

CABINET

THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2016

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

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

Deputy Lead Members also in attendance: Councillors Stuart Carroll, Ross McWilliams and Hari Sharma.

Also in attendance: Councillor David Hilton and Councillor Malcolm Beer

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sharma stated that he was employed by First / Beeline, rather than Courtney Buses who would benefit from the item 'Bus Services in the Royal Borough' therefore he had no interest to declare.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2016 were approved.

APPOINTMENTS

Members noted the following appointments:

Councillor Coppinger – Deputy Chairman of Cabinet

Councillor Bicknell – Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor D. Evans – Deputy Lead Member – School Improvement.

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 'Key Worker Housing in the Royal Borough' would be presented to Cabinet in June 2016.
- The item 'Tender for Residential/Nursing Care Contract' would be presented to Cabinet in July 2016.
- The item 'York Road and West Street Procurement Strategy' would be presented to the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee on 28 June 2016.

- The item 'Outcome Based Commissioning – Year 1 Review' would be presented to Cabinet in September 2016.

CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

A) INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (IPMR) QUARTER 4 2015/16

Members considered performance outturns against the key council priorities for Quarter 4, 2015/16. The Deputy Lead Member for Policy explained that 15 of the 27 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were on target; 5 KPIs were off target. The Chairman stated that there was a need to focus on those KPIs that were not hitting target. The report would be presented to Cabinet three times per year in future.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services highlighted that the target relating to the number of underage sales operations undertaken was off target, with only 8 of the target of 12 completed. Following a recent restructure of the Community Protection and Enforcement service, licensing and trading standards had been combined under a single lead therefore he proposed to combine the target and to determine an appropriate target going forward, which was likely to be in the region of 60.

The Lead Member for Planning highlighted that 57% of planning appeals had been lost, which was an underperformance. This was partly a result of professional officer recommendations being overturned by Development Control (DC) Panels, which were then lost at appeal. Additional training would be provided for Panel Members to address this issue. The Lead Member also commented that the borough Local Plan was on track for submission to the Inspector by September 2016. The one Neighbourhood Plan in place (Ascot and the Sunnings) had been used to robustly defend the council's position. The Chairman commented that DC Panels would in future be streamed on Periscope to improve transparency. He highlighted that if applications were approved on appeal the council did not receive any New homes bonus.

The Lead Member for Highways and Transport explained that he would like to amend the KPI in relation to potholes to reduce the time take to deal with them to 3 hours.

The Lead Member for Culture and Communities highlighted that grass cutting was slightly behind target due to recent adverse weather and the suspension of the contract manager. It was anticipated that this would be resolved soon and the target would be back on track.

The Lead Member for Adult Services and Health commented on two targets related to the completion of support plans (AS5 and AS6). The council had not had sufficient staff to undertake the work, however this problem had now been resolved. A Fundamental Service Review had also taken place which had helped to identify blockages, including the length of the form. Reducing the length would improve performance.

The Lead Member for Customer and Business Services explained that all KPIs in his area were on target. One secondary target was slightly behind. The target for answering calls within one minute had been raised from 75% to 80%, which had been met. However calls answered in over 5 minutes had suffered. A new digital channel had been soft-launched the previous weekend. Without any advertising 110 residents

had signed up; 40 people had signed up to green waste online. The new service would help to relieve pressure on the call centre. The Lead Member highlighted the excellent performance of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax claims team. Processing times had reduced from 27 days four years ago to just 4.8 days. Across the UK the council was number one in terms of new claims and number 3 for change of event processing. He commended officers who wanted to push for number one status on both aspects.

The Principal Member for HR and Legal highlighted that staff sickness absence was off target with 9.63 working days lost per FTE compared to a target of 6. This would be a key focus for the HR department in the coming year. Proposals included increasing the use of stress assessments, personal resilience training, promotion of the free counselling service.

The Chairman commented that he had spent a few hours walking round council offices earlier in the week to meet staff on an informal basis. He encouraged all members of Cabinet to do the same.

The Lead Member for Children's Services highlighted that target SG30 in relation to foster carers was below target. Over 57% of children in care were aged over 13; it was much harder to recruit foster carers because of the children's challenging needs. The council was working with other local authorities on a recruitment drive and was also looking at how foster carers for younger children could be provided with additional training. The Lead Member commented that she would be raising awareness later this year, as she had done in 2015, by undertaking half marathons.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

i. Note the progress made against the performance measures listed in the IPMR Quarter 4 2015/16 report.

B) BUS SERVICES IN THE ROYAL BOROUGH

Members considered whether to continue funding local bus services. The Deputy Lead Member – Bus Champion explained that the report requested £44,000 funding for a 12 month period; this would allow for a full review of bus services across the borough.

