

CABINET

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Andrew Johnson (Chairman), David Cannon, David Coppinger, Samantha Rayner, David Hilton, Gerry Clark and Donna Stimson

Also in attendance: Councillor Stuart Carroll, Councillor Ross McWilliams, Councillor Christine Bateson, Councillor Simon Werner, Councillor John Bowden, Councillor Gurch Singh, Councillor John Baldwin, Councillor Joshua Reynolds and Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra

Officers: Duncan Sharkey, Emma Duncan, Adele Taylor, Andrew Valance, Hilary Hall, Alyse Strachan, Rebecca Hatch, Kevin McDaniels and David Cook.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for not being able to attend in person were received from Councillors Carroll and McWilliams. They attended in a non voting capacity virtually.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 were approved.

APPOINTMENTS

None

FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet considered the contents of the Forward Plan for the next four months and noted the changes made since last published including the addition to January 2022 Cabinet of the JCEB Minerals and Waste Plan.

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

A) RESIDENT PARKING DISCOUNT & PARKING CHARGES 2022/23

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed introduction of a resident parking discount scheme.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking informed Cabinet that in 2020 the council ended the current resident discount scheme, which was delivered through the Advantage Card. At the time it was agreed that a review would be undertaken to see if a resident discount could be provided in a different way when it was financially prudent to do so. The report proposed to introduce a resident parking discount scheme with 1 hour free parking in selected car parks across the Borough, officers had looked at historical data prior to the pandemic to help make an informed recommendation.

Cabinet were informed that the introduction of a resident parking discount scheme would make the Royal Borough one of the only local authorities in England to offer such a scheme. This report provided four options and these were shown in Table 1. The scheme would be provided by RingGo. The RingGo system was already in place in the borough and was a natural extension to this service.

As the scheme was based on a permit system residents would have to register for each individual car park they wish for the discount to be applied in. Based on the data and financial envelope option 4 within the report was the recommended option. This would allow residents to apply to get the discount at car parks in Alma Road and Alexandra Gardens in Windsor, Grove Road and West Street in Maidenhead, Horton Road in Datchet, and Meadow Lane in Eton.

These six car parks were chosen because they were mainly used by short stay users and proved popular when resident discounts were previously implemented. Free parking will continue to be offered for disabled users and those using electric vehicles. There will be help to those who do not have online access to set up their accounts, in our libraries, and use the service. More than 75 per cent of car parking payments in Windsor and Maidenhead were already completed digitally, using a card payment or the RingGo app. Funding for the scheme would come from increased fees in our car parks and the scheme would remain under review and extended when prudent to do so.

The Chairman welcomed the scheme and showed the administration keeping its promises. The Council was now in a financial position to offer this new discount scheme and when prudent to do so we would be looking to extend it further. The draft budget was currently out for consultation and he welcomed and fully costed recommendations including any alternative to the proposed scheme. As mentioned fully electric vehicles would remain to get free parking in RBWM car parks. This was a sustainable, prudent and deliverable discount scheme.

The Deputy Leader of Council welcomed the report but was disappointed that Victoria Street car park had not been included, she asked if this could be considered in the future. The Lead Member replied that nothing was fixed and there would be a review at the end of the year and changes could be made when prudent to do so.

Mr Ed Wilson addressed Cabinet and asked if RBWM would be engaging with businesses in our town centres to promote the new scheme, how will RingGo promote the use of their service and will RBWM have a contingency to ensure that discounts do not run out during the year? The Lead Member replied that they would be engaging with business and Ringo. There was no need for a contingency as there was not a fixed number of discounts, the scheme would run all year and reviewed throughout.

Cllr Tisi said she broadly welcomed the paper, it would be welcomed by residents especially those in Windsor who felt their car parking charges was too high. She would like to see more people getting the bus, walking or cycling into town but if this encourages people to shop locally then it was welcomed. She questioned the rationale behind the car parks chosen in Windsor as Elam Road was a ten minute walk into town taking 20 minutes out of the free hour. She asked if it was possible to see the data behind the decision to choose this car parks.

The Lead Member replied that the data was freely available on request to officers. Residents who parked for more than one hour would still get the discount, it was not just for one hour and you had to move. Cllr Tisi said that residents would also wish to see the data.

