Agenda Item 16



To: Council

Date: 1 December 2014

Report of: Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Title of Report: Scrutiny Briefing

Purpose of report: To update Council on the activities of scrutiny function.

Introduction

Since my previous report in September, the Scrutiny Committee has firmed up its work programme and a number of topics have been considered at Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel meetings. I would like to thank Cllr Tom Hayes for chairing the November Scrutiny Committee in my absence. The inequality review group has agreed its terms of reference and started evidence gathering. The budget review will also soon be underway too, so we're entering a particularly busy few months for Scrutiny.

Work programme

The attached work programme includes updates on the work of review panels and ad hoc panels, as well as indicative agenda schedules for the Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panels.

In addition to the inequality review, the Scrutiny Committee has prioritised 'cycling' and 'supporting the local economy' as future review topics. These reviews will soon be scoped in more detail.

Standard Information

1. I will always include the following information:

- Current Panel work showing membership and progress.
- Forward agendas these will be indicative only.
- The number and result of any called in decisions or councillor calls for action.
- Recommendations made and the outcome of these.

- 2. This information is included as appendices to this briefing but is in **DRAFT** format awaiting the confirmation of the Scrutiny Committee.
- 3. I will also provide verbal updates where there has been progress since the last Committee.

Current Activity

- 4. The Scrutiny Committee met on 6 October and 10 November. Items included Educational Attainment, the Oxford Standard Panel Report, Discretionary Housing Payments, Individual Voter Registration and Consultation and Engagement. The following decisions were prescrutinised and a number of these discussions resulted in recommendations being made to the City Executive Board:
 - Welfare Reform, European Social Fund project
 - Towards Mental Wellbeing and Community Resilience in Oxford
 - The Culture Strategy 2015-2018
 - Statement of Community Involvement 2014 Review
 - Westgate Community Infrastructure Levy
 - Housing Strategy 2015-2018
 - Leaseholder Payment Options for Major Works
- 5. The Housing Panel also looked at Rent Arrears, while the Finance Panel considered the establishment of a Municipal Bonds Agency and agreed the terms of reference for the Budget Review.
- 6. The Inequality Review Group, led by Cllr Van Coulter, is now underway and aims to ensure that the City Council is maximising its impact in combatting inequality. This is a broad and wide ranging scope but members will maintain a tight focus on identifying and exploring gaps, opportunities and emerging issues. The review group meets in public for the first time on 24 November to hear evidence from a range of City Council Officers and a local expert on Food Poverty. A call for evidence is also being circulated to a range of interested parties including local Councillors, partner organisations, advice agencies, advocacy groups and others. Please contact Van or Andrew if you are interested in contributing to this review.

Looking Ahead

- 7. The Scrutiny Committee will start regularly reviewing Oxfordshire Growth Board agendas as well as considering a range of other items, notably the City Council's action plan following the recent Peer Challenge.
- 8. The Finance Panel will conduct the annual Budget Review over December and January. It also meets on 21 January to scrutinise the Capital Programme process review. On 5 February, the panel will explore how the City Council can maximise the benefits of European Funding, and MEPs representing the South East England region have been invited to contribute to this discussion. I would encourage

all relevant portfolio holders and shadow spokespersons to attend Finance Panel meetings.

- 9. The Housing Panel also has a busy programme with meetings on 10 December, 22 January and 4 February. Items include the Asset Management Strategy, Fuel Poverty and Tackling Under-Occupancy. Housing Panel Members have also been invited to contribute to the Budget Review session on 15 January, which is focused on Housing.
- 10. Finally, I would like to remind all members of Council that if there is an issue they wish to see scrutinised then they are able to ask a Scrutiny Councillor to place this on the agenda of the Scrutiny Committee or with 3 supporters add this to the agenda themselves.

