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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

# Agenda

# Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

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| Date: | **Monday 21 November 2011** |
| Time: | **6.00 pm** |
| Place: | **St Aldate's Room, Town Hall** |

For any further information please contact:

**Alec Dubberley, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01865 252402

Email: adubberley@oxford.gov.uk

# Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Membership**

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| **Chair** | **Councillor Stephen Brown** | Carfax; |
| **Vice-Chair** | **Councillor Scott Seamons** | Northfield Brook; |
| | **Councillor Mohammed Abbasi** | Cowley Marsh; |
| | **Councillor Michael Gotch** | Wolvercote; |
| | **Councillor Rae Humberstone** | Blackbird Leys; |
| | **Councillor Bryan Keen** | Cowley; |
| | **Councillor Sajjad Malik** | Cowley Marsh; |
| | **Councillor Stuart McCready** | Summertown; |
| | **Councillor Mike Rowley** | Barton and Sandhills; |
| | **Councillor Gwynneth Royce** | St. Margaret's; |
| | **Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen** | Hinksey Park; |
| | **Councillor David Williams** | Iffley Fields; |
| | **Councillor Val Smith** | Blackbird Leys; |
| | **Councillor Van Coulter** | Barton and Sandhills; |

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# AGENDA

| | | Pages |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND AND SUBSTITUTIONS** | |
| 2 | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** | |
| 3 | **STANDING ITEM: REPORT BACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE** | 1 - 4 |

Contact Officer: Alec Dubberley, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: (01865) 252402, email: adubberley@oxford.gov.uk

| **Background information** |
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| This Committee has made a number of recommendations to City Executive Board and officers. This item reports on the outcomes from these. |
| **Why is the item on the agenda?** |
| To report back on the report submitted to the Board on the Trading Strategy. All recommendations were accepted at the meeting and the report is included for the Committee’s information. |
| **Who has been invited to comment?** |
| The Principal Scrutiny Officer will be able to answer any questions |
| **What will happen after the meeting?** |
| Any further follow up will be pursued within the work programme. |

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| 4 | **BENEFITS FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW** | 5 - 30 |

Contact Officer: Helen Bishop, Head of Customer Services
Tel: (01865) 252233, email: hbishop@oxford.gov.uk

| **Background information** |
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| Outside of the Committee Scrutiny Councillors, Brown, Van Nooijen, Royce and Williams have been part of a Member Advisory Group established to monitor progress on the fundamental review of the service.<br><br>This is the first report back on progress by the Head of Service. |

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| **Why is the item on the agenda?** |
| The agenda contains 2 items:<br><br>• A report on its way to CEB outlining the progress of the fundamental service review and the service design proposals<br>• The response to questions raised by the Scrutiny Lead Member, Councillor Brown concerning the underlying value for money principles set out in the committees lines of inquiry (these can be seen in the work programme)<br><br>Member are asked to give their view based on advice from the Scrutiny Lead Member Councillor Brown and the Board Member Councillor Smith |
| **Who has been invited to comment?** |
| Helen Bishop, Head of Service and Councillor Smith – Board Member have been invited to attend. |
| **What will happen after the meeting?** |
| Any conclusions or recommendations will be reported to City Executive Board on the 7th. December and the Member Advisory Group at their next available meeting |

5 **LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT** To Follow

Contact Officer: Ian Brooke, Head of City Leisure and Parks, email: ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk Tel: 01865 252707

| **Background information** |
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| At the June 2011 meeting the Committee considered performance within the Fusion Leisure Contract against agreed targets. |
| **Why is the item on the agenda?** |
| To scrutinise outcomes to target from the Fusion Leisure Services Contract across:<br>• Value for Money<br>• Increased participation<br>• Improvements in quality of service<br>• Outreach work<br>• Carbon Management<br><br>For this six monthly report the Committee were particularly keen to see information on subsidy cost per user per centre as well as |

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| further information on the outreach work being done. |
| **Who has been invited to comment?** |
| Ian Brooke (Head of Service) and Councillor Coulter (Lead Board Member) have been invited to attend. |
| **What will happen after the meeting** |
| Any requests will be made to officers for further action. Recommendations to City Executive Board will be considered by the Board or the Board Member at a future meeting. |

## 6 COMMITTEE INQUIRY - ASSET MANAGEMENT 31 - 112

Contact Officer: Alec Dubberley, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: (01865) 252402, email: adubberley@oxford.gov.uk

| **Background information** |
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| The Council has an Asset Management Plan setting out an overarching strategy of how it's operational, investments and housing stock property is managed. The Plan was last updated in 2010. As part of the work programme for this year it was decided to review the 2010 plan's effectiveness and to assess whether milestones and targets within had been achieved. |
| **Why is the item on the agenda?** |
| The lines of enquiry were agreed with the Scrutiny Lead Member Councillor Van Nooijen and can be found in the report.<br><br>As explained in the report, a draft for the next version of the Asset Management Plan is also attached for the Committee to consider. A request to consider this item in private session has been received. A further briefing on this revised strategy will be provided in advance of the meeting. |
| **Who has been invited to comment?** |
| Steve Sprason, Head of Corporate Assets<br>Richard Hawkes, Corporate Asset Manager<br>Councillor Turner – Portfolio Holder |
| **What will happen after the meeting?** |
| This is up to the Committee. It may choose to submit a report to the Executive Board or to ask for further work to be done. |

## 7 STANDING ITEM: WORK PROGRAMME 113 - 124

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, Tel: (01865) 252191,
Email phjones@oxford.gov.uk;
Alec Dubberley, Democratic Services Officer, Tel: (01865) 252402,
Email: adubberley@oxford.gov.uk

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| **Background information** |
| The work programme needs to reflect the wishes and interests of the Committee. It is presented here and at every meeting to allow members to lead and shape their work. |
| **Why is the item on the agenda?** |
| To agree the lines of inquiry for forthcoming meetings and to take an overview of progress |
| **Who has been invited to comment?** |
| The Principal Scrutiny Officer, will present the work programme and answer questions from the Committee. |
| **What will happen after the meeting?** |
| The Chair and Vice-Chair will continue to monitor the Committee's work programme and report to future meetings. |

## 8 MINUTES 125 - 128

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2011.

## 9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

30 January 2012
26 March 2012

## DECLARING INTERESTS

What is a personal interest?

You have a personal interest in a matter if that matter affects the well-being or financial position of you, your relatives or people with whom you have a close personal association more than it would affect the majority of other people in the ward(s) to which the matter relates.

A personal interest can affect you, your relatives or people with whom you have a close personal association positively or negatively. If you or they would stand to lose by the decision, you should also declare it.

You also have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to any interests, which you must register.

**What do I need to do if I have a personal interest?**

You must declare it when you get to the item on the agenda headed “Declarations of Interest” or as soon as it becomes apparent to you. You may still speak and vote unless it is a prejudicial interest.

If a matter affects a body to which you have been appointed by the authority, or a body exercising functions of a public nature, you only need declare the interest if you are going to speak on the matter.

**What is a prejudicial interest?**

You have a prejudicial interest in a matter if;

a) a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interest; and

b) the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter; and

c) the interest does not fall within one of the exempt categories at paragraph 10(2)(c) of the Code of Conduct.

**What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?**

If you have a prejudicial interest you must withdraw from the meeting. However, under paragraph 12(2) of the Code of Conduct, if members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about that matter, you may also make representations as if you were a member of the public. However, you must withdraw from the meeting once you have made your representations and before any debate starts.

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| **To:** | **City Executive Board** |
| **Date:** | **21 September 2011** |
| **Report of:** | **Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee** |
| **Title of Report:** | **Trading Strategy** |


**Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report**: To present the recommendations of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Trading Strategy.

**Key decision?** No

**Scrutiny Committee Chair**: Cllr. Stephen Brown

**Executive lead member:** Cllr. Bob Price

**Policy Framework:** Efficient, Effective Council

**The City Executive Board is asked to consider the conclusion and recommendations of the scrutiny committee and say if it agrees or disagrees.**

**Recommendation(s):**

**1. Should the Council wish to go beyond the arrangements already in existence to reconsider the governance arrangements proposed within the strategy.**

**2. When considering the use of spare capacity to undertake trading activities the relative options, risks and returns need to be fully documented in order to make an informed decision.**

**3. To provide a report in years time showing**
- **The services sold or traded**
- **The amount of money raised**
- **The effects of this within our budget identifying specifically, if possible, where this has allowed us to reduce the costs of services within our budget**

## Introduction

1. The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee pre-scrutinised the Trading Strategy at their meeting on $12^{th}$. September. The committee would like to thank Councillor Tanner and Tim Sadler for their support in this debate.

2. The committee had noted the intention of the Council expressed in the budget to increase focus in this area and wanted to be clear within a strategy that:

    - A proper understanding of risks to the council in financial, legal and reputation terms is considered
    - The right balance between service delivery and trading is ensured
    - Sound governance arrangements exist

## Conclusions

3. It was clear from answers to questions that it was not the intention at this stage to move much beyond the activities that are already undertaken. Instead the focus was on extending these and other like opportunities in an effort to reduce overheads and therefore reduce the cost of services to the public. As these opportunities are already governed by current delegated powers the committee is happy that adequate governance arrangements exist. Should the intention in the future be to move beyond this into areas of greater risk then the committee would want reconsideration of the governance arrangements that stand.

4. The report mentions the use of spare capacity in services to raise income (section 3). The committee recognised that spare capacity comes in a number of forms and for a number of reasons but would want to see a sound financial and risk match between trading services and reducing capacity.

5. In order to take a view on success within this strategy the committee would ask to see a report in a years time showing:

    - The service sold or traded
    - The amount of money raised
    - The effects of this within our budget identifying specifically, if possible, where this has allowed us to reduce the costs of services within our budget

## Financial Implications

6. None arising specifically from this report.

**Legal Implications**

7. None arising specifically from this report.

**Comments from the Board Member and Director**

8. Comments at the meeting

**Name and contact details of author:-**
Pat Jones on behalf of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee
Principal Scrutiny Officer
Law and Governance
Tel: 01865 252191 e-mail: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

**List of background papers: Report on the City Executive Board agenda for 21 September 2011 - item 11**
**Version number: 1**

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**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 7th December 2011**

**Report of: Head of Customer Services**

**Title of Report: Benefits Fundamental Service Review**


**Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report**: To review the current outputs and the potential design principles and concepts from the Benefits Fundamental Service Review. To agree the Benefits service standards as informed by the customer and stakeholder consultation.

**Key decision? Yes**

**Executive lead member: Councillor Val Smith**

**Policy Framework:**

**Recommendation(s):**

**1. To approve the Benefits performance standards as follows:**
**To process new benefit claims within 14 days**
**To process changes in circumstance within 10 days**

**2. To note the proposed reconfiguration of the service to achieve the efficiency savings in the budget and meet customers reasonable expectations.**


**Appendix Numbers**

1. Current improvement update to Audit Commission and their response
2. Benefits Fundamental Service Review Milestone Chart
3. Risk register
4. Equalities Impact Assessment


**Name and contact details of author:-**

Name Helen Bishop
Job title Head of Customer Services
Service Area Customer Services
Tel: 01865 252233 e-mail: hbishop@oxford.gov.uk

**Background**

1. The Benefits Service has been identified by the Council as a service that is delivering a reasonable service at relatively high cost when compared with the best performers nationally. The results of an Audit Commission Inspection carried out in the summer of 2010 suggested that there were a number of areas where improvements to the service were required.

