

Cabinet – Meeting held on Monday, 17th June, 2024.

Present:- Councillors Smith (Chair), Chahal (Vice-Chair), Bedi, Kelly, Manku, Shaik and Wright

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors E. Ahmed and Shah

PART 1

14. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

15. Minutes of the Meetings held on 20th May and 3rd June 2024

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th May and 3rd June 2024 be approved as a correct record.

16. Public Spaces Protection Order

The Leader of the Council introduced a report that sought approval for the making of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the borough of Slough with the aim of addressing current and ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB) affecting the local community.

It was noted that the Council had introduced a PSPO in nine identified areas of Slough in October 2017 which had expired in 2020. Since this time the Council, working with partners such as Thames Valley Police, had been gathering evidence and consulting on a new PSPO which would cover the whole borough and be focused on restricting drinking in public spaces and surrendering alcohol to deal with ASB relating to alcohol. The public consultation results, which showed support for the proposal, were summarised and noted.

The previous PSPO had also included clauses on matters such as urination, defecation and spitting in public spaces. The reasons for not including such clauses in the new PSPO were explained and included the fact that the Police already had the necessary powers on urination and defecation. In relation to spitting, it was considered unnecessary to raise resident expectations that such issues could be addressed through a PSPO given the limitations on resources to enforce such as provision. Thames Valley Police had been consulted and were in agreement for the Council to focus the PSPO on the more realistic and achievable objective of enforcement of the alcohol prohibitions only. In response to questions from Lead Members about the public concern about wider issues, officers stated that the PSPO remit could be widened in the future if the evidence and resources supported that.

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Lead Members discussed the specific types of behaviours the PSPO primarily aimed to address and it was noted that the aim was try to change behaviours rather than levy fines. The Cabinet discussed the potential impacts on certain groups, such as those with alcohol addiction and the street homeless. Members encouraged a supportive approach that sought to help people access appropriate support services and it was confirmed that there were good links with drug and alcohol treatment services. The PSPO would come into effect from 1st July 2024 and Members asked whether the Council and partners were ready to implement it from this date. In response it was noted that the Council and Police were ready and the appropriate training had been provided to street wardens. As some of the ASB issues were more prevalent during the summer months it was agreed to implement the scheme as soon as possible. Members asked that the data be reviewed regularly to assess the effectiveness of the scheme and that this data be shared with Members at appropriate intervals.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet agreed the proposal to establish the borough wide PSPO.

Resolved – That the making of the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order within all wards in Slough in order to address current ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour affecting the local community for a maximum period of three years as defined by the Anti-Social behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 be approved.

17. Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn 2023/24

The Lead Member for Finance, Council Assets and Transformation introduced a report that set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year.

The report detailed the continued financial challenges faced by the Council and emphasised the importance of the actions, savings and transformation still required as part of the Council's financial recovery. In addition to the local factors facing Slough there had been a number of national challenges during the financial year including the impacts of high inflation and continued rising demand for services, particularly homelessness and adult social care. The Lead Member commented that the budget for 2023/24 had been set in March 2023 by the previous administration and had not made adequate provision for these two services which significantly contributed to the overspend.

The provisional overspend in 2023/24, prior to the use of reserves, was £15.51m and the Cabinet recognised that it was unsustainable to continue to utilise reserves to offset overspends. The steps that had been taken to improve financial management and budget monitoring were summarised and Lead Members reiterated their commitment to own the agreed budgets and take the appropriate actions to deliver them for example through robust savings plans and transformation. It was noted that future reports would come to Cabinet on the medium term financial strategy and capital

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programme in July 2024, and on the Dedicated Schools Grant in October 2024. Members asked about some specific figures in the report in relation to bad debt provision and the actual spend on the posts funded through Covid COMF monies during the year, which officers responded to and could provide more detailed information after the meeting if Lead Members had further queries.

The Cabinet discussed in detail the actions being taken to address the overspends in temporary accommodation and adult social care. In relation to homelessness it was noted that a number of measures had been taken to reduce the cost of provision, such as the revised out-of-borough policy previously agreed by Cabinet, and it was anticipated the impacts of these actions would come through before the end of the year. However, it was recognised that there were significant demand pressures faced by Slough and many other local authorities. A mitigating action plan had been put in place to address the adult social care overspend. Other issues discussed included the impact of the increase in interest rates and the Cabinet agreed the importance of delivering the asset disposal programme at pace. One of the issues that had arisen in the past year was the treatment of disposals from assets held in the Housing Revenue Account and it was noted that the Cabinet would receive a report on this issue at a future meeting. Officers updated on other work being undertaken such as the balance sheet review and timetable for clearing the backlog of accounts.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Cabinet recognised the challenging financial position the Council was in and supported the continued focus on taking the necessary action to address the situation. The report was noted and recommendations were agreed.