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Andrew Brown – Scrutiny Officer Email: <u>abrown2@oxford.gov.uk</u> Tel: 01865 252230

Scrutiny Work Programme 2014 - 2015

This programme represents the work of Scrutiny, including panel work and Committee items. The work programme is divided under the following headings:

- 1. Standing Panels
- 2. Review Panels and Ad hoc Panels in progress
- 3. Potential Review Panels (to be established if and when resources allow)
- 4. Items for Scrutiny Committee meetings
- 5. Draft Scrutiny Committee agenda schedule
- 6. Items called in and Councillor calls for action
- 7. Items referred to Scrutiny by Council

1. Standing Panels

204	Торіс	Area(s) for focus	Nominated councillors (no substitutions allowed
	Finance Panel – All finance issues considered within the Scrutiny Function.	See appendix 1	Councillors Simmons (Chair), Darke, Fooks and Fry
	Housing – All strategic and landlord issues considered within the Scrutiny Function.	See appendix 2	Councillors Hollick (Chair), Sanders and Wade Co-opted Member – Linda Hill

2. <u>Review panels and ad hoc panels in progress</u>

Торіс	Scope	Progress	Next steps	Nominated councillors
Thames Water investment to improve flooding and	To continue engagement with Thames Water Utilities (TWU) at a senior level to ensure delivery of the agreements	Catchment study publically launched and a press statement issued in advance.	Contact made with TWU to establish governance structure. Panel briefing on study	Councillors Darke (Chair) Pressel, Thomas and
sewerage Oxford Standard Panel	reached. To give advice to the City Executive Board on the content and definition of the Oxford Standard for Council properties.	The Scrutiny Committee on 6 October endorsed the report and provided comment.	to be arranged. Final report due to go to the City Executive Board in December.	Goddard Joint Chairing; Housing Panel and Tenant Scrutiny Group
Tacking Inequality	To review how the City Council contributes to combatting harmful inequality in Oxford, and whether there is more that could reasonably be done. Aims are: -To understand of the scale, reasons and impact of inequality -To identify specific areas where the Council can make the most difference. -To make deliverable, evidence- based recommendations, co- produced with citizens or stakeholders where possible.	The panel met on 13 October to discuss its terms of reference. Review of background documents completed. Contact made with numerous interest parties including experts and call for evidence to be circulated. The Policy Team has provided a paper that pulls together the different activities that the City Council is currently doing to reduce inequality.	Panel meetings scheduled for 24 November, 16 December and 9 February. Panel to consider evidence from a range of sources and begin to identify areas of focus.	Councillor Coulter (Chair), Gant and Thomas
Recycling rates	To review of recycling and waste data rates, and consider community incentives and other recycling initiatives.	Continuation of previous panel which reported in July 2014. Meeting held on 8 October to consider bid for incentive funding.	Panel to visit depot and consider waste and recycling data in Feb 2015 (date TBC).	Councillor Fry (Chair), Simmons and Hayes

3. <u>Potential Review Panels – to be established when resources allow</u>

Торіс	Area(s) for focus	Nominated councillors
Budget Review	Annual review of budget proposals. Scope considered by Finance Panel on 8 October and agreed by Scrutiny Committee on 10 November.	Finance Standing Panel Members
Support for the local economy	 Panel to meet on 3 December to consider terms of reference. Suggestions include: How City Council policies on planning and licensing affect the local economy, including aspects such as the restrictions on changes of use. How more can be done to ensure that local businesses are aware of all kinds of support available, including City Deal Funding. What a small cross-section of businesses, from large to small, and from across the City, feel are the biggest barriers to success locally (and just as important, how many of these barriers are amenable to action by the City Council). 	Councillors Fry (Chair), Benjamin, Darke, Gotch
Cycling	 Scope to be determined. Panel to consider area(s) of focus which could include: Review cycling funding including City and County Council contributions. Explore progress against sought outcomes and value for money achieved. 	Councillors Wolff, Upton Pressel and Hayes

Indicative scrutiny review timeline 2014-2015 (does not include ad hoc review panels)

Review	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	Мау	June	July
Budget Scrutiny											
Inequalities											
Cycling											
Support for the local economy											

