

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23 December 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Simmons (Chair), Hayes (Vice-Chair), Altaf-Khan, Anwar, Coulter, Darke, Fry, Hollick, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Smith and Upton.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Bob Price, Leader of the Council

INVITEES AND OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nigel Gibson, Director of the Save Temple Cowley Pool (STCP) Community Interest Group
Councillors Fooks, Lygo, and Sinclair (in the public gallery).

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Ashworth (Regeneration and Major Projects), Ian Brooke (Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities), Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer), Lindsay Cane (Law and Governance), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Finance), Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services), Jennifer Thompson (Law and Governance) and Jane Winfield (Regeneration and Major Projects - Team Manager)

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Henwood.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

65. SALE OF TEMPLE COWLEY SWIMMING POOL

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of City Regeneration and Housing submitted to the Executive Board on 10 December 2014 (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the commercial bids received to purchase the Temple Cowley Pools site.

The report identified the commercial bid which best met the Council's policy objectives and offered the best value for money; and reported on the proposal received from the Save Temple Cowley Pool Community Interest Group (CIC). It compared the key aspects of that proposal with the best commercial bid so that members could make an informed decision on whether to dispose of the site or work with the CIC to develop their proposal.

The Chair explained his reasons for calling in the application for further consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, and the process. He explained that notwithstanding the views he had previously expressed he had not prejudged the matter before the committee and was able to chair the meeting.

The Regeneration and Major Projects Manager presented the report and summarised the key aspects of the commercial bid.

The council's lawyer advised that in law Council must obtain best consideration on disposal of their assets, and although there were circumstances where the

council could dispose of assets at less than market value, a disposal at a reduction of more than £2million required the Secretary of State's permission.

Nigel Gibson, Director of the STCP Community Interest Group, presented the CIC proposal and outlined the social value to the community, the benefits of this social enterprise, and the risks of the commercial bid.

Judith Harley spoke in support of the CIC bid.

Mark Mann spoke in support of the CIC bid.

Members of the committee asked questions about the commercial bid; the CIC bid; the risks and merits of both; and the provision of accessible leisure and swimming facilities for the residents of Cowley. Officers, the Leader of the Council, and Nigel Gibson provided answers and additional details. Mr Gibson reiterated the benefits of the CIC bid for the users of Temple Cowley Pools, the residents of the local area, and if the enterprise was successful for the council. The Leader of the Council explained the Executive Board's reasoning including their view that the commercial bid was best for the city as a whole while recognising the strength of local feeling.

After debate, the Chair proposed a vote on 'the Committee wishes to refer the decision back to the City Executive Board to reconsider'.

The Chair reiterated the decision of the City Executive Board on 10 December for the committee:

'The City Executive Board resolved:

1. To note and accept the recommendation of the Regeneration and Major Projects Service Manager that in regard to the "commercial" bids received for the Temple Cowley pool site ("the Site") for use of the site for housing purposes, the preferred bidder would be Catalyst Housing.
2. To note the terms of the "community" proposal received from the Save the Temple Cowley Pools CIC ("the CIC"), taking full note of its proposed retention of a pool/leisure facility at the Site.
3. To accept the "commercial" bid from Catalyst Housing set out in Recommendation 1.
4. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of City Regeneration and Housing to enter into an appropriate contract with Catalyst Housing for the disposal of the Site in accordance with the terms of its bid, or any reasonable variation thereof approved by the Executive Director of City Regeneration and Housing.'

On being put to the vote, the Chair's proposal that the matter be referred back was not carried.

Accordingly the decision was not referred back and the original decision of the City Executive Board on 10 December 2014 took effect immediately.

66. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.00 pm