Members noted that prior to February 2014 Courtney Buses had operated the Maidenhead bus network under contract to the borough. In February 2014 most of these services had become commercial, saving the borough around £220,000 a year. At the same time a number of service enhancements were introduced, grant funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for a period of two years, ending 31 March 2016.

The requested funding would retain Service (a) to the Riverside area; Service (b) Sunday services in Maidenhead and between Windsor, Holyport and Maidenhead; Service (c) Evening services after 18.30pm in Furze Platt, Pinkneys Green and Belmont Wards.

The Deputy Lead Member highlighted that for every £1 spent in bus services, £7 came back into the local economy. Bus operations across the country were under pressure as passenger expectations rose in relation to technology, comfort and safety.

The Lead Member for Finance stated that the funding requested would not represent any adverse pressure on council funds because in the first few days in office the new Leader had identified opportunities to make savings in the way the Leader and Cabinet was supported. He was confident that this figure would be in excess of £200,000.

The Deputy Lead Member commented that despite pressures the council had continued to fund bus services; the borough was the only council in the area to allow bus pass users to travel before 9.30am.

The Chairman commented that the figure of £44,000 represented 66,000 passenger journeys in aggregate. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport commented that he would be asking officers to undertake an in-depth study of bus services to ensure a balance across the borough. This was the reason for the 12 month period proposed.

Councillor Beer commented that references to rail weakened the report as rail services were not a viable alternative for local travel.

It was confirmed that the date of 31 March 2016 in referred to Local Sustainable Transport Funding ending; the council had continued to provide funding to ensure no suspension of services. However this had been from the existing directorate budget which was not sustainable in the long term. The Deputy Lead Member confirmed that there were no plans to reduce service 71.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services suggested that reference to the 12 month period for he funding be included in the recommendation.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet agree additional funding of £44,000 to maintain the current level of bus services for the next 12 months.

c) DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES - OUTCOME OF REVIEW

Members considered the outcome of the comprehensive review of drug and alcohol services commissioned by Cabinet in October 2015 and undertaken by a multi-stakeholder Task and Finish Group (TFG).

The Deputy Lead Member for Public Health and Communications explained that the detailed, comprehensive and high quality report was the result of significant work by officers and members of the TFG. The outcome showed the benefit of a collaborative stakeholder approach.

The objective was to present to Cabinet the most cost effective outcome-based service. A comprehensive review of the current service had been undertaken including benchmarking, a focus on best practice, identification of areas of risk and a stakeholder consultation. Transformation principles were also followed.

Members noted that benchmarking and best practice research showed the current service was performing well and delivered value for money to residents and service users. The latest Public Health England estimates showed that for every £1 spent, a

saving of £5.51 in cost avoidance was achieved. In this respect the borough was above the national average.

Flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness were key factors in any service model. Members noted the recommended cohort approach detailed in paragraph 2.8 of the report, alongside greater emphasis on prevention, better integration with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and better signposting of services. A specific feasibility study was proposed in relation to additional services.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that the TFG had been led by the Deputy Lead Member in an exemplary fashion. The work undertaken by the Working Group had been diligent and comprehensive. The Group was determined to protect critical treatment services to a small number of residents in dire need of help. At the same time the aim was to extend the role of the DAAT as a lightning rod for a range of prevention, advisory and support services so that all residents had easy access to the various bodies able to inform, guide and help them to avoid or manage their addictions, from younger people with many temptations and those more mature who turned to alcohol. This was a classic example of 'more for less'. A more flexible and agile service was better able to help all residents within budgetary pressures.

Dr. Kirstin Ostle, a member of the TFG, addressed Cabinet. Dr. Ostle explained that she was a GP based in Dedworth and Eton. She had been very impressed with the organisation of the TFG and the work undertaken by officers in a tight timescale. The DAAT service was often undervalued; it was relied upon heavily in general practice and needed support. Dr. Ostle commented that alcoholism was a hidden problem in the population. Affluent residents did not necessarily admit how much they drank. Loneliness was also a factor, as was PTSD in the armed services. The DAAT helped a range of people. She had experienced situations where children were affected or taken into care because their mothers drank too much. She was aware of three cases of death due to alcoholism in soldiers affected by tours of duty in Afghanistan and the Gulf. There was also an increasing problem with legal highs. Alcoholism destroyed lives and could result in homelessness.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Ostle for her work on the frontline.