2. The Council updates the Audit Commission on a quarterly basis regarding progress against the agreed improvement plan. The latest update and the Audit Commission's response to our submission are attached at Appendix 1.

3. To date, the service has taken on the challenge of successfully managing its own performance and has reduced the time taken to process benefits claims, both new and revisions to existing claims, significantly. The intention is to deliver a robust service that achieves upper quartile performance in terms of the time taken to process all claims, reducing the overall cost to the local tax payer, reducing the unit cost of the process and improving the quality of the service to the end user.

**Current Performance**

4. As at 30th September 2011, the cumulative performance to date for processing new claims is 17.1 days. This is comparable to the final result for 2010/11 which was 17.2 days. It should be noted that nationally this is equivalent to top quartile performance. The target for new claims is 14 days, and the year end projection is to meet this target.

5. The cumulative performance as at 30th September for processing changes in circumstance is 10.7 days, compared to the final result for 2010/11 which was 11 days. The target for changes in circumstance this year is 10 days, and the year end projection is to meet this target.

6. The average length of a telephone call handled by the Council's contact centre is 7 minutes, and currently over 90% of telephone calls are getting through first time on the Council's main service lines.

7. Sickness issues have been tackled for the service area as a whole. The end of year projected number of sickness days per employee has reduced from 20 days for the month of April 2011, to 10.2 days for September, only just above the Council target of 9.5 days by the end of the year. Last year for Customer Services the number of sickness days out turned at 12.75 sickness days per employee.

**Service Review Progress**

8. Please refer to Appendix 2 which details the Review's milestones. This chart shows that progress is currently running to time. In summary, the financial overview, review of current processes and consultation are all completed.

9. The review of potential process improvements, their financial impact and associated benchmarking are on track to be completed by December.

10. The proposed new service requirement, and proposed new structure to deliver this will follow between November 2011 and January 2012, with consultation on the structure proposals in February and March 2012.

**Consultation Feedback**

11. Around 200 benefits customers were surveyed both face-to-face and over the telephone during September.

12. The feedback showed a good level of satisfaction, with 82% rating the service as above average with 25% giving a top score. However, customers felt that the main areas for improvement were answering the telephones more quickly and making swifter decisions on claims.

13. The current dip in benefit processing performance has been due to a number of factors. One of which is that the Department for Work and Pension (DWP) has increased the amount of information that is sent automatically to local authorities. This started in July 2011 and meant a significantly increased workload for the service to process, which has now stabilised. At the same time, we have taken the opportunity to re-tender the resilience contract that we use to help us meet our performance levels during peaks in workload, and this contract commenced in October. With a concentration of resources during October and November we are confident that this dip in performance will be rectified. However, it should be noted that phase 2 of the DWP release of information is scheduled for release in January 2012, and we have already made provision for our resilience contractors to provide extra support to us at this time.

14. Benefits customers demonstrated a high propensity to use new technology, with 86% having some access to the internet, 75% happy to use a self-service terminal and 64% who would consider making a claim on-line.

15. In terms of service standards, 35% would consider it reasonable to process a new claim between 11 and 15 days whilst 27% would prefer a new claim to be determined between 6 and 10 days. For changes in circumstance, 35% considered between 6 and 10 days acceptable and 27% thought that between 11 and 15 days would be reasonable.

16. In addition, two focus groups were held with voluntary groups and housing associations to gather their input.

17. Again, the view was that performance had taken a dip lately in terms of speed of getting through to our contact centre and for processing claims. They found the service better than those of other authorities where the service had been outsourced. All wanted easy access to expert information when required, although there were mixed views on electronic access in terms of how their client base would adopt to using the internet. However, all felt that they would be willing to assist their clients access our services on-line and would be willing to house self-service terminals.

**Benefits Service – Potential Future Design Principles**

18. The work reviewing potential service improvements is not yet complete, but the team has already agreed some design principles which include:

- Processes
  - Get it right first time
  - Reduce overpayments
  - Pre-empt changes in circumstance wherever possible
  - Include mechanisms to check for fraud

- Technology
  - Ensure options for automated methods are available
  - Use assisted claiming
  - Use flexible web forms rather than long scripts for customer service to read through
  - Re-use existing information already held by the Council on customers

- Organisation
  - Ensure the right people are doing the right tasks

- Customers
  - Use customer-preferred contact methods
  - Do not reduce choice but encourage customers to move to other channels
  - Provide positive feedback to customers

**Benefits Service Standards**

19. The feedback from this round of customer consultation supports the previous view, also based on consultation and benchmarking, that the service standards for processing new claims and changes in circumstance should remain as they are for the current year as 14 and 10 days respectively.

**Benefits Service – Potential Design Concepts**

20. The initial output from the staff work groups suggests initial design concepts for the Benefits Service to deliver the agreed savings as follows:

- Move to electronic capture of claims at source, which means
    - No paper application forms
    - Assisted claiming for customers in the customer service centre, via telephone by the contact centre, by visiting officers and by third parties (e.g. housing associations)
    - Self service via the web to check eligibility, to make a claim and to book appointments
    - Customer access to their claim information using E-citizen

***Benefits include reduced scanning, no double handling of data, greater customer choice, improved accuracy of claim, and a 'right first time' approach***

- Introduce risk based verification on new claims, this means
    - Up to 58% of claims could be treated as "low risk", and would require no additional evidence documentation to put into payment
    - Quicker processing times

***Benefits include reduced scanning, reduced overall time to assess a claim, increased potential for a claim to be put through to payment in one day, reduced errors and increased fraud detection***

- Identify potential changes in circumstances at every opportunity, this means
    - Pro active reminders to claimants on predictable changes

***Benefits include fewer errors, less overpayments and a more predictable workload***

21. These changes would meet customer expectations in terms of service speed, deliver the required savings and be in line with industry and DWP best practice.

**Risk**

22. An evaluation of the risks associated with the implementation of this policy has been carried out. A detailed risk register is at Appendix 3.

**Climate Change/Environmental Impact**

23. Through better and shared use of technology, customers will be able to self-serve on the web, telephone the Council or visit potentially more conveniently placed third parties in order to access the Benefits Service. This will contribute to a reduced carbon footprint for the service

**Equalities Impact Assessment**

24. A Screening exercise has been carried out and is at Appendix 4. No undue, adverse impacts have been identified.

**Financial Implications**

25. The budget saving in 2012-13 expected from the Benefits Fundamental Service Review is £69k.

26. The technology required to deliver access for customers to their claims (E-citizen),to enable customers to self serve and to enable others to assist claimants has already been procured by the organisation as part of the new Capita contract agreed at the start of the current year.

27. Provision has also been made in the budget for 2012/13 should additional software be required. This is on an invest to save basis.

**Legal Implications**

28. None.

List of background papers: None
Version number: 1.1

**Appendix 1**

**Update for Audit Commission on Implementation of their Inspection Recommendations – 16 September 2011**

**From Helen Bishop – Head of Customer Services**

## 1.0 Introduction

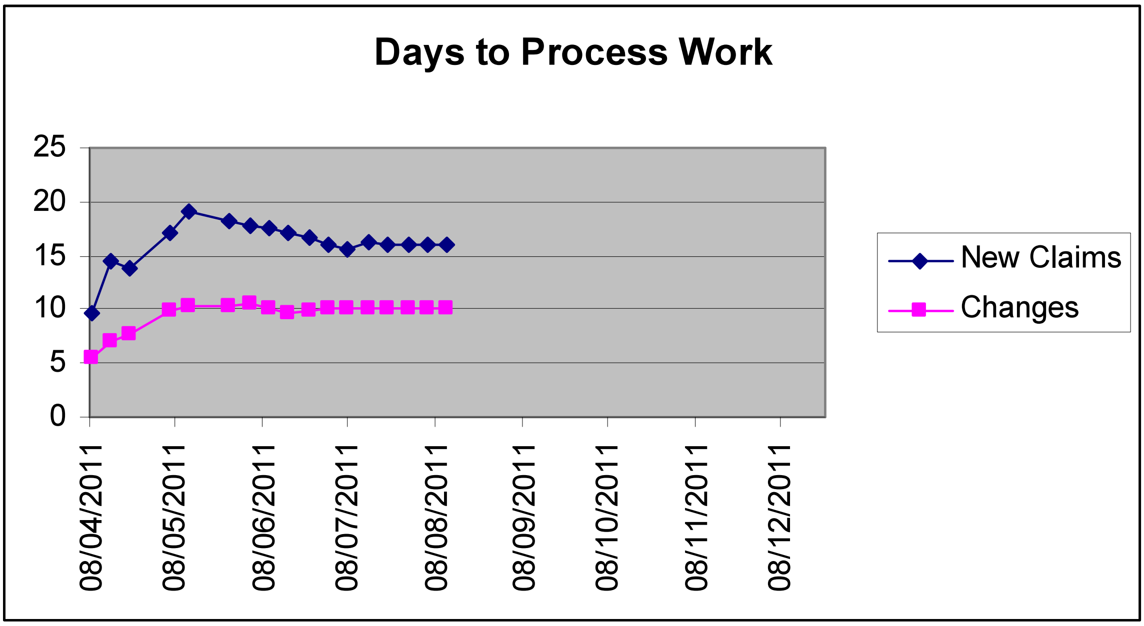
1.1 This report is intended as an update to Oxford City Council's response to the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in their Inspection Report published on 24 March 2011.

1.2 This update follows the format of the response made by the City Council on 21 April 2011, focussing on the specific actions recommended by the Audit Commission.

## 2.0 Performance

2.1 Following the publication of the 2011/12 Housing Benefit Right Time performance data by the DWP, it was pleasing to see that Oxford City Council was in the top quartile for its New Claims performance. We were within a day of the median figure for Changes performance. This is much better than was anticipated by the Inspection report

2.2 Performance has continued to improve as the graph below shows. At the end of August our processing times were 16.2 days for new claims and 10.3 days for changes. We anticipate performance improving further as currently a number of staff are engaged in the Fundamental Service Review which reduces the time they are spending on benefit assessment work.



2.3 The performance framework that was introduced a year ago and detailed in our April report has continued to deliver improved performance. The one to one meetings staff have, which focus on their performance is now ingrained into the culture of the office.

**3.0 Fundamental Service Review**

3.1 Our April report explained that the Benefits Service was about to embark on a Fundamental Service Review. At the time this was just underway. It is now more than halfway through and on target to meet its December completion date. Shortly after submitting our report in April it was decided to merge some of the work streams to facilitate better management of the process. The Overpayments stream was merged into the Process Group, and the Partnership work has been included with the Customer Interface group.

3.2 The Process Group have mapped 147 separate processes which are conducted by the Council in relation to the processing of Benefits. During this process various efficiencies have been identified. These are being drawn together in the next stage of its work in mapping potential "To Be" processes. This will from the basis of recommendations as to the future shape of the Service.