Scoping
Evidence gathering and review
Reporting

4. Items for Committee meetings (in no particular order)

Торіс	Area(s) for focus	Lead and other Councillors
Discretionary Housing Payments	Quarterly updates on spending profiles within a framework agreed by the Committee.	Councillor Coulter
Performance monitoring	Quarterly report on a set of Corporate and service measures chosen by the Committee.	Councillors Altaf-Khan, Coulter, Darke & Simmons
Educational attainment investment	To consider the academic progress and key stage results at schools operating the KRM model compared to those not.	Councillors Altaf-Khan, & Hayes & Thomas
Fusion Lifestyle contract performance	Regular yearly item agreed again by the Committee to consider performance against contact conditions.	Councillor Simmons
Research on the effects of welfare reform	To consider research into the impact of welfare reforms in the City.	Councillor Coulter
Clean streets	To receive an update on the City Council's approach to keeping Oxford streets clean from graffiti, detritus, littering and waste.	
Living Wage	To review how the living wage is enforced through procurement contracts	
New controls over anti- social behaviour	To receive an update on the City Council's changing approach to anti- social behaviour.	
Low Carbon Oxford	To receive an update on the progress of this scheme and plans to progress the low carbon agenda in Oxford.	
Community and Neighbourhood services	To review aims, activities and outcomes; grant distribution; community centres and associations; volunteering; Neighbourhood plans; how better on-going engagement can be established with different communities.	
Activities for older residents and preventing isolation	To receive an update on services and activities for over 50s, with a focus on preventing isolation.	
Individual voter registration	To receive an update on changes to electoral registration and to monitor how the City Council is maximising registration.	
Taxi Licencing	To review rules and processes; to understand driver issues.	
Forward Plan items	To consider issues to be decided by the City Executive Board.	

5. Draft Scrutiny Committee Agenda Schedule

Date (all 6pm, St. Aldate's Room)	Agenda Item	Lead Member; Officer(s)
8 December 2014	1. Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan	Cllr Price; Peter Sloman
	2. Clean Streets	Douglas Loveridge
	3. Research into the local impact of Welfare Reform	Paul Wilding
	4. Discretionary rates relief for businesses policy (pre-scrutiny)	Tanya Bandekar
	5. Purchase of St. Aldate's Chambers (pre-scrutiny)	Jane Winfield
19 January 2015	1. Educational Attainment	Pat Kennedy; Val Johnson
	2. New Council controls over anti-social behaviour	Richard Adams
	3. Growth Board Work Programme	Cllr Price; Paul Staines
3 February 2015	1. Cycle City	Jo Colwell
	2. Community and Neighbourhood services	lan Brooke
	3. Activities for older residents and preventing isolation	Luke Nipen, Vicki Galvin
	4. Performance monitoring – quarter 3	N/A
2 March 2015	1. Living Wage	Simon Howick
	2. Consultation and Engagement	Sadie Paige
23 March 2015	1. Low Carbon Oxford	John Copley

	2. Inequalities Panel report	Cllr Coulter
5 May 2015	1. Recycling rates	Geoff Corps

6. Items called in and Councillor calls for action

None

7. Items referred to Scrutiny by Council

None

Appendix 1 - Finance Panel work programme 2014-15

Items for Finance Panel meetings

Suggested Topic	Suggested approach / area(s) for focus	
Budget Scrutiny	Review of the Council's medium term financial strategy.	
Budget monitoring	Regular monitoring of projected budget outturns through the year.	
Treasury Management	Scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and regular monitoring of Treasury performance.	
Capital process	To receive an update on the implementation of the Capital Gateway process.	
Maximising European To consider how the City Council can maximise funding opportunities; invite local MEPs to contr		
funding to the discussion.		
Municipal bonds	To receive an update on the establishment of a municipal bonds agency.	
Local financing	To consider whether there is a case for the City Council to generating capital financing locally through	
	bonds or crowd-funding.	
Ethical investment	To monitor the City Council's approach to implementing an ethical investment policy.	
Council tax exemptions	To receive an update on the financial implications of different types of exemptions.	