Cllr Bowden mentioned that most of Windsor Car Parks were in his ward and that with regards to Elma road this was a popular car park and easy to access the town centre via the stairs and lift into the shopping centre. He looked forward to the scheme being extended when possible. He was also pleased to see the Ringo system being used and mentioned that with regards to data during the Christmas Tree lights on there was over 6000 car park visits. He had asked for the data Monday and received it on Wednesday.

Cllr Reynolds asked if the data used was the number of transactions as the larger car parks would naturally get more visits. The Lead Member said the car parks were those most popular for short visits.

Cllr Singh said he was concerned about the report. It was dependent on the Ringo App so what would happen for those who did not have a smart phone, what about the elderly and disabled residents. He questioned the car parks chose in Maidenhead as the multi story car parks were not included. He also mentioned the previous farcical issue with the installation of car park machines that had cost the authority £1 million, he wanted to know if legal action was possible to reclaim some of the money. He was glad to see a scheme introduced.

The Chairman replied that the issue from the car park machines date back to 2018 and there was little that could be done now. This paper was about looking forward and offering a residents discount scheme and that the car parks chosen were accessible to the town centre. Other car parks mentioned could be included in the future when feasible.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Agree the recommended proposal to introduce a Resident Discount Parking Scheme**
- ii) Agree to increase the maximum stay at Grove Road, Maidenhead car park from 2 hours to 3 hours.**
- iii) Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Place Services and Head of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Parking, to implement the recommended resident parking discount scheme.**

B) 2021/22 MID-YEAR DATA & PERFORMANCE REPORT AND PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE PERFORMANCE REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

Cabinet considered the report regarding the the 2021/22 Mid-Year Performance Report.

The Deputy Leader of Council, Corporate and Resident Services, Culture and Heritage and Windsor informed Cabinet that appendix A sets out the council's progress in relation to the strategic priorities of the Interim Council Strategy in the period 1 April – 30 September 2021 and looks forward to reporting the newly adopted Council Plan, this included the development of a new public-facing dashboard (Citizen's Portal), providing increased transparency to Members and the public.

The reporting period was dominated by the Pandemic and recovery, a series of campaigns were launched to provide reassurance to visitors returning to visit our local towns, and to promote the borough as a destination to residents and domestic tourists. Q2 saw the return of some large-scale events to the borough, including Royal Ascot as a government test event and the Royal Windsor Horse Show. Good progress throughout the period had been made in the delivery of other priorities under the Interim Council Strategy such as supporting 8000 residents who had to 'shield', approval of the RBWM Climate Partnership and the launch of a new Family Hub Service.

The impact of COVID-19 continued to be reflected in a number the council's performance indicators. For example, within adult social care people being discharged from hospital typically had more complex needs which impacted on performance in relation to admissions to care homes and reablement. Collection rates for Non Domestic Rates (NDR) was behind target. The measures were significantly affected by a number of national relief schemes.

Despite the hard work to reduce homelessness, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 was reflected in the slow decrease in the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation. With only the 2 exceptions mentioned, all performance indicators were on or

near target at the close of Q2 and the Council continued to have better scrutiny, transparency and better use of data in decision making.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot said he was delighted to support this report detailing Q1 and Q2 performance on the new performance regime for the new Corporate Plan. He welcomed the new dashboard reporting KPI's making the information available to all. He noted that reporting to scrutiny would be an exception but he felt that this could lead to just looking at negativity and missing out good work so a summary report should be provided.

The Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement said that with regards to homelessness even though the team were under pressure there were fewer families in temporary accommodation and more affordable housing. The team had been working with the private sector to increase capacity and there were more people kept within or close to the borough.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

- I. Notes the 2021/22 Mid-Year Data & Performance Report in Appendix A.**
- II. Agrees the proposed arrangements for future performance reporting against the new Corporate Plan (detail at section 2.17 – 2.21).**
- III. Agrees that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel should take on primary responsibility for Member Scrutiny of the council's performance.**
- IV. Agrees the proposed transitional arrangements for performance reporting for the period January – March 2022 (detail at section 2.22).**
- V. Requests relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and Heads of Service to maintain and strengthen focus on performance.**

c) CIPFA REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN - FINAL CLOSURE REPORT

Cabinet considered the report regarding the closure of the CIPFA action plan.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot informed Cabinet that the paper closed the CIPFA governance action plan. When he became Lead Member it was apparent that finance needed intensive care. CIPFA were invited to help resolve many financial weaknesses. Since then the Council had come a long way with a draft balanced budget being produced, improved reporting and the ability to deal with future issues. He supported the Managing Director and there had been a new Head of Finance and Director of Resources appointed. The new director had been working with statutory officers and internal audit to strengthen governance.