3.3 The Customer Interface Group are conducting a survey of Benefit Customers to find out what they think of the Service, how they would like to interact with the service, and what expectations they have in relation to service delivery. They are also conducting seminars with various stakeholders and partners to get their view of the same issues. This information will be used to fine tune future service delivery.

3.4 The Finance Group has modelled our current costs, so that they can estimate the effect on the Services Costs of the various proposals made by the Processing Group. They have also been conducting detailed benchmarking of both performance and costs in relation to other Local Authorities.

**4.0 Improvements to Customer Service Centre**

4.1 A number of negative observations were made in relation to our Customer Service Areas, and the level of service received by our Customers. At the time that the Inspection was made we were already well under way with transforming the Council's approach to dealing with Customers.

4.2 Since the April report, the two contact centres that existed have been brought together into one. Customers can now access all Council Services from a single number. There is an ongoing program to up-skill the contact centre so it is able to respond to enquiries across the whole range of Council Services. Recent call stats from our merged contact centre are attached with this document. The Council's web site is also being developed in parallel with the services that are being provided face-to-face and via our contact centre.

4.3 As part of our Offices for the Future program which is modernising all Council offices, we have refurbished our Service Shop in the city centre. It has expanded to be able to deal with enquiries in relation to Planning and Environmental issues, in addition to the Services it was already dealing with. The modern design makes it more welcoming to customers rather than creating barriers between employees and customers which was a feature of the old layout.

4.4 We have invested in a brand new queuing system which amalgamates the ability to book online appointments with drop in requests taken in the Service Shop. This is not a feature which is available in the market leading products. We also have a touch screen survey which allows people to provide straight forward feedback about their visit, available on their way out. In addition we have set up self service PCs so we can encourage our customers to access our web services for themselves.

4.5 The latest highlight report form our Customer First Program is available but not detailed here.

**5.0 Response to Recommendations**

The responses provided in the last report are copied below in italics, followed by a progress update.

5.1 **R1 – Improve the Speed and Accuracy of the Service**

5.2 *An analysis of both new claims over 30 days and changes over 7 days will be undertaken. The top 10 reasons will then be addressed. The Processing work group in the Fundamental Service Review are best placed to deliver this work. Completion is therefore scheduled for Quarter 2 of 2011.*
As mentioned in Section 3 above, this is on track to be delivered.

5.3 *Staff will be encouraged to chase evidence by phone where it is appropriate to do so. This will be done prior to sending a letter. Visiting officers will be used to assist in obtaining evidence for vulnerable claimants, or cases where we have difficulty in obtaining it by the usual means. Again this will be carried out by the Processing work group in the FSR and fully implemented by the end of Quarter 4 of 2011.*
The FSR is on track to deliver this. Team leaders of the assessment teams also encourage this way of working in team meetings and in 121's.

5.4 *The recommendation to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to processing has been carried out, and can be seen in the improved processing times in Section 3 above. Resources for each processing team are checked weekly. Where necessary one team will support another one which is light on resources. A resilience contract is also in place which can be called on as necessary.*
This is completed

5.5 *The recommendation to analyse defective claims has also been carried out. The analysis highlighted the main reasons for claims being made defective, which was linked to the lack of evidence supplied by the customer. Subsequently this analysis has led to the addition of an insert being sent with our application forms. This details the most common reasons for a claim being made defective, and encourages claimants to provide the right information with their claim. This will be an ongoing piece of work, with defective claims being analysed throughout the year.*
This has been completed but is also ongoing work.

5.6. *Currently interventions are carried out by personal visits. Our intervention work will be increased however, as we will use our SHBE data and fraud statistics to identify the type of cases we wish to review. An annual intervention program will then be designed, with reviews being conducted by post and phone as well. The Processing work group in the FSR will design this, and it will be in place by the end of Quarter 4 of 2011.*
Training was delivered in August to allow interrogation of our SHBE file in MS Excel. This recommendation will then be fully implemented following completion of the FSR.

5.7 *A risk based approach to Quality has already been implemented. Using data provided by our subsidy team, half of all checks made are in respect of claims where there are a higher incidence of errors. There is still more work to be done in improving our Quality Assurance process and this will be delivered by the FSR in Quarter 4 of 2011.*
We continue to update our Quality process according to risk. This work is still dispersed throughout the team, and it is intended that the FSR will result in this being focussed in one team.

5.8 *The time taken to deal with requests and reviews has fallen dramatically. This process has been re-engineered, and also subject to external review, see Appendix C. As such we consider this recommendation to be implemented.*
This has been completed

## 6.0 R2 - Improve access to the Service and make sure the Service is meeting the needs of all of its customers

6.1. *An extensive analysis of the enquiry volumes has been undertaken. This has been used to produce the draft structure for the new Customer Contact team that is presently out for consultation. In addition service level agreements with back office providers will be put in place by the summer, providing service information that will help to identify demand. This recommendation will be implemented by the end of Quarter 2 of 2011. Also we have an agreement to employ additional staff in the meantime to ensure that during implementation call volumes do not suffer. Please see Appendices D & E for details of the call analysis, and example of a Service Level Agreement with an internal department.*
Delivery of the new Customer Contact structure has taken a little longer than expected. This has pushed back some of the deliverables mentioned above into Quarter 3. However during this period we have made use of staff employed on fixed term contracts and temporary workers to ensure we maintain a reasonable service.

6.2 *As part of the work identified above, staff work patterns will be reviewed once the new structure is in place. A copy of this structure is at Appendix F. The Customer First programme is on track to deliver a new walk in Customer Service Centre, and single contact centre. The Programme Manager's contract has been extended to February 2012. Appendix G shows the latest highlight report of the Customer First Programme*.
Due to a contractor being liquidated the new Customer Service Centre was delayed by two months. It is now open, and vastly improves the Customer experience, as referred to in Section 4 above.

6.3 *Work has been undertaken to improve the form and layout of our letters. This is in its final stages and has been undertaken by a consultant from XL Print. Further work will be carried out as part of the FSR which will examine the content of letters. The 20 most common letters will be identified for this work. This will be completed by Quarter 4 of 2011.*
This is on track for completion.

6.4 *The Customer Interface Group will conduct a formal review of all leaflets as part of the FSR, including the consideration of whether it is cost effective to produce our own. Our demographic information will be analysed to ensure we are including the right languages on our leaflets. In addition as current stocks require replenishment, leaflets will be updated to ensure language information is included. This item will be completed by Quarter 4 of 2011.*
This is on track for completion

6.5 *A limited customer needs survey was carried out last year. This year we will conduct a fuller piece of work as part of the FSR. Individuals will be interviewed about their requirements from the Benefits Service. These interviews will then be used to design a fuller survey. To be completed by Quarter 2 of 2011.*
As referred to in Section 3, this is being conducted this month.

6.6 *The above recommendation will inform the service standards we need to set, along with input from the Member Advisory Group and other stakeholders. To be completed by end of Quarter 3 of 2011.*
This is on track for completion.

6.7 *Currently performance is not communicated to customers. The Customer Interface Group will determine the most appropriate way to communicate our performance to all customer groups. This will be delivered by the end of Quarter 4 of 2011.*
This is dependent on 6.5 above and is on track for completion.

6.8 We have also procured from Capita the self service/e-citizen modules for revenues and benefits which are presently being developed for implementation later this financial year. This will enable customers to view their account on-line and make certain adjustments.

**7.0 R3 The Service should ensure Value for Money**

7.1 *The FSR has commenced. Please see Section 8 below for further details on this item.*
An update was provided in Section 3 above in relation to this item.

7.2 *The offsite processing contract is currently being monitored. It is due to be reviewed in June with a decision to be taken as to whether this is extended for another year. Performance of this contract will be compared against in house and agency resources.*
We decided not to extend this contract for another year. Instead we sought new quotes based on an amended specification. This contract has been awarded to Mouchel plc, but has not yet commenced.

7.3 *Collection of overpayment debt has been subject to analysis by an external consultant and found to be sound, See Appendix H for the detail of this report. Benchmarking of this data shows that our collection rate is very good. Further consideration will be given to how overpayments are dealt with by the FSR. This will be completed by the end of Quarter 3 of 2011.*
This is on track for completion

7.4 *Recommendation R3.4 has been completed. Our write off policy has been reviewed, and uncollectable debts have been submitted for write off.*
This has already been completed

**8.0 R4 Improve Performance Management**

8.1 *Service Planning will be developed to include medium and longer term plans, and will be based on the requirements of internal and external partners and service users. This will be delivered by the end of Quarter 4 of 2011.*
This is on track for completion, and will be shown in the Customer Services plan for next year. We will be able to provide you a copy of this at the time.

8.2 *Workforce plans have been strengthened by the development of individual plans for teams which are reviewed during one-to ones with staff. This recommendation has been completed.*
This has already been completed

8.3 *All staff have received appraisals which are reviewed at the mid year point. Regular one-to-ones are also held. Appraisal objectives feed directly from the corporate and service plan. This recommendation is also complete.*
This has already been completed

8.4 *Since introducing our new performance framework last year, staff receive regular feedback on their performance. This is done at least six weekly, and more frequently if required. Team leaders also meet with the Benefits Manager and Head of Service to explain what they are doing to improve performance within their teams. This recommendation has been completed.*
This has already been completed.

8.5 *Following the restructure of our Customer Contact team, a new Training Officer will be appointed who will conduct an evaluation of training in line with corporate guidelines, and produce a new training policy as a result of this work. This will be delivered by the end of Quarter 3 of 2011.*

A new Training Manager started this month, and this recommendation is on track for completion.

8.6 *Staff and Management training need will be identified from appraisals. This will be recorded on a matrix which will inform a training plan for the whole service. This will be completed by the end of Quarter 3 of 2011.*
As with the above, this is on track for completion

**From:** Stone Alby WWG HOUSING COSTS [mailto:ALBY.STONE@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK]
**Sent:** 27 September 2011 15:30
**To:** WILDING Paul
**Subject:** RE: Audit Commission inspection report

Hi Paul,

Many thanks for providing this update. We're pleased with the overall progress you're making and especially with the improvement in new claim and change of circumstances processing times.

We'd like a similar update in January, for quarter 3 processing times and progress against the Audit Commission recommendations; and the outcome of the Fundamental Service Review. I'll drop you a reminder in mid-January.

In the meantime, if you need anything from us, please let me know.