Draft Finance Panel agenda schedule

Date and room (all 5,30pm)	Agenda Item	Lead Member; Officer(s)
21 January 2015, St Aldate's Room	1. Capital programme process review update	David Edwards, Stephen Clarke, Nigel Kennedy
	2. Banking Services Provider	Nigel Kennedy
	3. Budget Scrutiny – recommendation areas agreed	Cllr Simmons
5 February 2015, St Aldate's Room	1. European funding	Anneliese Dodds MEP; others TBC
	2. Budget monitoring – quarter 3	Nigel Kennedy
	3. Treasury Management Strategy 15/16	Anna Winship
	4. Budget Scrutiny – report finalised	Cllr Simmons

Meetings closed to the public:

Date and room (all 5,30pm)	Agenda Item	Lead Member; Officer(s)
11 December 2014,	1. Review of draft budget	Nigel Kennedy
Plowman Room		
12 January 2015,	 Budget Scrutiny – Community Services 	Cllr Turner; Tim Sadler
Plowman Room		
13 January 2015,	1. Budget Scrutiny – Organisational Development and	Cllr Turner; Peter Sloman, Jackie Yates
Plowman Room	Corporate Services	
14 January 2015,	 Budget Scrutiny – Housing 	Cllrs Turner & Seamons; Stephen Clarke
Plowman Room		
	Budget Scrutiny – City Regeneration	Cllrs Turner & Seamons; David Edwards
3 February 2015, St.	1. Review of published budget report	Nigel Kennedy
Aldate's Room		

Appendix 2 - Housing Panel work programme 2014-15

Items for Housing Panel meetings

Suggested Topic	Suggested approach / area(s) for focus
Performance monitoring	Regular monitoring of performance measures for Estates Regeneration, Housing Supply and Welfare Reform and Housing Crisis.
Housing Strategy	Review headline priorities and sought outcomes in Housing Strategy at draft stage, and the action plan post-consultation.
Increasing the provision of affordable housing	Monitoring of performance measures; scrutiny of the Housing Business Plan and the Housing Strategy; consider alternative options e.g. pre-fabs and 'pods'; possible review topic.
Homelessness	Monitoring of performance measures; scrutiny of the Housing Business Plan and Housing Strategy; pre-scrutiny of homelessness grant allocations; possible review topics.
Rent arrears	Monitoring of performance measures; bi-annual update reports.
STAR survey results	Monitoring of results.
Tackling under-occupancy	Report on efforts to tackle under-occupancy; consider in rent arrears reports.
Oxford Standard	To receive a progress update on the delivery of the Oxford Standard through the Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan, including an update on work to improve thermal efficiency in the Council's housing stock.
Private sector licencing	Update report on the scheme; consider views of landlords and PRS tenants.
Unlawful dwellings	A report on the City Council's approach to tackling illegal dwellings e.g. beds in sheds, given that funding ends in April 2015.
Repairs exemptions policy	To scrutinise proposed changes to the current policy.
De-designation of 40+ accommodation	Update report on the final phase of de-designating 40+ accommodation (expected in April 15).
Sheltered Housing	To contribute to and monitor the customer profiling survey of residents in sheltered accommodation and how this data should inform future provision.
Fuel Poverty	To receive an update on the City Council's approach to the issue of Fuel Poverty. Commission/review research; consider during other items; possible review topic.
Supporting people	Verbal updates on the joint commissioning of housing support services.

Draft Housing Panel Agenda Schedules

Date, room and time	Agenda Item	Lead Member; Officer(s)
10 December, Plowman Room, 5pm (TBC)	1. Asset Management Strategy	Stephen Clarke
	2. Sheltered Housing	Gary Parsons; Alison Dalton
	3. Aids and Adaptions Policy	Stephen Clarke
	4. Exemption policy	Gary Parsons; Nicola Griffiths
22 January 2015, Plowman Room, 5pm	1. Star Survey Results	Gary Parsons
	2. Fuel Poverty	Deborah Haynes
4 February 2015, St Aldate's Room, 5.30pm	1. Unlawful dwellings	Ian Wright
	2. Tackling under-occupancy	Bill Graves

