

## CABINET

THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 2016

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Dudley (Chairman), David Coppinger (Vice-Chairman), Carwyn Cox, Geoff Hill, Derek Wilson, Natasha Airey, Samantha Rayner and MJ Saunders

Principal Members also in attendance: Councillors Christine Bateson and Hilton, Lisa Targowska.

Deputy Lead Members also in attendance: Councillors David Hilton, Ross McWilliams and Stuart Carroll

Also in attendance: Councillor Jones

Officers: Alison Alexander, Russell O'Keefe, Simon Fletcher, David Scott, Rob Stubbs, Karen Shepherd, Anna Trott and Louisa Dean

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman congratulated all the excellent comprehensive secondary schools and further education colleges in the Borough and the achievements of all the pupils on GCSE results day. Irrespective of outcomes, all had worked very hard and the council was very proud of their achievements.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bicknell, D. Evans and Rankin.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bateson declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item 'New Primary School Places in Ascot' as a Trustee of the Sunninghill Parochial Charity, which would be leasing land to the school. She left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

### MINUTES

#### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:**

- i) The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2016 be approved.**
- ii) The minutes of the Cabinet Local Authority Governors Appointments Sub Committee held on 28 July 2016 be noted.**

### APPOINTMENTS

None

## FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet considered the contents of the Forward Plan for the next four months and noted the changes that had been made to the plan since the last meeting. In addition it was noted that:

- The item 'Future Provision of Debt Recovery Enforcement Services,' listed for September 2016, would be deferred until October 2016.
- The item 'Change to Council Tax Empty Unfurnished Exemption,' listed for September 2016, would be deferred until October 2016.
- The item 'Maidenhead Golf Club – Update' would be presented to the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee on 26 September 2016.

## CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

### INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (IPMR) QUARTER 1 2016/17

Cabinet considered progress and performance outturns against the Council's key priorities for Quarter 1 2016/17.

The Deputy Lead Member explained that performance in the first quarter of the financial year was down compared to the previous quarter, with 43% of measures on target and 29% off target. It was noted that the number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had reduced from 27 to 24, however performance was not where the council wanted it to be. The Deputy Lead Member explained that he was working with officers to review the format of the report to ensure it looked at strategic aims and was accessible to all.

The Lead Member for Culture and Communities explained that the council had negotiated a new contract with ISS Waterers in January 2016 for grounds maintenance, resulting in a saving of £140,000. However there had been numerous problems including staffing and management issues, which were now sorted. The council had also imposed higher KPIs to achieve a better quality service. Regular weekly meetings were being held with the management at ISS Waterers to bring performance back on target. A financial penalty of £20,000 had also been imposed. The Strategic Director for Operations and Customer Services confirmed that ISS Waterers now had staff in place to fully support the contract obligations and he was confident that performance would be back on track by November 2016. He would be attending inspections alongside officers. The target was cumulative therefore significant improvements would be needed to get performance back on track.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services highlighted that incredible performance continued in waste disposal, however the issue now needed to be looked at in a different way to increase the amount recycled rather than being sent for incineration. Income from parking had seen a significant dip between May and June 2016. The figures for July would bring the target back on track. It was noted that the figures for April had been down by £30,000; in May over by £130,000; and in June down by £180,000. The Strategic Director explained that this may be due to a profiling issue and he would be undertaking an investigation. He would be able to give a confident statement of the reasons for the fluctuations by the time of the next report.

The Lead Member for Children's Services referred to the comments made by the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel in relation to targets in her portfolio area. She explained that the way of reporting progress with Troubled Families did not reflect the way the programme worked. The target had always been met by year end, but showed underperformance during the year. The KPI would therefore be removed from the next report. The Lead Member suggested an annual report including case studies would be more appropriate, with regular monitoring by Overview and Scrutiny. In relation to indicator SG40 she explained that the target had been amended to be more realistic. She believed that there had been some confusion at Corporate Services O&S as the reference to no intervention being required related to the fact that the target was not off-track. She confirmed that intervention plans were in place for each child. There were more avenues for people to report Child Sexual Exploitation than ever before.

The Lead Member for Planning explained that to address performance in relation to lost appeals, a number of measures had been taken. Mandatory training for Development Control Panel Members would take place in September 2016 to look at overturns. There would also be increased reporting on performance to Development Control Panels. The Chairman requested that this item be listed as the first substantive item on Panel agenda. The Lead Member highlighted that performance in relation to Major and Minor applications was on target. Performance on 'Other applications' was always difficult due to the variety of applications including permitted development, certificates of lawfulness and listed building consent. The number of enforcement cases being dealt with was improving, with the aim of being 'green' in the next report. The Chairman stated that if additional resources were required, a business case should be put forward.