Thanks again,

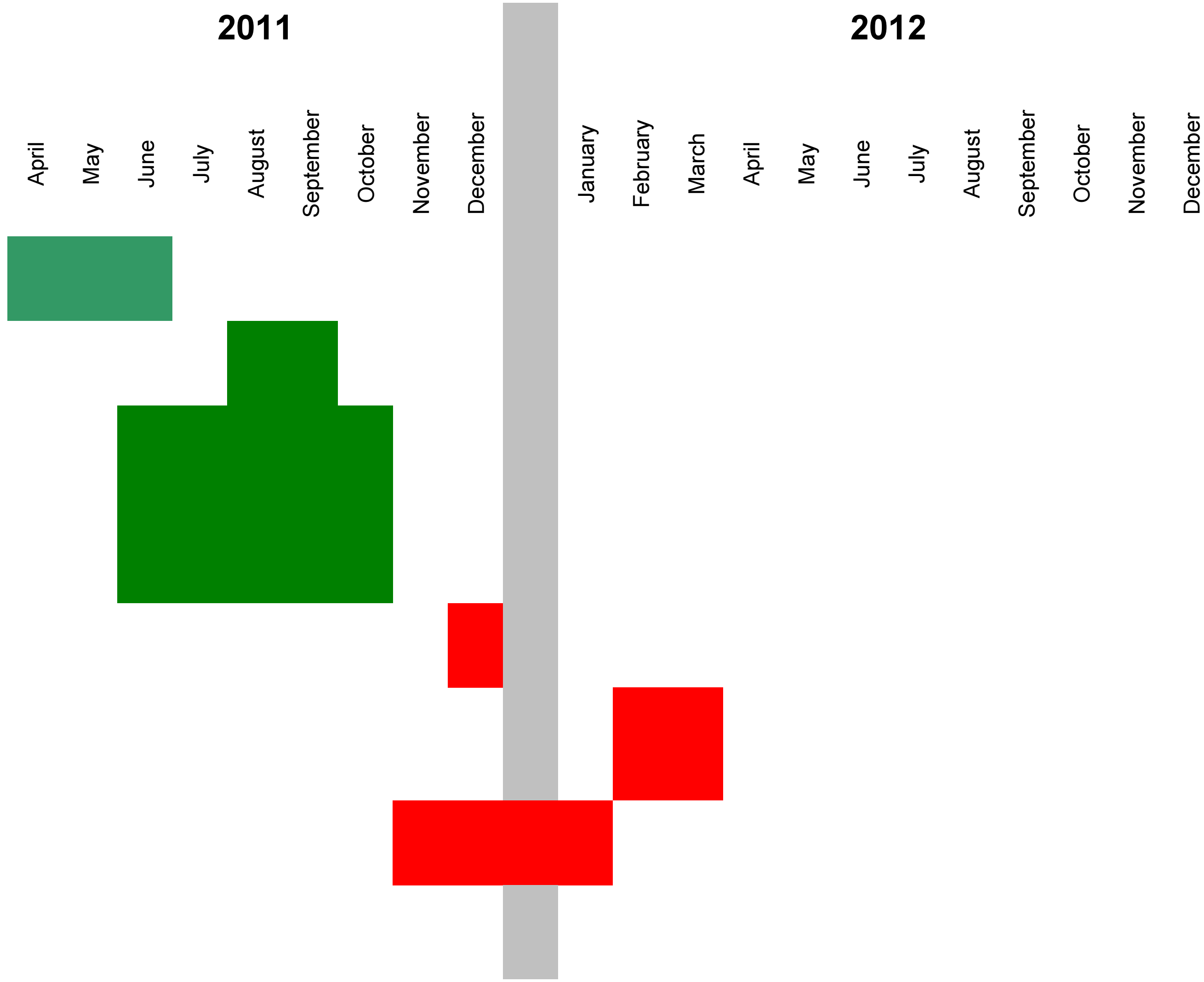
Alby

**Appendix 2**

**Benefits Fundamental Service Review Milestone Chart**

# Project Plan
# Benefits FSR

| | Milestones and Action | Resource (name) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Create FSR Board and project teams | |
| 2 | Customer satisfaction survey | Customer/Stakeholder Team |
| 3 | Conclusion of processing and overpayments work | Processing/overpayments Team |
| 4 | Financial overview completed | Finance Team |
| 5 | Draft staffing structure for consultation | Service Management |
| 6 | Implementation of new staffing structure post consultation | Service Management |
| 7 | Overarching Service Requirement | Member Advisory Group |




**Processing**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **and Overpayment Team** | |
| 8 | Review of current processes | Dave Cavill |
| 9 | Review of potential process improvements | Dave Cavill |
| 10 | Analysis of overpayment causes | Dave Cavill |
| 11 | Integration of ATLAS | Service Management |
| 12 | Write new processes | Dave Cavill |
| | **Customer and stakeholder interface team** | |
| 13 | Determine who all stakeholders are | Clare Taylor |
| 14 | Draft consultation documentation | Clare Taylor |
| 15 | Sign off of draft consultation by FSR Board | Clare Taylor |
| 16 | Release consultation documentation | Clare Taylor |
| 17 | Organise focus group session with external | Clare Taylor |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | stakeholders | |
| 18 | Analysis of consultation responses | Clare Taylor |
| 19 | Feed in to service design | Clare Taylor |
| | **Finance Team** | |
| 20 | Analysis of current cost base | David Weston |
| 21 | Review financial impact of processing options | David Weston |
| 22 | Benchmarking | David Weston |

**Appendix 3**

## Risk Register

| Raised by | Date Raised | Probability | Impact | Gross Risk Score | Proximity | Description | Mitigation | Owner | Target Date | Revised Probability | Revised Impact | Residual Risk Score | Date last rev'd by board |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PW | 20/06/2011 | 4 | 4 | 16 | Short term | Day to day processing suffers due to lack of resource | Make business case to obtain sufficient funding to support staff taken off front line processing to carry out FSR work | PW | 31/07/2011 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 17/08/2011 |
| TS | 20/06/2011 | 3 | 3 | 9 | Long term | Increase in claims alters cost base | Make use of contractual arrangements | PW | 31/12/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 17/08/2011 |
| TS | 20/06/2011 | 2 | 3 | 6 | Short term | Staff don't engage in project due to the way it is managed when BIP hand over | Ensure that BIP is briefed as to progress to date and how it has been achieved | PW | 01/09/2011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 17/08/2011 |
| HB | 20/06/2011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | Short term | Impact on the service due to the staff not engaging in the process | Ensure that BIP is briefed as to progress to date and how it has been achieved | PW | 01/09/2011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 17/08/2011 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TS | 20/06/2011 | 3 | 3 | 9 | Short term | Impact of external industrial relations on resources | Dependent upon the nature of the industrial relations dispute, make use of contract to fill the void | PW | 31/12/2011 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 17/08/2011 |
| MH | 20/06/2011 | 2 | 3 | 6 | Short term | Sickness levels rise/annual leave summer peak | Maintain the Council's approach to sickness monitoring and cover where appropriate/plan and manage leave sensitively with the needs of the service in mind | PW | 30/09/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 17/08/2011 |
| DW | 20/06/2011 | 3 | 3 | 9 | Short term | Customer expectations following consultation are unrealistically high | Ensure that when redesigning the service there is a balance made between what is affordable and delivers the best outcome for end users | PW | 31/10/2011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 17/08/2011 |
| TS | 20/06/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | Long term | Competing priorities within the organisation | Balance as far as is practical any competing priorities through discussion at Management Team | TS | 31/12/2011 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 17/08/2011 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MH | 20/06/2011 | 2 | 4 | 8 | Long term | Stakeholders unable to continue to operate and support the service | Maintain contact with stakeholders to ensure that if there is any risk of them being unable to operate, the Council can plan early for any increased workloads | MH | 31/12/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 17/08/2011 |
| TS | 20/06/2011 | 2 | 4 | 8 | Long term | Welfare Reform Bill enactment may minimise the benefits of improved technological solutions due to payback times being foreshortened | Ensure that a thorough cost benefit analysis of any new technology solutions is carried out before making a purchasing decision | PW | 31/12/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 17/08/2011 |
| Dweston | 13/07/2011 | 1 | 3 | 3 | Short term | Potential negative impact of scriptflow changes being incorrect or not fit for purpose when switching to new contact centre arrangement | Ensure that when the scriptflows are being written the input of one or more of the front line assessment officers is utilised | PW | 30/09/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 17/08/2011 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | s in September 2011 | | | | | | | |
| HB | 19/07/2011 | 2 | 2 | 4 | Short term | If staff are not kept well informed about the link between budget the planning process and the FSR there is a risk that any published draft budgetary information may be viewed as a fait accompli | Ensure that staff are communicated with effectively via newsletter, team briefs to make clear progress on FSR and how it may impact on the budget setting process for 2012-13 | PW | 31/12/2011 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 17/08/2011 |
| PW | 01/11/2011 | 3 | 4 | 12 | Short Term | If eClaims module fails to work as required it will impact adversely on the revised new claims process, allowing more fraud and error into | Carry out intensive testing prior to implementation, ensure adequate resources are allocated to development and implementation | HB | 31/03/2012 | 2 | 4 | 8 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | the system and impacting on our subsidy | | | | | | | |

**Appendix 4**
**Equalities Impact Assessment**

**Initial screening EqIA template**

1. Which group (s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

None – it is anticipated that there will be no negative equality impacts from the changes in process, rather that there will be positive impacts for our customers.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

   Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

Key design concepts for the Benefits Service are based on the following concepts:

1. A move to abandon paper-based application forms to electronic capture of claims at the first point of contact along with improvements to our web-based information systems which will mean;
   - No paper application forms (feedback from consultation has shown these are difficult to follow for claimants)
   - Assisted claiming for customers in person (by appointment) in the customer service centre, via telephone through the contact centre, by visiting officers where access is an issue, and by third parties (e.g. housing associations)
   - Self service via the web to check eligibility, to make a claim and to book appointments
   - Customer access to their claim information using E-citizen

   This will mean faster decision times for claimants, a greater choice in ways to access the service to make a claim, assistance for those that require it and the ability to 'self serve' if preferred.

2. Introduce risk based verification on new claims to arrive at a risk rating for claimants. Analysis shows that up to 58% of claims could be treated as “low risk”, and would require no additional evidence documentation to put their claim into payment

   Benefits include a reduced requirement to bring in evidence to support a claim, reduced overall time to assess a claim, reduced errors and increased fraud detection

3. Identify potential changes in circumstances at every opportunity, with automatic reminders issued to claimants around the time of anticipated changes.

   Benefits include fewer errors by claimants in notification leading to reduced overpayments, mitigating the need to repay these

Changes are to be introduced in 2012/13. A variety of personnel will be responsible for actioning the various elements, but these will be identified in the Improvement Plan arising from the Review.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

   Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

Consultation has already been carried out with around 200 benefits customers who were surveyed both face-to-face and over the telephone during September 2011.

Benefits customers demonstrated a high propensity to use new technology, with 86% having some access to the internet, 75% happy to use a self-service terminal and 64% who would consider making a claim on-line.

In addition, two focus groups were held with voluntary groups and housing associations to gather their input. All wanted easy access to expert information when required, although there were mixed views on electronic access in terms of how their client base would adopt to using the internet. However, all felt that they would be willing to assist their clients access our services on-line and would be willing to house self-service terminals.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

   Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

| |
|---|
| N/A – no adverse impacts have been identified. |

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

   Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

| |
|---|
| Ongoing monitoring will take place as part of routine satisfaction surveys of benefits customers and customer services in general.<br><br>A formal review of the impact of the changes will take place after 6 months of operation of the revised service to assess if its anticipated benefits have been realised and if there are changes required to improve the service.<br><br>It should be highlighted that there will be national changes to the way that housing benefit is administered over the next two years that may result in local councils losing this function. |

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Neil Lawrence

Role: Project Manager, Housing Benefits Fundamental Service Review

Date: 1 November 2011

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, socio-economic, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources

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*Revised report*

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

**To:** **Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** **21 November 2011**

**Report of:** **Head of Law and Governance**

***Title of Report:*** **Asset Management – Select Committee Inquiry (revised report)**

***Summary and Recommendations***

**Purpose of report**: To brief the Committee on progress made to date with the 2009 Asset Management Plan and to set out a proposed line of questioning for the Committee Inquiry.