Resolved –

That the following be noted:

- (a) The provisional overspend, prior to use of reserves, was £15.511m.
- (b) The Council's provisional overspend was £14.182m, after some accounting adjustments and this would need to be financed from the Council's reserves.
- (c) The Budget for 2024/25 contained investment of £9.883m aimed at re-basing those budgets that were overspending the most in 2023/24. Analysis of the outturn suggested a pressure in 2024/25 of £11.7m that would need to be managed and required immediate mitigating action.
- (d) A refresh of the medium-term financial plan would be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting, and this would include proposals for changes to the capital programme.

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That the following be agreed:

- (e) The transfer to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) General Reserves the surplus on the HRA of £3.393m in the year, as laid out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 of the report.
- (f) The draw down request from the Redundancy Reserve of £1.549m to cover the costs of redundancies agreed in 2023/24, and the associated budget transfer to those areas that incurred these costs as set out in paragraphs 10.3 and 10.4 of the report.
- (g) The draw down request from the Budget Smoothing Reserve attributable to the Balance Sheet and ledger reviews, and note that these mitigate the headline forecast overspend, reducing it from £15.511m to £14.182m. This was set out in more detail in paragraphs 10.6 and 10.7 of the report.
- (h) The Revenue carry forwards, relating to unspent specific grants and earmarked funding for transformation, as set in paragraphs 8.1 - 8.6 and Table 7 of the report.
- (i) A transfer to Public Health reserves of £1.095m, being the unspent element of the 2023/24 Public Health ring-fenced grant, as set out in paragraph 3.11 of the report.
- (j) The addition of the following new projects to the 2024/25 Capital Programme, totalling £0.740m
 - Childcare expansion (£0.220m, grant funded)
 - Upton Court Pathway (£0.075m, section 106 funded)
 - Cippenham Bridges (£0.150m, section 106 funded)
 - Swimming Pool Support Fund initiative (£0.295m, grant funded)

18. Adult Social Care Re-Procurement of Domiciliary Care Services

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care introduced a report that sought approval to award contracts to 14 suppliers of domiciliary care which had been tendered by competitive process via the Council's Adult Social Care Dynamic Purchasing System. This would ensure a sufficiency of supply on the expiry of current contracting arrangements during 2024. The Cabinet had approved the re-tendering of tranche 3 of the contracts in November 2022.

Details of the providers was included in Appendix 2 to the report which contained exempt information. This was considered during Part I of the meeting without disclosing any of the exempt information.

The Cabinet discussed the financial implications including whether contract uplifts had been properly taken into account. Officers responded that the majority of suppliers had tendered prices above the current weighted average of supply and this would be mitigated by utilising existing contractual

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arrangements with lower pricing until the expiry of contracts and the method of allocation of work to suppliers. After due consideration the Cabinet approved the recommendations.

Resolved –

(a) That the award of contracts to 14 suppliers for the provision of domiciliary care be agreed. This was to providers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 22, 28, 34, 38, 42, 46, 47, 55, and 57. Details of these providers were shown in Exempt Appendix 2. The contract term shall be for three years commencing on 1st July 2024 with an optional extension of two years.

(b) That the issuing of contract extensions and variations to existing tranche 3 suppliers, who did not bid for a new contract or who were unsuccessful at this re-procurement for a period until 30th November 2024 be agreed. This would enable suppliers to continue to work with up to 236 service users who wished to remain with their current supplier, but not to take on new referrals, whilst alternative arrangements are put in place. To issue contract extensions and contract variations to limit supply of services to existing service users under the contract to the following providers [Details of providers were listed in Exempt Appendix 2].

Providers 7, 15, and 41 contract extension from 28th June 2024 to 30th November 2024, which are safeguarding contracts issued pursuant to council wellbeing, safeguarding, continuity of supply and individual person-centred approach duties under The Care Act 2014 and related Guidance.

Providers 32, A and B contract extension from 1st September 2024 to 30th November 2024 which is within the timescales permitted within existing contract terms and compliant with Regulation 72(1)(a) PCR 2015.

(c) Delegated authority to the Executive Director for People (Adults) in consultation with HBP Law, and the Lead Member for Social Care to enter into the tranche 3 contracts for domiciliary care.

(d) Delegated authority to the Executive Director for People (Adults) in consultation with HBP Law, and the Lead Member for Social Care to enter into the contract extensions and contract variations with existing providers of domiciliary care as detailed in recommendation 2 above.

19. References from Scrutiny

There were no references from scrutiny.

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20. Exclusion of Press and Public

All business was conducted in Part I of the meeting, without disclosing any of the exempt information, therefore it was not necessary to exclude the press and public.

21. Adult Social Care Re-procurement of domiciliary care services - Appendix 2

Resolved – That the Part II Appendix be noted.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.50 pm)