Councillor Hilton, as the former Chairman of the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Panel, addressed Cabinet. Viewed in isolation the DAAT was a small service to 500 adults at a cost of £920,000. With budget pressures it was not surprising that it had come under scrutiny. However the service had an impact on key partners including the police. Acquisitive crime to fund habits was reduced if addictions were managed. Violent crime and domestic abuse was often fuelled by alcohol. Substance abuse led to ill health and therefore impacted the health services. The TFG had been the ideal method to take in views. Even if the council provided the full cost of the service the proposal was still £76,000 less than the current structure and included a number of additions.

The Lead Member for Adult Services and Health commented that the members of the TFG had been chosen carefully to ensure all aspects of the service were challenged.

Dr. Ostle explained that preventative work was being undertaken in schools in relation to psychoactive substances. The issue highlighted the need for the DAAT to be adaptable.

Councillor Beer reported that Councillor Jones, who had been a member of the TFG, had been delighted with the results. However, she had requested that the additional services in Table 6 be included, as she felt they were cost effective steps to avoid repeat users. The Deputy Lead Member explained that the feasibility study proposed would look at these areas in detail. The Chairman commented that the proposals would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel therefore Councillor Jones would have an opportunity to input.

The Managing Director highlighted that the council was working with the Sue Brett Foundation to address the issue of homelessness in the borough. Proposals would be presented to Cabinet in the coming months. She thanked the Sue Brett Foundation for its work with borough residents.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i. Notes the outcome of the Drug and Alcohol Services review undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and agrees the recommendations, see box 1.**
- ii. Approves a tender exercise to secure drug and alcohol services for adults, effective from 1 April 2017.**
- iii. Notes that Cabinet will receive a report back on the outcome of the tender in January 2017.**

D) SHARED LEGAL SERVICES

Members considered an extension of the agreement with Shared Legal Services (SLS) and approval of the new business plan. The Principal Member for HR and Legal commented that the service was a good example of how a shared service could work for the benefit of residents by reducing council tax whilst still maintaining services. The proposal represented a saving of £250,000 per annum. The Principal Member highlighted the need to ensure a high quality service to inform all decision making. A one-year review would take place.

The Lead Member for Planning suggested that Planning should be included in the list of areas of law in paragraph 2.1.

Councillor Beer commented that he had heard that officers were fearful to seek legal advice as they had been advised to cut costs. The Strategic Director stated that the issue was not one that had been raised in the review. The council paid an annual charge based on a set of services rather than an hourly rate, so this was not an issue. All Heads of Service would encourage legal advice to be taken on a risk assessment basis. Councillor Bicknell asked Councillor Beer to provide evidence of his claims.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- I. Approves extending the Shared Legal Solutions agreement for five years, 2016 – 2021.**
- II. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Corporate and Community Services in liaison with the Lead Member for HR and**

Legal to sign an extended agreement with Wokingham Borough Council, Shared Legal Solutions.

III. Approves the Shared Legal Solutions business plan.

E) RESIDENTS SURVEY

Members considered the results of the annual residents' survey.

The Principal Member reported that in total 774 responses were received, equating to approximately a 39% response rate. 140 online responses were received. Overall 81% of residents were very or fairly satisfied with Windsor and Maidenhead as a place to live. This was a reduction of 7% on the previous year. The three most important factors for residents living in the borough were health services, levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and education provision. These were the same factors for residents as in the previous surveys in 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011. In terms of satisfaction with council services the highest level was for refuse collection (93%). The lowest levels of satisfaction was for road maintenance (40%), although this was an improvement from 2014 (29%). In terms of overall satisfaction with how the council ran things, 61% were satisfied. This was lower than the 65% in 2014.

The Principal Member highlighted the very high percentage of residents who volunteered, with 44% of residents having given unpaid help in the last 12 months and 17% having given help at least once a week.

The Lead Member for Environmental Services commented that he was pleased with the high levels of satisfaction in his area, however he acknowledged there was still work to do. He highlighted that a parking strategy was being developed to address concerns in this area.

The Lead Member for Children's Services commented on the low response rate from young people. The council needed to look at how younger people could be encouraged to get involved. Promotion through schools, colleges and youth centres, along with more online options, would help. The Strategic Director for Corporate and Community Services agreed to check if the 140 online responses were included in the total of 774 or were in addition.

Councillor Beer suggested if the results for highways and pavements were split they would show greater dissatisfaction with pavements. The Strategic Director for Operations and Customer Services commented that this was an area he would like to explore further. He commented that satisfaction levels often lagged behind investment in infrastructure. The council resurfaced 10% of roads each year so if this level was maintained, satisfaction levels should improve.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that a level of 60% satisfaction was an achievement in the national context of councils elsewhere cutting services.