**Key decision?** Not applicable

**Inquiry Lead Members**: Councillors Van Nooijen and Gotch

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Turner

**Policy Framework:** Efficient, Effective Council

**Recommendation**: The Committee is asked to use the time available to question officers and form views and recommendations to inform the development work on the 2012/13 Asset Management Framework.

**Introduction**

1. For the 2011/12 work programme the Committee decided to hold a series of Select Committee style inquiries in order to probe in greater depth a number of key topics.

   This Select Committee Inquiry will give the Committee an opportunity to consider progress made to date with the 2009 Asset Management Plan providing an opportunity for officers from Corporate Assets to report on whether targets and milestones in the Plan have been achieved. The session will also give the Committee the opportunity to pre-scrutinise a very early draft of the revised version of the plan due to be consulted upon and published early in the New Year (this is included on pages 33-90 of the main agenda). This very early view of the document is welcomed but the committee may feel they do not have enough time within this current meeting to properly consider the content. The options open to the committee are:

- Consider the document now
- Set another full committee meeting shortly
- Set a Panel of "interested members" shortly

The future timetable for agreement of the Strategy is

- 8 February 2012 – Plan released by City Executive Board for formal consultation

- May 2012 – Outcome of consultation reported to CEB and plan adopted by Full Council.

2. Councillor Van Nooijen, with the assistance of Councillor Gotch, was appointed by the Committee to be the member lead for this quite wide ranging topic. Following preliminary discussions it was decided to base the Committee's work around the following key lines of enquiry:-

| |
|---|
| To have an early view of:<br><br>The draft document proposed for consultation with highlighted or listed areas that have changed<br><br>The achievements against the 2009 action plan with areas that remain unachieved highlighted with reasons for delay or change<br><br>The work done in order to identify the gaps and alterations needed based on changing circumstances and demands. Alongside this how these are addressed in the new plan<br><br>An update on the 2009 risk assessment (and any links to the corporate risk register) in particular sections set to ensure we provide maximum value from our asset base. |

3. The lead members held a meeting with officers from Corporate Assets to discuss what progress had been made since the 2009 plan was adopted.

**Outline of debate**

The table below gives a quick reference guide to the information presented in the report and in particular its relevance to your debate. The report is divided into sections each containing possible questions and lines of inquiry suggested by the lead member.

| Section | Information/Document | Source | Relevance |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A.** | Key objectives<br>Paragraph 5 | 2009 Asset Management Plan (AMP) | Outlines the overarching directions for the plan and progress towards these are given alongside each. |
| **B.** | Corporate performance targets – paragraph 6 | Corporate Performance indicators | Gives a picture of how the Corporate Assets service area is performing against targets set |
| **C.** | Milestones – paragraph 7<br><br>The milestones is full are available at Appendix 3 to this report | 2009 AMP | Progress against milestones is given to give a picture of how each target has been achieved on target |
| **D.** | Risk – paragraph 7 | Taken from the Corporate Risk register and the risk register attached to AMP 2009 | Gives detail of the risks identified in 2009 providing an opportunity for the Committee to be updated |
| | Maintenance Backlog<br>Appendix 2 | 2009 Asset Management Plan (AMP) | Background data |
| | Summary of assets by type<br>Appendix 3 | 2009 Asset Management Plan (AMP) | Background data |

**Section A - Key objectives from the 2009 Asset Management Plan**

4. Five key objectives were decided upon for the future management of the Council's property portfolio. These are detailed below with an accompanying commentary from the Head of Corporate Assets on progress and achievements.

Objective 1

Within the next 5 years, we want our operational property to be "lean", that is, we only want to own and/or occupy the minimum amount of operational property that is needed to fulfil the objectives of the services we provide. We want this occupational property to be fit for purpose and in good condition and if there is a choice to be made, we would rather have less property which is fit for purpose and in good condition, than more property that is not.

Corporate Assets Comments
- The office rationalisation project (OFTF) is set to reduce the overall footprint by 20% from 7358 sq m to 5886 sq/m, which represents circa 43% reduction in City Centre office accommodation.
- 2 community centres are set to be replaced at Cowley and Northway;
- The depot rationalisation project continues, as the business case continues to be developed.

Objective 2
We want all of our Property to support our service objectives in regeneration, housing, environmental, community, customer and customer service terms, as appropriate.

Corporate Asset Comments
- Barton site to be brought forward for residential development of which 40% will be affordable;
- Re-provision of Community Centres at Cowley and Northway with modern facilities, in addition to the provision of affordable housing;
- New Customer Service Outlet opened in September 2011 which was made possible by the OFTF programme.

Objective 3

We want our investment property to make the greatest possible financial contribution to the Council within the context of good estates management and good investment management, thereby protecting where possible enhancing asset value.

Corporate Assets Comments
- Income has remained broadly stable through difficult economic conditions. Notwithstanding a number of tenant defaults, voids have been proactively managed and where possible future portfolio risk has been mitigated.

Objective 4

We want all of our property to be well-managed and efficient with, as appropriate, efficient running costs, efficient income generation and recovery and optimal utilisation.

Corporate Assets Comments
- The restructure of the property team to provide a central corporate property function was completed in June 2009. The remit of this team was further extended in November 2010 to include strategic responsibility for all HRA assets.

- A favourable report was received by the Audit Commission in April 2010 regarding Asset Management practice within the Council.

Objective 5

We want to maximise synergies working in partnership with other service providers / landowners where appropriate.

Corporate Assets Comments
The Council continues to have a very high profile at both County and National level. Our progress with partners may be evidenced by the progress made on the Barton Joint Venture, Northway and Cowley developments, together with our continued dialogue and support for partners in the Westgate Centre Alliance. We continue to forge meaningful relationships with key partners in our district which range from important employers such as BMW through to our counterparts at the County Council and third sector organisations alike.

***Question/Issues***

*Starting point for discussion: The overall aim of the AMP 2009/10: To "Develop a comprehensive asset management plan that rationalises our property holdings, releases capital for investment and ensures that our building are properly maintained. – By March 2009/10*

- *Has the document achieved its purpose?*

- *What is the position on maintenance backlogs and the effects of these on the proper/effective use of assets*

- *What is the current strategy for the best use of car parks within the asset framework*

**Section B - Corporate Performance Targets**

*5.* Information on the specific corporate performance targets that relate to the asset service area is included at appendix 1 to this report. There are 12 targets, 8 of which are being achieved, 1 is not being achieved and 1 is "within tolerance" and 2 of the targets cannot yet be measured. The targets mentioned were correct as at the end of September 2011. Of particular relevance to this Inquiry are CE002 which has seen a larger than expected income from commercial property rent.

*Questions*
*CA004 – Can this target be justified? In order to maximise rental yields should we be aiming for a higher level of satisfaction?*
*CA006 – Rent reviews and lease renewals are surely an important way to maximise income. Why is this number so low?*

**Section C – Target Milestones from AMP 2009**

6. The table below shows progress against the targets and milestones set in the 2009 plan. The original extract from the plan that includes these targets is attached at appendix 1
Highlighted in red is data that was not available at the time this report was written. Officers from the Service Area will provide members with an update at the meeting.

| Target milestones set 2009 AMP | Progress against target at November 2011 | Lines of inquiry |
|---|---|---|
| **By the end of 2009/10** | | |
| To have reduced our occupied office accommodation floor space by 10% from 2008/09 levels | Vacation and demolition of Northway offices produced TBC% savings in office accommodation by Dec 2009. | |
| To have maintained income from investment properties at 2008/9 levels. | [TBC] | |
| To have completed the Property and Facilities Management Service reorganisation and recruit to vacant posts. | Completed June 2009. | |
| To have a proper system of corporate asset management in place and be managing property corporately | Corporate Asset Management Group with agreed Terms of Reference set up February 2010. The committee continues to meet monthly to oversee Asset Management, operational property, capital planning and allocation. | What benefits were expected from this and have these been realised? |
| To have implemented a new system of financial accounting for property. | Completed in part. Migration from Atrium system for repairs onto Uniform common platform enabling reconciliation between income and costs. | |
| To have a clear property strategy for Blackbird Leys, Cemeteries, Council Offices, Investment | Blackbird Leys Strategy – ongoing<br>Cemeteries – Preferred strategy to be presented to CEB Dec 2011<br>Offices – Offices For | Can further details be given on the strategy for our investment properties |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | The Future strategy agreed July 2010. Completion set for Feb 2012. | |
| Property, Off-street car parks | Ongoing | Timescales and scope for this? |
| To have achieved a general fund capital receipts target of £2m | Achieved overall between 2009/2011 | Is there a breakdown of information for each of the financial years? |
| **By the end of 2010/11** | | |
| To have a clear strategy for the all the property aspects of Customer Services shops | New Customer Service Outlet completed Sept 2011.<br>Review of Templar Square CSO underway November 2011. | |
| To have a clear property strategy for Northway | Development partner selected and terms agreed on the redevelopment for housing and re-provision of a new purpose built community centre. | |
| To have a clear strategy for new affordable housing on housing estates | Ongoing | What is the new completion date for this |
| **By the end of 2013/14** | | |
| To have decreased the maintenance backlog year on year from 2008/2009 levels | £7m Planned Preventative Maintenance programme agreed between 2011-2015. Offices For The Future Programme removed xm from Maintenance Backlog. Leisure substantive works has removed ym from Backlog. | Question within key objectives section A |
| To have increased our income from investment properties by 2.5% in real terms compared to 2008/9 levels. | [TBC] | When is this information likely to be available? |
| To have reduced our occupied office accommodation floor space by 20% from 2008/09 levels | On target for 43% reduction in operational office accommodation by Feb 2012 due to the Office For The Future Programme. | |
| To have supported the | Offices For The Future | Can we quantify the effects of |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| advancement of the Oxpens redevelopment area with a view to commencing development in, say, 2015/16; to have concluded whether the Council's offices will, in due course, relocate there; and, to have determined whether this will on the basis of shared space with our Partners. | strategy was to reduce City Centre office buildings from 4 to 2, retaining St Aldate's Chambers as the main office building in addition to the Town Hall.<br>The progress of Oxpens development has not advanced due to the economic climate; however we continue to engage with key stakeholders and will consider utilising our land holdings in this area for the purpose of regeneration at the appropriate time. | this delay to the City<br><br>What is the current position on any future development of the Oxpens site? |
| To have appropriate community centres fit for purpose and in good condition | Significant progress made in the redevelopment of Northway and Cowley community centres. An over arching strategy for remaining community centres is emerging and will be documented in the refreshed AM plan. | Question in objectives Section A on maintenance backlogs |
| To have leisure centres fit for purpose and in good condition, by both improvement and rationalisation. | Partnership with Fusion progressing well, the substantive repair programme has now had a visible impact on the quality of the Leisure centre offering. | |
| To have brought forward land at Barton (adjacent to the ring road) for housing development and if possible to implementation. | Joint Venture partner selected and Limited Liability Partnership incorporated as a delivery vehicle for development of the site over 5 year period. | |
| To have explored the possibilities for additional housing provision at South Oxford Urban Extension and taken them as far as possible, and if feasible, to implementation stage (some of | On hold due to changes in planning legislation. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| this is outside of the Council's direct control). | | |
| To have decreased the carbon footprint for the Council's operational buildings from 2008/2009 levels | On target for 28% reduction in carbon footprint by March 2012. | |

**Section D - Risk**

7. The Head of Corporate Assets has identified the following as the biggest risks to the successful delivery of the Plan.