Councillor Mrs Jones commented that the additional resources referred to in the report had been to provide maternity cover; the issue of resourcing had not been addressed. The enforcement officers were working very hard but could not cope with the workload. She also highlighted that a 0.5FTE Support Officer had been removed in November 2015. The Lead Member responded that this was not accurate, as maternity cover had been found but unfortunately had proved not to meet the council's exacting standards and the individual had subsequently left the authority. The Strategic Director commented that a replacement had been recruited and he expected performance to get back on track for the year as a whole. A consultation on the restructure of the planning department was underway and therefore the issue of additional resources could be addressed, with recruitment starting as early as 14 September 2016.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that as a Ward Councillor in an area with a number of enforcement issues, he had much appreciated the personal intervention by Strategic Directors, which had given residents greater confidence. Unfortunately officer did not have the bandwidth to deal with the lower profile enforcement issues .

The Principal Member for HR and Legal highlighted that voluntary staff turnover was 14.5% compared to a target of 7% in the first quarter. The council wanted to be an employer of choice and retain the skills of good employees. A number of steps were being taken to address issues raised as part of the staff survey and from exit interviews. To address the desire for improved training and career opportunities, the Learning and Development team had set up a calendar showing all training available and a skills based register. The team had achieved this whilst also realising a cost saving.

The Chairman commented that there was lots of work still to do; he expected the number of indicators on target in November 2016 to have risen from 10 out of 24 to at least 20 out of 24. Lack of resources was not an acceptable argument and therefore proposals should be put forward if this was required.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:**

- i. Note the progress made against the performance measures listed in the IPMR Quarter 1 2016/17 report.**

NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN ASCOT

Cabinet considered options for the provision of additional primary school places in Ascot. The Lead Member explained that a clear majority of respondents to the consultation had preferred the option of expansion at Cheapside School. The school currently offered 16 places per year; with expansion this would increase to 30 per year from September 2017. The report did not request capital funding as proposals needed to be developed before moving to the tendering stage. The recommendation included the need to develop an infrastructure plan to deal with issues such as parking. An infrastructure plan would be developed for each school in the consultation.

The Deputy Lead Member for Ascot Regeneration commented that as an Ascot councillor he had been made acutely aware of the shortage of places by people moving into the area who struggled to find a place for their child. Cheapside was rated as Outstanding by Ofsted. The increase to 30 places would secure the school's long term future. The school was in the Green Belt but he imagined that special circumstances could be demonstrated. He and his fellow ward councillor would be pleased to be involved in the process with officers, particularly in relation to the infrastructure plan.

Councillor Jones stated that she supported the report. She requested that further expansion be considered in relation to future development so that places were provided in the right locations. The Lead Member agreed that this would be the case and would involve consultation with residents. The Lead Member for Planning requested that the infrastructure plan be forwarded to the Planning Policy team.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:**

**Approves a four-stranded approach to meeting the forecast future need for primary school places in the Ascot area as follows:**

- i. In relation to Cheapside Church of England Primary school:**
  - a. Approves the publication of a formal proposal for the expansion of the school from 16 to 30 places per year group from September 2017 (see Option A in table 1) during September 2016.**
  - b. Authorises the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services to determine the expansion proposal following the end of the representation period during October 2016.**

- c. Authorises the Head of Schools and Education Services to proceed with procurement and tendering for the scheme to expand the School.**
  
- ii. Requests that the Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Service works with the Strategic Director of Corporate & Community Services to ensure that one or more new primary school sites in Ascot are identified as the housing plans for the area develop.**
  
- iii. That further work is done to develop the plans to expand the existing schools (see Options B and C in table 1) so that these can be implemented when needed.**
  
- iv. That, for all options, a local infrastructure plan is developed to minimise the impact of new primary school places on the local community.**

(Councillor Bateson left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item)

#### CHANGES TO THE HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

Cabinet considered proposals to change the Home to School Transport policy. The Lead Member explained that the council had a statutory duty to provide a certain level of provision, as detailed in table 1 of the report. Like other local authorities, the council offered additional discretionary help as detailed in table 2. The cost in 2010/11 had been £1.8m, rising to £2.2m in 2015/16. These budget pressures were mirrored across the country. With current trends, the cost would rise to £3.2m in 2019/20. This would result in funding being taken from other service areas unless an alternative policy was put in place.

The Lead Member explained that the proposals would be put in place from September 2017 for new or revised travel arrangements. The proposals would not affect existing provision. There were no proposals to change provision under statutory duties. All proposals were being made to make the system more fair and equitable and to manage future costs growth. The Lead Member referred to an inaccurate article in the Maidenhead Advertiser that had claimed a father would have to pay £750 for his younger child to use the same bus as her older sibling. The Lead Member confirmed that the proposals had been extended so that siblings were not penalised.

The Chairman highlighted that the proposals did not result in a cost saving, they were being put forward to be fair to all council taxpayers.

The Deputy Lead Member for Ascot Regeneration commented that fairness lay at the heart of the proposals, to create a balance between discretionary provision and the interests of the council taxpayer. It had been good to see support in the consultation for independent travel training. Individual transport budgets would be a worthwhile addition to the options for residents. The proposals also took into account the uniqueness of some areas of the borough, such as Eton Wick.