The Strategic Director for Corporate and Community Services commented that the traditional model surveyed a random sample in theory, however the structure and method of delivery did not encourage wide participation. It was proposed to trial a new method surveying people with regular contact with the Customer Service Centre.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i) **Notes the results of the resident's survey.**
- ii) **Approves the planned actions in paragraph 2.17 to ensure the information will inform the council's strategic plan, service planning and improvement.**

F) OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE

Members considered an update on progress against the Ofsted Improvement Plan implemented in Children's Services following the Ofsted inspection of March 2015 when the service had been judged as 'requires improvement'.

Members noted that a revised report had been circulated, with amended dates in the recommendations.

The Lead Member reported that the 16 recommendations in the year 1 action plan had been completed, with ongoing monitoring taking place. The report dealt with the second phase, aiming to move the council to outstanding or good by the time of the next inspection in two years.

The council was looking at good practice at the two councils judged as outstanding (Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster). The MASH had been in place since January 2016 and was working well. The Corporate Parenting Forum had been strengthened and work was underway to develop the Children In Care Council.

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i. **Notes the completion of the Ofsted Improvement Plan in respect of the 16 recommendations from the March 2015 inspection, published in May 2015.**
- ii. **Notes that the safeguarding peer review will now be undertaken through the Local Government Association in December 2016.**
- iii **Requests the Managing Director/Strategic Director Adults, Children and Health Services provides Cabinet with a progress report against the Phase 2 Improvement Plan in January 2017, alongside the outcome of the Local Government Association safeguarding peer review.**

G) FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT: MONITORING REPORT

Members considered the latest update. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport commented that flooding was nasty, dirty and miserable and could cost lives. The danger was that public bodies took their foot off the gas when flooding was not occurring. The borough had not taken its foot off the gas.

The scheme delivery target of 85% had been achieved. A Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) service had been established as a formal consultee on major planning applications. In the 12 months from April 2015 to March 2016, comments had been provided on 148 applications. The council achieved the statutory 21 days performance target for 74% of the applications, and a further 11% within 28 days. With a flood-risk engineer in post from November 2015 the service was on track to achieve the performance target of 85-89% of responses provided on time in 2016-17.

The borough continued to support the River Thames scheme project and hosted the quarterly flood liaison group with key partners. Significant investment had been approved for 2016/17 as detailed in the appendix.

The Lead Member had asked officers to review the most at risk areas since the bad floods of 2014. He highlighted the lengthy comments from Councillor Beer as a member of the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel and agreed to respond in writing.

The Lead Member for Adult Services and Health asked the Lead Member to consider Fifield which, although not an obvious flooding area, suffered from run-off water. The Lead Member explained that one of the reasons for the full review was to identify such areas and include them in future schemes.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i. Note the positive progress in delivering the manifesto commitment ‘Ensure flood schemes and maintenance are delivered on time to better protect homes and highway’.**
- ii. Authorise the Strategic Director of Operations & Customer Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways and Transport to implement the programme of works set out in Appendix A to this report in 2016/17**
- iii. Authorises the Strategic Director of Operations & Customer Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways and Transport be authorised to agree minor amendments to the approved schemes within approved budgets and implement reserve or substitute schemes should this become necessary (subject to funding)**
- iv. receive an annual report providing an update on flood risk management .**

H) FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members considered the latest financial update. The Lead Member presented the out-turn for the financial year. The recommended level of reserves had been £5.4m; the final figure was £5.8m.

In Children's Services an unexpected budget pressure of £600,000 in relation to home to school transport meant the issue would need clear focus in the future. There had been a number of staffing cost pressures, but these had been offset by reduced costs

in fostering and the need for fewer residential placements for disabled children. This had left overall spend slightly better than target.

In Adult Services higher numbers of older people in residential and nursing care or social care in their own homes had caused budget pressures. The increased cost of supporting people with learning disabilities or mental health problems was also an issue. Some of this had been offset by careful management of support staff costs. It was therefore an achievement that no more than the additional £2m budget had been required during the year.

In Corporate Services, aspirations for additional income from the Guildhall had not been met. Additional critical costs of supporting the demanding planning agenda on the way to a new Local Plan had been offset by other efficiencies, leaving overall spend slightly behind budget.

In Operations there had been an overall underspend of £800,000. Very strong performance by the revenues and benefits team and the parking team, and efficiencies in IT and the management of waste and refuse services had all contributed.

The Lead Member reported the need for a write off of £56,750 commercial rent debt after all best efforts to recover from a business which, regrettably, had been shown to have no ability to pay.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Cabinet:

- i) **Notes the report and the final outturn position.**
- ii) **Approves the write off of a £56,750 commercial rent debt. (See paragraph 4.8)**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on items 8-9 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The meeting, which began at 7.30 pm, finished at 9.34 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....