    1) A high number of retail premises (70% approximately) in the Council's investment portfolio. This, when placed in the context of the economic downturn, represents a sizable risk to the Council's financial targets.

    2) The likelihood of keeping a high level of income from capital receipts is diminishing as marketable assets are sold leading to less attractive assets to having to be disposed of.

The 2 tables below show:

- An extract from the Corporate Risk Register of those risks potentially influenced by the work of corporate assets. Risks in the Corporate Register are those of particular significance corporately
- The Risk Register contained within the Asset Management Framework

**Corporate Risk Register Extract**

| ID number | ***Risk Title*** | **Description of risk/ consequences** | ***Risk Owner*** | ***A high risk is a score of 4 or more*** | **Action to reduce risk** | ***Action Owner*** | ***% Action complete*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CRR-013 | Impact on homelessness of changes in Housing Benefit | Changes in housing benefit and universal housing benefit increase homelessness | Dave Edwards | 15 | Monitoring and intervention, ensure takeup of benefits | Helen Bishop | 50% |
| CRR-014 | Management of HRA reform and self-financing | That the self financing regime is difficult to administer and the 30 year cashflow is not favourable to the council | Jacqui Yates | 12 | Establish Board, engage consultants, agree debt profile, write asset management plan and business plan | Graham Stratford | 10% |

*Revised report*

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CRR-007 | Health & Safety | Existence of operational risks (relating to internal as well as public concerns - property not vehicle) | Dave Edwards | 12 | Create 'one view' of all corporate assets (issues, status of building, budget, work required, timescales). 'One view' being everything documented in consistent and understandable format which can be shared across organisational boundaries. | Steve Sprason | 50% |

*Revised report*

*Question/Issues*

- *Does the corporate risk register adequately reflect the risks associated with the management of our assets?*

- *Commercial property income – how big a risk is this to the council achieving a balanced budget?*

- *Last estimate of the Council's asset worth was £96m in 2008. How has this position changed and does any downward trend have any affects within our revenue and capital budgets?*

- *Are Council Tax payers receiving the best return on the investment in our property portfolio? What is the rate of return and how does this compare*

- *Are we able to produce rates of return now and if not why not.*

- *Commercial property voids – when considered within the current economic climate, does this present an unreasonable risk? How many properties are currently void? Is there a plan of action should a large tenant leave at short notice? What is the trend?*

<u>AMP risks</u>
Below is the risk register from the AMP 2009. Of the 15 risks identified in 2009, 5 were identified as being "major" 9 as "Moderate and 1 as "minor."

*Revised report*

**Questions/Issues*
*Major risks that need further exploration*

*Risk 4 – Asset review recommended by AMP 2009 not carried out.*

- *The cause of this risk was noted as "lack of buy in from stakeholders" Have the asset reviews happened adequately and was support available from all areas of the Council.  Are there any concerns for the committee to consider*

*Risk 10 – Westgate scheme*

- *Can we estimate the economic loss to the City and the Council because of the delay in this scheme?  Can the Committee be updated? Has this resulted in any unbudgeted costs to the council?*

*Risk 11 – OFTF*

- *Has the ongoing office project been delivered on schedule and within budget? Have difficulties with the contractors led to an increase in the overall costs for the project? Are there any other risks the committee needs to be aware of?*

*Risk 12 –Swimming Pools*

- *Does this still present a "major" risk to the Council?  Has the potential loss because of delay or stop been estimated within the risks*

**Name and contact details of author:-**
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*Law and Governance*
*Tel:  01865 252402  e-mail:  adubberley@oxford.gov.uk*

**Version number: 3**

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Appendix 14

# Strategic Action Plan and Milestones

| Project | Action to Be taken and Target Date(s) | Lead Officer(s) |
|---|---|---|
| **Current and Ongoing** | | |
| 1. **Development Site** – Land West of Barton | Joint feasibility project with HCA in 2009/10 with likely intensive work in subsequent years. | Head of Community Housing and Community Development supported by a Corporate Project Team. |
| 2. **Development Site** - South Oxford Urban Extension | Project involving consultancy and negotiations in 2009/10 with likely intensive work in subsequent years. | Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 3. **Development Site** - Oxpens | In 2009/10 the Council is considering options for the approach to the development. | Head of City Development supported by Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 4. **Development Site** - Westgate Shopping Centre | Ongoing project negotiating with developer/owner | Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 5. **Organisational Review** - Property and Facilities Management Service Reorganisation Implementation | Completion of reorganisation and integration of the new Service including recruitment and establishment of protocols, procedures and governance for corporate asset management.<br>Completion by Sept. 2009. | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. |
| 6. **Property Category Review** - Leisure Centres | Review of future provision of Leisure Centres.<br>Report to CEB in May 2009 and feasibility work ongoing | Head of City Leisure Services, supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 7. **Property Category Review** - Office Accommodation Strategy | Second stage of the strategy undertaking more detailed work on | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the |

| Project | Action to Be taken and Target Date(s) | Lead Officer(s) |
|---|---|---|
| (Refinement of Options including the Carlyle Development Scheme). Development of supporting ICT and ICT Policies | Option 1A and 2. Report in 2009. | Heads of Business Transformation, Finance and Human Resources. |
| 8. **Property Policy Development** – Capital Receipts from Asset Disposals programme | Development of a multi-year programme | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the Head of Finance. |
| 9. **Property Policy Development** - Maintenance Backlog Works Prioritisation | Formal prioritisation of addition capital funding. Report to CEB in May 2009. | Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| **2009/2010** | | |
| 10. **Area Property Review** – Blackbird Leys | Review of public property in Blackbird Leys and development of a future strategy for services and property in the area. Reporting in March 2010. | Head of Community Housing and Community Development supported by a Corporate Project Team. |
| 11. **Development Site** – Northway Offices Demolition | Demolition and landscaping. Completion 2009. | Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 12. **Organisational Review** – Financial Accounting for Investment Property. | Review of property accounting methods to allow for total income and expenditure analysis on an individual establishment basis, particularly but not exclusively in the Investment Property Portfolio. Completion by March 2010. | Head of Finance, supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 13. **Property Category Review** - Cemeteries | Review of options for future burials and interments the outputs of which will be a property strategy for Cemeteries. Report by March 2010. | Head of City Works/Bereavement Services Manager, supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 14. **Property Category Review** - | Review of customer access channels | Head of Customer Services, |

| Project | Action to Be taken and Target Date(s) | Lead Officer(s) |
|---|---|---|
| Customer Service Shops | one of the outputs of which will be a strategy for the Council's Customer Services Outlets and its call centre. Report in 2009. | supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 15. **Property Category Review –** City Works Depots | Review of all City Works operations including property considerations. Report in Dec 2009. | Head of City Works, supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 16. **Property Category Review** - Investment Property | Review of Investment Property portfolio and development of ongoing Investment Property Strategy. This review will include the Covered Market. Report in December 2009. | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the Head of Finance. |
| 17. **Property Category Review** – Off Street Car Parks | Review of car parks particularly but not exclusively to review income and expenditure and potential to provide affordable housing. Report in March 2010. | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the Head of City Development. |
| 18. **Property Category Review -** Parks and Street Screen | Review of the Council's Parks and associated uses and the management of the street scene. | Head of City Works |
| 19. **Property Category Review** - Public Conveniences | Review of the Council's public conveniences leading to agreement and implementation of public conveniences strategy. | Head of City Works, supported by the Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 20. **Property Category Review** – Review of Service Tenancies | Review of all Council service tenancies. | Executive Director of Regeneration |
| **2010/2011 and later** | | |
| 21. **Area Property Reviews** – Estates Strategy Development | Identify development sites to be released for affordable and/or other | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by |

| Project | Action to Be taken and Target Date(s) | Lead Officer(s) |
|---|---|---|
| work to bring forward affordable housing | housing. | Head of Community Housing and Community Development. |
| 22. **Area Property Review** – Northway | Review of public property in Northway Area and development of a future strategy for property in the area. | Head of Community Housing and Community Development supported by a Corporate Project Team. |
| 23. **Development Site** – Northway Offices Site | Development and/or disposal for development of the site of the Northway Offices for low cost housing | Head of Property and Facilities Management |
| 24. **Property Policy Development** – Assets and Community Groups | Review of benefits and challenges and development of criteria for granting property interests to community groups.<br>Report in March 2010. | Head of Property and Facilities Management supported by the Head of Community Housing and Community Development. |
| 25. **Property Policy Development** – Property Charging and Rent Grants | Development of policy rent charging to community groups, the third sector and others. | Head of Property and Facilities Management. |
| 26. **Property Policy Development** – Reduction of Carbon Emissions from Property | Development of a policy for building emissions – new and existing. | Head of Environmental Development supported by Head of Property and Facilities Management. |

## Estimated Maintenance Backlog March 2009

| | Investment Properties | Leisure Properties | Parks and Cemeteries | Community Centres | Admin. Buildings | Town Hall | Community Properties | Housing (Non HRA) | Others | TOTALS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital** | £915,000 | £1,079,500 | £1,218,000 | £1,088,500 | £325,500 | £122,000 | £66,000 | £133,500 | £0 | **£4,948,000** |
| **Revenue** | £1,511,000 | £305,000 | £631,000 | £461,500 | £372,500 | £193,500 | £491,500 | £113,000 | £30,500 | **£4,109,500** |
| **TOTAL** | £2,426,000 | £1,384,500 | £1,849,000 | £1,550,000 | £698,000 | £315,500 | £557,500 | £246,500 | £30,500 | **£9,057,500** |

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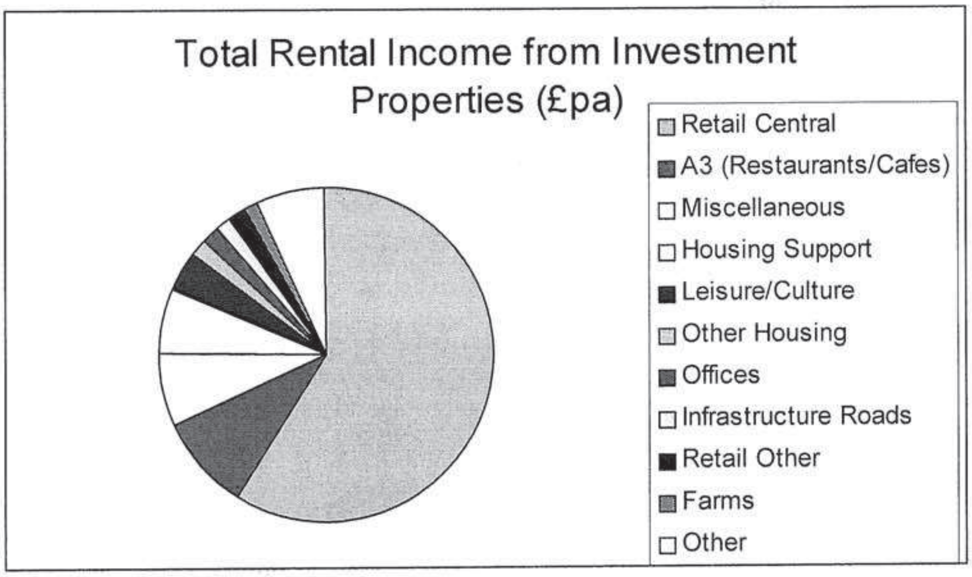
Appendix 8(i)