Meetings closed to the public:

Date, room and time	Agenda Item	Lead Member; Officer(s)
15 January 2015, Plowman Room, 5.30pm	1. Budget Scrutiny - Housing	Cllrs Turner & Seamons; Stephen Clarke

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Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker 2014-15

Statement of Community Involvement 20	Statement of Community Involvement 2014 Review – Scrutiny Committee 10 November					
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date		
 That the Statement of Community engagement clearly sets out how members of the public can access paper versions of planning documents 	Y	Very happy to accept that change to the report	Cllr Price / Lyndsey Beveridge	Y		
Towards Mental Health and Wellbeing –	Scrutiny C	ommittee 6 October				
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date		
 That the establishment of the Member Challenge Panel for Mental Health and Wellbeing does not divert officer resources away from other Member Services such as Scrutiny. Consideration should be given to whether a budget bid is required to support this new Member Panel. 	Y	I would anticipate this challenge panel being member led, and operating for the most part informally, rather than drawing upon extensive officer support.	Cllr Turner / Val Johnson	March 2015		
3. That the Action Plan is updated and elaborated upon to include progress made against actions that are due.	Y	These are sensible comments on how to develop the action plan, and we had certainly hoped to update and monitor	Cllr Turner / Val Johnson	March 2015		
4. That resources required to deliver the Action Plan are fully identified and costed, so that any bids for additional resources can be made as part of the current budget setting process.	Y	it.	Cllr Turner / Val Johnson	March 2015		
5. That consideration is given to the role of ethnic minority groups and faith	Y		Cllr Turner / Val Johnson	March 2015		

 leaders in supporting mental health and wellbeing in Oxford, and to how these can be included in the action plan. 6. That consideration is given to how the action plan supports the mental health and wellbeing of service personnel and veterans, and to whether more focus on these specific groups is required. Draft Culture Strategy 2015-18 – Scrutiny 	Y	- C Ostakar	Cllr Turner / Val Johnson	March 2015
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
1. That the Culture Strategy presents the fullest picture of Oxford's cultural offering, including cultural experiences that the City Council is not directly involved in.	Y	The Strategy is focused on cultural offerings and experiences that the Council supports (by funding or partnership working) or delivers. There's no reason why we can't explore these links.	Cllr Simm / Peter McQuitty	Feb 2015
2. That the Culture Strategy sets out how City Council functions such as licencing and planning can play an important role in supporting culture.	Y	Yes	Cllr Simm / Peter McQuitty	Feb 2015
3. That the list of organisations invited to contribute to the Culture Strategy is shared with elected members, so that they can make any further suggestions.	Y	Yes. Happy for this to be shared with anyone else members think would be helpful.	Cllr Simm / Peter McQuitty	Feb 2015
4. That consideration is given to how the City Council can encourage visitors to spend more time in Oxford, and to whether increasing visitor length of stay should be made a priority in the Culture Strategy.	Y	This will be considered by Experience Oxfordshire, who are funded by the City Council, and included in their Service Level Agreement. It will also be considered in the action plan under priority one; Support the sustainability	Cllr Simm / Peter McQuitty	Feb 2015

		of Oxford's cultural sector and improve the skills and diversity of the city's current and future creative workforce.		
Budget Monitoring 2014/15 – Quarter 1 –	Finance P	anel 4 September		
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
 That urgent action is taken to avoid a loss of subsidy relating to the overpayment of benefits. 	Y	Extra action is already being taken, looking at training and processes. The threshold is more stringent this year due to the removal of Council Tax benefit from this calculation.	Cllr Turner / Helen Bishop	Y
 If necessary to avoid slippage, a flexible approach should be taken to spending the £2m investment in Homelessness Property Acquisitions in 2014/2015. This could include investing in social housing instead. 	In part	Note sentiment but other uses are likely to take longer.	Cllr Turner	N/A
9. The premises for the heavy vehicle testing facility should be flexible enough that it can be used for other purposes in the event that the testing facility is not successful.	Y	The facility is expected to be successful.	Cllr Turner	March 2015
10. The capital programme should be a red risk in performance reports until the new capital gateway process proven to be effective.	N	Risks are measured using the Risk Management Framework agreed by Council.	Cllr Turner	N/A
Treasury Management – Finance Panel 4	Septembe	er		
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
 That consideration is given to how the capital process can be made more 	In part	Noted. Where possible a flexible approach will be taken. Changes to the	Cllr Turner	N/A

