to Cabinet in Winter 2022.
- (e) Delegated authority to the Executive Director for People (Adults), in consultation with the Lead Member for Social Care and Public Health, to have oversight of the development of the proposed model as well as the development of performance targets for the contract period (1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023), should this be approved.

107. Finance Action Plan Update

The Leader of the Council introduced a report that updated the Cabinet on the work undertaken in 2021/22 to implement the Finance Action Plan. The Cabinet was asked to recommend the report to Council.

Most of the actions in the plan were completed or on track. Of the 64 finance related recommendations in the CIPFA, DLUHC and Grant Thornton reports, 28 were complete with the other 36 partially complete or on track. It was noted that progress was made on the Asset Disposal Programme and Lead Members and Directors were meeting regularly to identify the £20m savings for 2023/24 by the end of May. Work on the accounts was continuing with the 2018/19 accounts due to be produced imminently with subsequently accounts being completed at 3 or 4 month intervals during 2022. The Cabinet welcomed the progress that had been made in delivering on the action plan which was critical to the Council's financial and wider recovery.

Speaking under Rule 30, Councillor raised a number of matters including the remaining financial gap for 2023/24; issues with the potential disposal of

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Observatory House; workforce issues and training; and customers responsiveness including with housing repairs. The Leader responded to the points made, and highlighted that identifying the potential £20m savings for 2023/24 by the end of May was far earlier than previous years and would provide sufficient time for robust savings plans to be refined and scrutinised.

Lead Members noted the comments of the Commissioners on the report which set out the stark financial picture for the Council and responsibility of all councillors to understand the position and focus on taking the necessary decisions to put things right. The Cabinet acknowledged the need to difficult decisions and were committed to taking evidence based decisions and follow the proper processes of good governance.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet noted the report and agreed to recommend the Finance Action Plan to Council on 19th May 2022.

Resolved –

- (a) That the wide range of progress in 2021-22 as highlighted in Appendix 1 to the report and the proposed financial management objectives in 2022/23 be noted; and
- (b) That the report be recommended to Council.

108. NNDR Covid Additional Relief Funding Scheme (CARF)

The Leader of the Council introduced a report which set out how support through the Covid Additional Relief Funding (CARF) scheme should be awarded to businesses and to agree the Council's scheme.

Funding had been provided by central Government to support businesses impacted by the pandemic and this further sum of money had been made available for distribution to businesses who would otherwise be ineligible for existing support linked to business rates. It was noted that awards would relate to liabilities for the 2021/22 financial year only.

After due consideration the proposed scheme was agreed.

Resolved – That the proposed CARF scheme (as at Appendix 1 to the report) be approved.

109. Procurement forward plan for services in excess of £180,000 and works in excess of £1 million in 2022/23

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which sought authority from Cabinet for the commencement of procurement for contracts with an estimated value of over £180,000 (services) and £1 million (works), that were proposed to be let in the 2022/23 financial year. The list of contracts was set out in Appendix A to the report and were approved.

Resolved –

- (a) That commencement of procurement for the list of goods, works or services set out in Appendix A to the report be authorised;
- (b) Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Corporate Operations, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member for those procurements indicated in Appendix A as requiring delegated authority to award contract due to tight timescales involved.

110. References from Overview & Scrutiny

The Cabinet received a reference from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee from its meeting held on 7th April 2022 in relation to the Initial ICT Improvement Programme.

“That the Committee support the proposed hybrid approach of building both in-house capacity and securing an ICT partner be supported in principle, but that key data storage and management hardware and systems be kept in-house.”

Lead Members commented that operational ICT related decisions would generally best be taken by expert officers in the IT team and noted the risks in in-house provision rather than cloud based solutions. It was suggested that further information could be sought to better understand the rationale for the scrutiny recommendation and the detail could be considered as the IT improvement programme was delivered.

The Leader noted that there is to be a new Cabinet Member responsible for IT who could explore the issue further with scrutiny members and IT officers and report back to a future Cabinet.

Resolved –

That the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 7th April 2022 be noted, and that the Lead Member for Customer Services, Procurement and Performance consider the matter with scrutiny members and officers, then report back to a future Cabinet meeting.

“That the Committee support the proposed hybrid approach of building both in-house capacity and securing an ICT partner be supported in principle, but that key data storage and management hardware and systems be kept in-house.”

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.39 pm)