The Lead Member for Adult Services and Health commented that for many years the Bray councillors had fought to keep a special deal for residents. He was now of the opinion that this position was not tenable as fairness was needed across the borough. The proposals ensured families were not disadvantaged in the short term and could plan for the future.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that when the public sector provided services to a range of residents, some of whom were in significant need through to modest need, this would always be fraught with complexities. The capacity for spend to balloon over time was clear, as the quantum of users increased. Unfortunately there would be some with modest needs who would be accustomed to being part of such a support network that would no longer exist. With a high degree of care and equity the council was seeking to adjust and redirect money spent so those in significant need or vulnerability were those to whom the greater proportion of a complex budget would be directed. There would be some who felt aggrieved but the council had taken huge care over the transition arrangements so that they did not cause disparity in some families or localities.

The Managing Director confirmed that the reference to 'low income' in the recommendations related to those families eligible for free school meals. The Chairman requested this wording be added in parenthesis at the end of the introduction to recommendation i).

It was confirmed that if a child could not access a place at their local school, even if they wanted to, they would be eligible for free transport.

**RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:**

- i. **Approves changes to the Royal Borough's home to school transport policy as set out below so that it better reflects statutory guidance and is fairer to all residents and supports those with a low income (eligible for free school meals).**

<b>Policy Category</b>	<b>Recommended Proposal</b>
<b>4. Statutory eligibility for Special Educational Needs.</b>	<b>To introduce an individual annual review of home to school transport needs for each pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan. (Proposal A).</b>
	<b>To introduce Independent Travel Training starting with a pilot in 2016/17. (Proposal B).</b>
	<b>To introduce Personal Transport Budgets starting with a pilot in 2016/17. (Proposal C).</b>
<b>7. Discretionary eligibility – Windsor middle schools.</b>	<b>To stop the discretionary offer from September 2017 for new pupils and provide children applying to Windsor middle schools free home to school transport only if they are eligible under the standard statutory criteria. (Proposal E).</b>
<b>8. Discretionary eligibility – Holyport Village to Cox Green.</b>	<b>To stop the discretionary offer from September 2017 for new pupils and provide children living in Holyport village free home to school transport only if they are eligible under the standard statutory criteria. (Proposal F).</b>
<b>9. Discretionary seats on</b>	<b>To end the availability of Ten Journey Passes on home to school transport routes. (Proposal K).</b>

<b>home to school transport.</b>	<b>To introduce direct debit instalment plans for home to school transport charges to make payment easier for residents and more efficient. (Proposal L).</b>
<b>10. SEN after-school clubs.</b>	<b>To provide, for SEN children, free transport home from one after-school club per week only where the after-school club is firmly linked to specific outcomes in the EHCP. (Proposal M).</b>
<b>12. Post-16 transport for young people with SEN.</b>	<b>To stop providing free home to school transport to young people with SEN in post-16 education except students from low income families who will continue to receive transport support to attend education when aged 17-18. To set out a clear policy for providing home to school transport for young people with SEN aged 19-25. (Proposals Q and T).</b>

**Authorises the Lead Member for Children’s Services and Managing Director & Strategic Director of Adult, Children and Health Services to agree the final wording of the home to school transport policy, for publication in September 2016, in line with the changes agreed by Cabinet.**

#### FINANCIAL UPDATE

Cabinet considered the latest financial update. The Lead Member explained that the council had set itself financial challenges this year; finances were on track in general. The anticipated combined reserves at year-end were in the region of £6.3m, which was £1m over the required minimum. The Adults, Children and Health directorate dealt with some of the most vulnerable and demanding residents. Funding could be on an individual basis and very expensive therefore changes during the year could be attributed to a small number of individuals. The budget for learning disability and mental health problems was £40,000 over budget, however in older peoples services the budget was £250,000 under and the children with disabilities budget was £370,000 under.

In the Corporate and Community Services directorate the council had chosen to forgo £80,000 of rental income to provide valuable services to the community including two units of Waldeck House being let to charities and a day centre for the homeless at Howarth Road. There were other areas showing modest savings therefore in broad terms the directorate was on line with budget expectations.

In the Operations and Customer Services directorate a number of savings had been identified including a tactical review of IT services leading to a saving of £150,000 in excess of budget projections. In total the underspend in the directorate was projected to be £245,000.

The Lead Member highlighted that the council was releasing back into the general accounts £200,000 that had been set aside for the Shurlock Row arrangements. An allocation of £100,000 from the development fund was being made for Forest Bridge school. Paragraph 4.4 also made reference to £495,000 for Pay Reward, which was demonstrably driven by performance measures.

The Lead Member for Children's Services explained that Forest Bridge school was looking for a new location. One potential site was at Berkshire College of Agriculture. The council had agreed to share the risk with the EFA by match funding £100,000 for a planning application. Other potential sites were under consideration including Braywick Park, therefore the money was not yet being spent. The Managing Director explained that the school was now in the position that it could not take any more pupils after September 2016. In conversations with the EFA it had been confirmed that the current site was needed back by the council to meet the need for primary places, therefore the EFA was looking at alternative sites

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:**

- i) Notes the report and the projected outturn position.**

The meeting, which began at 7.30 pm, finished at 8.34 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....