# The Council's Property Investment Portfolio - Breakdown

| Investment Class | Rent Roll pa |
|---|---|
| Retail Central | £4,325,385 |
| A3 (Restaurants/Cafes) | £686,750 |
| Miscellaneous | £528,034 |
| Housing Support | £485,968 |
| Leisure/Culture | £283,772 |
| Other Housing | £124,854 |
| Offices | £123,764 |
| Infrastructure Roads | £122,927 |
| Retail Other | £116,300 |
| Farms | £113,755 |
| Other | £485,380 |
| **TOTAL** | **£7,396,889** |

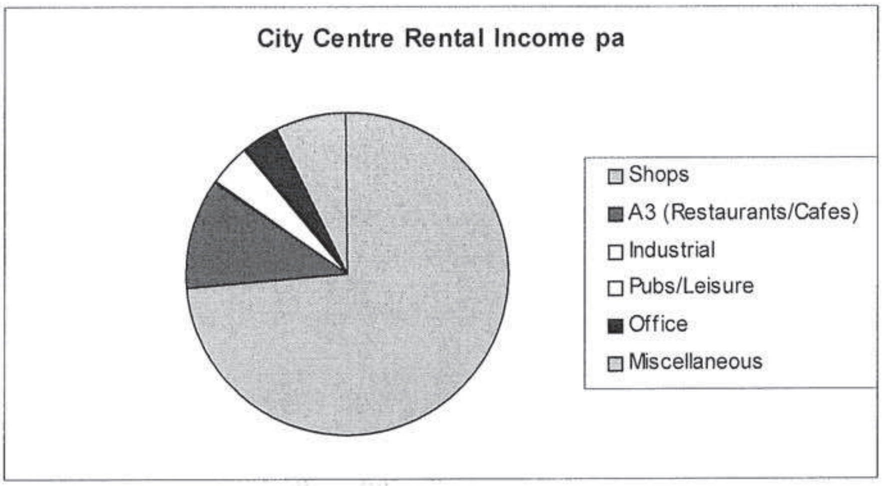


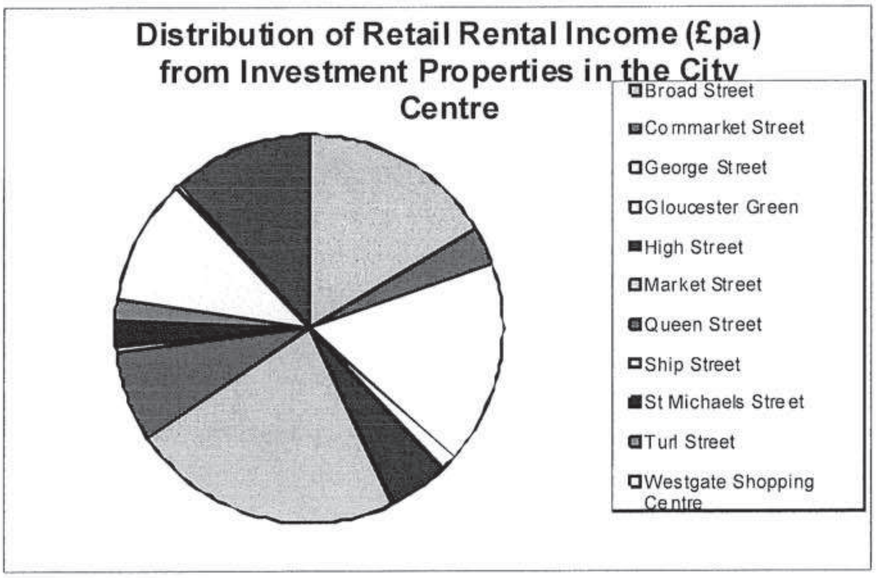

*Note: Due to some properties being categorised differently between the tables in this appendix there are discrepancies between some of the figures. These will be resolved in the review of Investment Property being undertaken in 2009/10.*

Appendix 8(ii)

# The Council's City Centre Property Investment Portfolio - Breakdown

| Investment Class | Rent Roll pa |
|---|---|
| Shops | £4,340,435 |
| A3 (Restaurants/Cafes) | £665,250 |
| Industrial | £9,860 |
| Pubs/Leisure | £256,772 |
| Office | £222,237 |
| Miscellaneous | £431,384 |
| **TOTAL** | **£5,925,938** |



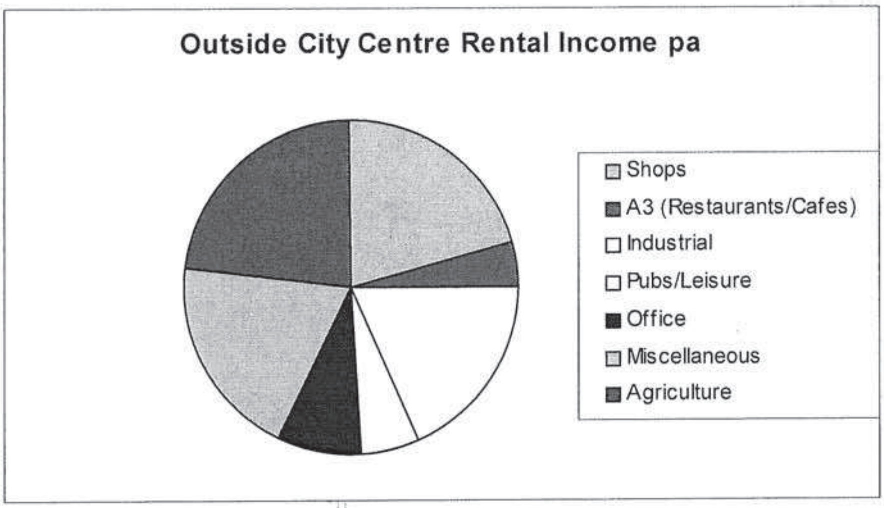




*Note: Due to some properties being categorised differently between the tables in this appendix there are discrepancies between some of the figures. These will be resolved in the review of Investment Property being undertaken in 2009/10.*

Appendix 8(iii)

# The Council's Non City Centre Property Investment Portfolio - Breakdown

| Investment Class | Rent Roll pa |
|---|---|
| Shops | £101,250 |
| A3 (Restaurants/Cafes) | £21,500 |
| Industrial | £88,860 |
| Pubs/Leisure | £27,000 |
| Office | £39,264 |
| Miscellaneous | £96,650 |
| Agriculture | £113,755 |
| **TOTAL** | **£488,279** |




*Note: Due to some properties being categorised differently between the tables in this appendix there are discrepancies between some of the figures. These will be resolved in the review of Investment Property being undertaken in 2009/10.*

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Work programme debate outcomes**

**General Principles**

After consultation with back-bench councillors the committee this year has decided to run its programme through a series of themes. Each theme will be led by a committee member sometimes supported by small group of colleagues.

The aim of the committee this year in setting themes is to approach its work in a more focused and searching way reducing the number of items on agendas allowing a "select committee approach" to be taken.

A Finance and Performance Panel has been set again this year to give a firm focus on budget delivery, performance and treasury management. Of particular interest to the panel this year will be the reform of council housing finance and the delivery of budget. The Panel will invite the attendance and views of a council tenant representative at appropriate times

The programme remains flexible and open to reorganisation by the committee. A complete review will be undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair in January 2012

The information that follows shows:

- The themed draft programme and focus
- Current nominations
- Projected agenda schedules
- Forward schedule for the Finance and Performance Panel

**Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Draft Work Programme 11/12**



| **Theme** | **Area(s) for focus** | **Likely Status of Inquiry** | **Nominated/interested councillors** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asset Management | Lines of inquiry<br><br>To have an early view of:<br>• The draft document proposed for consultation with highlighted or listed areas that have changed<br>• The achievements against the 2009 action plan with areas that remain unachieved highlighted with reasons for delay or change<br>• The work done in order to identify the gaps and alterations needed based on changing circumstances and demands. Alongside this how these are addresses in the new plan<br>• An update on the 2009 risk assessment (and any links to the corporate risk register) in particular sections set to ensure we provide maximum value from our asset base | Select Committee Inquiry:<br><br>Target meeting date: 21st. November | Councillors van Nooijen and Gotch |
| Benefits Service | Focused reporting on progress and outcomes around value for money principles | Standing Panel. Report back to committee: | Councillors Brown, Royce, van Nooijen |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fundamental Service Review | Within all of these outcomes how we would compare nationally (if that is still possible)<br><br>• **Economy -** How the overall cost of the service to the local tax payer is being reduced. What the reduction target is, over what period and how we are performing against this. In considering this to see the full effect on our accounts split between subsidy, administration and debt provision<br>• **Efficiency** - The target for the unit costs of the various process (new claims, change in circumstances etc) over what period and how we are performing against this<br>• **Effectiveness** - The output measures, but the committee would like to see additions to the normal internal measures and include others that customers might see as a "whole service" so:<br>- Time taken to perform the various functions i.e. new claims and changes in circumstances<br>- The number of appeals and success rates<br>- Accuracy levels<br>- Queuing times<br>-Telephone response times<br>- Abandoned call rate<br>- Customer feedback on quality and attitudes of staff<br>- Benefit take up measures with monetary targets | Target dates: 7th. December and 26th. March | and Williams<br><br>Lead Member: Councillor Brown |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | It is recognised that the "Economy Measure" above will be linked to the results of the analysis to determine the type of service we are to design. For the committee be told which service elements or outputs within the proposed service design are different from those generally delivered, why and the extra cost of these. | | |
| Finance and Performance Panel | Standing Panel remit:<br>• Current year budget delivery<br>• Performance against service and corporate targets<br>• To act as the "responsible body" within the CIPFA code for the Treasury Management Strategy and service<br>• To understand and review the business planning and treasury management strategy set to meet the reform of council housing finance<br>• To review budget proposals and Medium Term Financial Strategy | Standing Panel<br><br>Agenda schedule below | Councillors Seamons, Rowley, Brown and Williams<br>Lead Members: Coucillor Seamons |
| Environmental Services | Reconfiguration of Environmental Health Services to reduce costs<br>• The current range, status, cost and users of our services<br>• Any links between these services and other targets and actions within the council | Committee Inquiry<br><br>Target date: 12th. September | All committee members |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • Options for reductions to meet the target<br>• In particular what are the options for the noise nuisance service<br>• Communication and wined down plans<br><br>Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing:<br>• Targets within the extended scheme are met<br>• Cost and charging base is controlled and reasonable | Committee Inquiry<br><br>Target date: 26th. March | |
| Equalities | **Service Delivery**<br><br>To understand the agreed equality objects and outcomes expected from these. To monitor direction of travel and change<br>Service Plan link<br><br>**Oxford City Council as an employer**<br><br>No lines of inquiry agreed. Discussion with lead member underway<br><br>**Corporate Performance**<br><br>Outcome from the corporate assessment to achieve level 2 of the Equalities Framework for Local Government | Select committee inquiry<br><br>Target date: 30th. January | Councillors Royce and Rowley |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leisure contact performance | To scrutinise outcomes to target from the Fusion Leisure Services Contract across:<br>• Value for Money<br>• Increased participation<br>• Improvements in quality of service<br>• Outreach work<br>• Carbon Management<br>The committee this year is particularly interested in outcomes from outreach programmes and interaction with partners around public health issues | Committee inquiry<br><br>Target date: 21st. November | All committee members |
| Additional item called from the Forward Plan Return of Park and Ride facilities to City Council management and operation | Briefing to allow pre scrutiny:<br><br>• What events have culminated in the breakdown of the current park and ride management arrangements<br>• What are the budgetary implications for the council and how will these be managed<br>• What are the service implications for the council and those using park and ride facilities | Committee inquiry<br><br>Target date: 12th. September | All committee members |
| Additional item called from the Forward Plan<br><br>Trading Strategy | To pre-scrutinise the proposed strategy for trading our services outside the council. The 10/11 committee interest in particular lay in:<br>• A proper understanding of risks to the council in legal, financial and reputation terms<br>• Striking the right balance between service delivery and trading and recognising "pinch points"<br>• Governance arrangements | Committee inquiry<br><br>Target date: 12th. September | All committee members |

**Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee Agenda Schedules**

| Dates | Slots and Items |
|---|---|
| 21st. June | 1. Destination Management Organisation – Business Plan<br><br>2. Performance against target – outcome for 10/11<br><br>3. Provisional budget outturn 10/11<br><br>4. Fusion leisure contact – outturn against targets<br><br>**Meeting full** |
| 12th. September | 1. Trading Strategy<br><br>2. Reconfiguration of Environmental Services<br><br>3. Park and Ride operation and management (briefing)<br><br>**Meeting full** |
| 21st. November | 1. Asset Management – Select committee meeting<br><br>2. Leisure Contract Performance<br><br>3. Benefits fundamental service review progress and Panel view<br><br>**Meeting Full** |
| 30th. January | 1. Equalities – Select committee meeting<br><br>2. Budget Report – Finance and performance Panel<br>**Meeting Full** |
| 26th. March | 1. Benefits fundamental service review progress and Panel view<br><br>2. Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing progress<br><br>3. Vacant slot<br><br>4. Vacant slot |

**Finance and Performance Panel**

**Members: Cllrs. Seamons (Lead member), Brown (VAP Chair), Rowley and Williams**

**Officers for this meeting: Pat Jones, Nigel Kennedy, Anna Winship, Tim Power, Jane Lubbock**

**Meeting Date:**
**23rd. September at 2.00pm – papers deadline: morning of the 6th. September**

**Officers for this meeting: Pat Jones, Nigel Kennedy, Anna Winship, Tim Power, Jane Lubbock**

| Agenda Item | CEB link | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1. 1st. Qtr. Spending<br>2. 1st. Qtr Performance – to include reporting of service level targets<br>3. Treasury management performance 10/11<br>4. Treasury Management performance 1st. Qtr. Including issues for 11/12 strategy<br>5. Reform of Housing Finance<br>6. Budget prospects 11/15 | **21st. Sept**<br>Absolute deadline 13th Sept (papers published) | The Panel want to report their comments and recommendations to the CEB meeting on the 21st. Sept<br><br>Tenant representative not invited for item 5. |

**Date: 14th. November 2011**

**Panel only meeting to agree budget review outline**

| |
|---|
| **Date:**<br>**29th. November at 5.30pm – papers deadline: morning of the 25th. November**<br><br>**Officers for this meeting: Pat Jones, Nigel Kennedy, Anna Winship, Tim Power(possibly), Jane Lubbock** |

| Agenda Item | CEB link | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1. 2nd. Qtr. Spending<br>2. 2nd. Qtr. Performance– to include reporting of service level targets<br>3. 2nd. Qtr. Treasury Management Performance including issues for 11/12 strategy<br>4. Reform of Housing Finance (progress) | **7th. Dec**<br>Absolute deadline 29th. Nov (papers published) | The Panel will want to report their comments and recommendations to the CEB meeting on the 7th. December<br><br>The Consultation Budget and MTFS will be taken as part of the Budget Review Group. Lead Member to agree a timetable for discussion with the Board Member<br><br>Invite a tenant representative for item 4 |

| |
|---|
| **Dates to be agreed**<br>**Budget Review October/November to February – dates and outline to be agreed by the Lead Member**<br><br>Key dates as understood currently:<br>MTFS – 7th. December CEB<br>Consultation Budget – 7th. December CEB<br>Scrutiny Budget report complete by 27th. January<br>Budget proposals from CEB to Council – 8th. February<br>Council agrees budget – 20th. February<br><br>Reserved meetings – CEB and Council 23rd. February<br><br>**All based on published schedule** |

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Date:<br>3rd. February at 2.00pm – papers deadline: morning of 27th. January<br><br>Officers for this meeting: Pat Jones, Nigel Kennedy, Anna Winship, Tim Power(possibly), Jane Lubbock</td></tr>
<tr><td>Agenda Item</td><td>CEB link</td><td>Comment</td></tr>
<tr><td>1. 3rd. Qtr. Spending<br>2. 3rd. Qtr. Performance– to include reporting of service level targets<br>3. 3rd. Qtr. Treasury Management performance<br>4. Treasury Management Strategy 12/13<br>5. Final comments on “firm” budget proposals<br>6. Reform of Housing Finance</td><td>8th. February<br>Absolute deadline 31st. January (papers published)</td><td>The Panel will want to report their comments and recommendations to the CEB meeting on the 8th. Feb<br><br>Invite a tenant representative for item 6</td></tr>
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# VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## Monday 12 September 2011

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Brown (Chair), Seamons (Vice-Chair), Abbasi, Gotch, Humberstone, Keen, Malik, McCready, Rowley, Royce, Van Nooijen and Williams.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Alec Dubberley (Democratic Services Officer), Tim Sadler (Executive Director for City Services) and Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer)

### 13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

No apologies for absence were received.

### 14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Abbasi and Malik declared personal interests in item 6 (minute 18 refers) as holders of a taxi licence.

### 15. STANDING ITEM: WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended) updating the Committee on the work programme for the current year.

The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided a brief overview of the Committee's work programme for the current year and, during discussion, the following points were noted:-

Councillor Van Nooijen, with the assistance of Councillor Gotch, would be leading on a committee enquiry to review the Council's Asset Management Plan. Councillor Van Nooijen said that his particular focus would be checking the plan works effectively and milestones marked on it had been achieved. A specific analysis of the risk of the Council's portfolio was also planned to be worked through.

The Committee also agreed that Councillor Royce, with the assistance of Councillor Rowley would be leading the Committee's work on equalities.

<u>Resolved</u> to note the position.

### 16. STANDING ITEM: REPORT BACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the recommendations made to the Executive Board and the response received.

## 17. TRADING STRATEGY

The Executive Director for City Services submitted a report detailing the Council's proposals to optimise income through charging for certain services. The report would be submitted to the Executive Board later in the month.

The Committee came to the following conclusions:-

It was clear from answers to questions that it was not the intention at this stage to move much beyond the activities that are already undertaken. Instead the focus was on extending these and other like opportunities in an effort to reduce overheads and therefore reduce the cost of services to the public. As these opportunities are already governed by current delegated powers the committee is happy that adequate governance arrangements exist. Should the intention in the future be to move beyond this into areas of greater risk then the committee would want reconsideration of the governance arrangements that stand.

The report mentions the use of spare capacity in services to raise income (section 3). The committee recognised that spare capacity comes in a number of forms and for a number of reasons but would want to see a sound financial and risk match between trading services and reducing capacity.

In order to take a view on success within this strategy the committee would ask to see a report in a year's time showing:

- The service sold or traded
- The amount of money raised
- The effects of this within our budget identifying specifically, if possible, where this has allowed us to reduce the costs of services within our budget.

<u>Resolved</u> to make the above views know to the City Executive Board's meeting on 21 September 2011.

## 18. RECONFIGURATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) outlining proposals to reconfigure certain services offered by the Environmental Development Service.

In discussion the following points/conclusions were made:-

(1) After a debate supported by the Director for the service the committee concluded:

- The principle outlined of focusing resources in areas of importance and where the Council can make a difference is sound but the report did not give enough information to make these judgements
- The general principle of doing more for less (20/20 rule) applied to other services going through reconfiguration seemed absent on reading the report. The debate suggested that some efficiency gains would be taken but it was not

entirely clear from information what these meant in practical service delivery and monetary terms

- The management and resolution of noise nuisance is clearly an issue for some communities in Oxford affecting social well being and community cohesion. Further work in needed with our partners and communities on more effective handling and prevention

(2) The Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Board Member, when considering where reductions are made, assesses carefully what the outcomes will be based on data and the knowledge of current case work and calls for service. In doing this to focus particularly on:

- Target/vulnerable groups
- Significant issues of well being across the City
- What efficiency gains can be made to bridge priority gaps

If after this areas of focus or priority groups remain without service to consider more broadly solutions to this

It was recommended to recast the report for final decision on this basis.

Resolved to make the above recommendations to the Board Member for Cleaner Greener Oxford in order to inform the report that would be presented to a future City Executive Board meeting.

## 19. BRIEFING ON PARK AND RIDE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

The Executive Director for City Services submitted a report outlining changes to the way in which the three Council owned park and ride site would operate in future as responsibility for their operation returns to City Council.

As he presented the report the Executive Director for City Services said that the situation of proposing a charge was regrettable but necessary when placed in overall context with the Council's budget. He added that the proposed charge would be implemented to cover running costs of the three sites and that an operating profit was not forecast.

The Committee discussed the report and the following principal points were covered:-

- Concern was expressed that anti social behaviour at the Redbridge site would become more of a problem once permanent staff were withdrawn from the site. Increased CCTV cameras and frequent mobile patrols were intended to deter anti-social behaviour.

- The Executive Director said that money saving measures which included removal of permanent staff, automated payment options and mobile patrols would help to keep running costs down.

- Press coverage, new signage and leafleting in the affected car parks would contribute to public awareness of the new charges.

- It was not yet known how the introduction of charges at the park and ride sites would affect the occupancy of city centre car parks. This would be monitored closely.

The Committee concluded that although the charge was regrettable, the level of charge proposed was reasonable given the circumstances.

Resolved to note the report.

## 20. MINUTES

Resolved that subject to a number of typographical errors to approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2011.

## 21. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

21 November 2011
30 January 2012
26 March 2012

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.15 pm**