flexible so that approved projects can be brought forward to mitigate slippage elsewhere in the programme.		capital programme have to be agreed by Council.		
Oxfordshire Growth Board - Scrutiny Cor	nmittee 23	3 June		
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
 For the Terms of Reference to explicitly set out that meeting agendas and minutes will be publicly available and that access to meetings will be possible for Councillors and members of the public. 	Y	This suggestion will be referred to the Board	Cllr Price	Dec 2014
Community Engagement Policy Statemer	nt - Scrutii	ny Committee 23 June		
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
11. To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.	Y	Merged with recommendation 3.	Cllrs Price & Simm; Sadie Paige	N/A
12. To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.	Y	To provide this information for all consultations would be a huge piece of work so a sample will be used instead, together with a forward-looking approach.	Cllrs Price & Simm; Sadie Paige	Verbal update on progress expected on 10 Nov 14. Full response to follow.
13. To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.	Y	Two consultations identified as candidates for the pilot as per CEB suggestion. Project brief created for the pilot, which includes the objectives, and a reporting template.	Cllrs Price & Simm; Sadie Paige	2 March 15

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14. To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.	Y	Expected at 10 November Scrutiny Committee meeting.	Cllrs Price & Simm; Sadie Paige	10 Nov 14
End of Year Integrated Report – 2013-201	4 - Scrutir	y Committee 23 June		
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N
2. The Committee supports the purchase of the Iffley Road building as an asset of value to the community and recognises that negotiations are on- going. There is a gap between the asking price and the money available and the City Executive Board is asked to do what it can within reasonable value for money criteria to secure the purchase of this property.	Y	Noted (£250k has been earmarked for acquisition of property).	Cllr Turner; Nigel Kennedy; Jane Lubbock	Ν
3. To consider the contingency available to support homelessness in light of county proposals for implementing cuts in the Supporting People and if underspends from 13/14 should be maintained within this budget.	N	Current level of contingency considered to be sufficient.	Cllr Turner; Nigel Kennedy; Jane Lubbock	N/A
Fusion Lifestyle Performance 2013-2014	- Scrutiny	Committee 23 June		
Additional information requested	Agreed Y/N	Outcome	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N
Facility running costs It was agreed at the June meeting in 2013 that the running costs of the facilities would be shown including all capital investment and loan cost in the next report. This	N/A	Information papers considered by Scrutiny Committee on 2 September. Meeting offered to Chair to discuss finance investment financing.	Cllr Rowley; Lucy Cherry	Y

hadn't been done.	
Performance outside of expectations Members asked how poor performance was addressed and asked to see the issues raised and the actions/penalties taken over the last year.	
Publicity Campaign An issue was raised concerning literature used to highlight the Active Women Campaign. The images used were considered to be too stereotypical and gendered. The Committee asked that this issue be taken up with Sports England who run this national campaign.	
Views of non-card users at facilities The Committee asked to see any information on the views and experiences of non-card users.	
Falling attendance amongst young people The Committee were concerned to see this and wanted some more detailed data and information to understand more fully the reasons behind it and whether it was a particular set of circumstances or a trend.	
Information excluded from the public The Committee heard a complaint from a	

	1		
member of the public that the information			l
provided outlining the running costs to the			I
Council of each Leisure Facility should be			
made public because if the Council was			I
still running these centres then the			I
information would be available publically.			I
The Committee heard that this was			I
commercial information but asked that this			1
exclusion is reconsidered by Fusion.			I
			I
Investment financing			1
Members were interested in why the City			1
Council financed investment spending that			1
Fusion Lifestyle was originally required to			1
finance, and in how much this saved the			1
partnership.			