The Chairman reminded Cabinet that CIPFA had been proactively brought into the Council to review financial arrangements and cultural issues. There has been an intensive period of work undertaken with historical issues being dealt with. There was a cultural failure that this administration has addressed all the concerns raised by CIPFA. You only need to look at the consequences of not undertaking these actions by looking at one of our neighbours. We were proposing a balanced budget and this year's budget being on target. Difficult decisions had been taken and there was still a lot of work to be done.

The Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure thanked the Lead Member and officers for the transformative work, issues had been resolved, there was better transparency, better decision making and accountability.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet:

- I. **Notes the actions taken in respect of the objectives set out, and that the Action Plan has now been completed.**
- II. **Approves the formal closure of the action plan.**

D) **SALE OF LAND AT STAFFERTON WAY**

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed sale of freehold land.

The Chairman informed Cabinet that Absolutely Leisure held a long leasehold over The Arena, Unit 4 Howarth Road. The property was split in two sections following the construction of the Stafferton Way Link Road with a small plot of land south of the link road being used for car parking.

Terms had been agreed to sell this area of land to Absolute Leisure to enable its development for residential units. The sale is conditional on obtaining planning permission. The transaction enables the Council to receive a capital receipt whilst maintaining the income from the remaining property and helped the leaseholder maintain its charitable status.

The Lead Member for Finance and Ascot mentioned that this was a small piece of land that would not sustain major development but if sold would support the business.

Resolved unanimously: that Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Approves the Council entering into an option agreement with Absolute Leisure for the sale the freehold interest of land south of the Stafferton Link Road for £5,000 and the subsequent sale of the freehold on receipt of planning consent under the terms of the option agreement.**
- ii) **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Economic Development & Property to negotiate the legal contracts required to complete the transactions.**

E) **SALE OF RETAIL/HOUSE IN COOKHAM**

Cabinet considered the report regarding the proposed sale of a freehold.

The Chairman informed Cabinet that 13 Hillcrest Avenue was a small shop attached to residential property and was leased to the tenants on a 99-year lease from 4 April 2001 at a peppercorn rent. There was a condition that the shop could not be closed for more than an three month continues period. Terms had been agreed to sell the freehold interest in the property to the tenant. He informed that he had mixed feeling on this decision as the shop was a valued community asset that he wished would stay open but the council had received a valid request from the leaseholder.

The Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead said that he lived in a village where the number of small shops were very important for the local community, allowing older groups to shop locally and reducing the need for travel into Maidenhead. He was concerned that the shop could be closed at the detriment of the local community as it was an important facility.

The Deputy Leader of Council said she would second the paper but was concerned about the potential loss of the shop. The property was on a long lease so she supported the recommendations.

The Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure informed that the property was in his ward and thus he also had the concerns raised. The shop was a local hub and the agreement in 2021 protected its continues use. There was an agreement to maintain the use of the

property as a shop but selling the freehold would remove this. Maintaining the shop was important for the community and thus he would not be supporting the recommendations.

The Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking said that having lived in villages he understood the concerns raised. Once you start losing local amenities communities start to decay. The clause had been put in place to protect residents losing this facility, he was concerned that this protection could be lost.

The Lead Member for Housing and Youth Engagement said that he agreed with what had been said and there was a difficult decision between the recommendations and the potential future loss of the shop.

The Deputy Chairman of Cabinet also agreed with what had been said as there was a clear concern about the loss of the shop if the freehold was sold.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability and Culture asked if a condition could be added that the shop be maintained.

The Chairman replied that such a condition could not be added to the sale of the freehold, we would have to rely on the goodwill of the leaseholder. On balance he felt it was best to approve the recommendations within the report.

Resolved that: Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves the sale of the freehold interest in 13 Hillcrest Avenue.**
- ii) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Economic Development & Property to negotiate the legal contracts required to complete the transactions.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Cabinet agreed there was no need for Part II deliberations.

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

A) SALE OF LAND AT STAFFERTON WAY

Discussion on this Part II item was not required.

B) SALE OF RETAIL/HOUSE IN COOKHAM

Discussion on this Part II item was not required.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.20 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....