

## Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker 2015-16

<b>Municipal Bonds – Finance Panel 2 July</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Suggested executive response provided by the Board Member for Finance</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
1. That the City Council welcomes the establishment of the Municipal Bonds Agency as a worthwhile social investment vehicle and source of capital financing.	Y	Agreed. The City Council welcomes the establishment as an alternative source of financing to PWLB	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	10 Sept CEB
2. That the City Council doesn't make significant investments in the Municipal Bonds Agency or borrow from it at this stage but keeps a watching brief on the Agency and considers it as a future source of prudential borrowing.	Y	Agreed. There is still some uncertainty about the rate of return any investor would get from investing in the Municipal Bond Agency if indeed there would be any at all. There are no plans to undertake prudential borrowing in the immediate future to fund capital expenditure and given latest announcements from the Chancellors Budget in July the authority will be looking to reassess all its future spending plans. When and if the authority has a requirement to borrow then it will consider all sources of finance.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	10 Sept CEB
3. That the Executive Member for Finance, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services, considers the case for the City Council making a £10k capital investment to become a minimum shareholder in the Municipal Bonds Agency before its first bond issuance, which is expected to take place in September 2015. This investment would be made with no guarantee of a return but it would secure	In Part	There still remains uncertainty as to the rationale behind investing in the MBA since the Council currently has no requirement to borrow in the immediate future. The preferential rate referred to (and mentioned at the Finance Panel by the representative of the MBA) is not referred to in any of the documentation submitted to the Council and therefore cannot be validated. Information obtained from the Council Treasury advisors, Capita suggest that there remains a number of unanswered	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	29 Oct Finance Panel

<p>preferential interest rates on any future Council borrowing.</p>	<p>questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early paperwork from the MBA referred to a 'new issue premium' in the first year or two, it is uncertain whether early joiner borrowing authorities would voluntarily pay a higher interest rate</li> <li>• There is a joint and several guarantee for investors, whilst this would presumably be in proportion to holding there may be a risk to the authority</li> <li>• How flexible can the agency be around bond maturities and how will it ensure that its meets the requirements of its customers in terms of size, duration and interest rate.</li> <li>• The MBA representative mentioned that the preferential rate for investors would be 2 or 3 basis points below the preferential bond rate for other investors (although this is by no means certain). Additionally rates move quickly and this differential could be wiped out quickly even before the overall costs of the bond are taken into consideration.</li> </ul> <p>Due to the level of uncertainties although a £10k 'hedge' may be seen as relatively small in the scale of the Council's overall finances there are a number of important questions which need to be answered before such funds should be committed. Officers will undertake to investigate answers to these questions and either commit £10k if the answers suggest investment would be in the interests of the Council, or report back to CEB and Scrutiny</p>		
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		within the next three months with the outcome of the investigation.		
4. That in considering whether to make a minimal investment (Recommendation 3), the Head of Financial Services speaks with one or more District Councils that have already signed up as shareholders in the Agency.	In part	The MBA advise that there are 10 authorities who have invested £10k with the fund although it is not known who they are. To some extent it is irrelevant as to the reason why other authorities have invested in the fund since it is a matter of judgement for the Section 151 Officer of this authority in consultation with the Finance and Asset Portfolio Holder to decide whether to invest.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	N/A
<b>Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 4 2014/15 – Finance Panel 2 July</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
1. The General Fund outturn position for 2014-15 - a favourable variance of £1.808m which is mainly due to increased income - is a very good outcome and we recommend that officers are congratulated on overachieving against income targets.	Y	The favourable variance has largely arisen from increased income arising from commercial property rents, engineering works and other income. As deputy leader, I quite agree that officers are to be congratulated.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	Y
2. We support the transfer of £1.4m to a Dry Recyclate Reserve and recommend that the City Council urgently assesses options for significantly mitigating this serious budget pressure, including exploring the possibility of building and operating a waste transfer station and changing the Council's waste collection system.	Y	The Council is exploring a number of options to mitigate budgetary pressures around dry recyclate which have become apparent during negotiations for the renewal of the contract with the current waste transfer station provider. Due to changes in the market price for recyclate the current provider is seeking significant increases in gate fees in order to ensure the viability of the current operation.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	Recycling Panel to monitor
3. We note that there are 4 red performance indicators against Meeting Housing Needs but only 3 are explained in the Corporate Summary. We recommend that this is corrected and that fuller explanations are given for the amber risks relating to Environmental Development (section 4.3 in	In part	The missing red performance indicator for Meeting Housing Needs relates to Tenant satisfaction with their Estates; this has been discussed in a previous report and there is no new data. Further explanation on the risks within Environmental Development are included in the attached appendix.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	N/A

the Community Services Directorate).				
4. That the City Executive Board considers: a) Re-directing a relatively small portion of the under-spend towards addressing homelessness, where it could potentially go a long way; b) Other potential uses for part of the under-spend in improving performance against corporate targets, including investing in an additional HMO licensing officer.	N	The under-spends from 2014/15 has been transferred to earmarked reserves largely to mitigate future budgetary pressures. A small proportion has been transferred to the capital funding reserve which is considered prudent given the size of the council's capital programme. There is already a substantive reserve available for the area of homelessness and this can be used if needed. HMO licensing is currently being consulted on and it will be appropriate to consider whether the staffing resource is adequate as part of the response to that consultation.	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	N/A
5. That the City Council continues to embed and improve the capital gateway process to further reduce capital slippage.	Y	The overall slippage on the capital budget was around £15million in comparison to the original budget of £63million. This primarily related to three schemes, Rose Hill Community Centre, Affordable Homes Programme, and Vehicles. The average spend on capital over the last 9 years has been around £20million and the delivery of £48.7 million in 2014/15 is significantly above this. The Council will continue to embed and improve its monitoring through the Capital Gateway process	Cllr Turner / Nigel Kennedy	Finance Panel to monitor

#### Debt Management Policy – Finance Panel 2 July

Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
1. That the City Executive Board approves the Debt Management Policy subject to a minor amendment to the timescales for recovering Miscellaneous Debts set out in the table on page 9 of the policy,	Y	There is an error on page 7 of the policy which will be corrected- this should say 10 days and not 7 days.	Cllr Turner / Tanya Bandekar	Y
2. We reaffirm recommendation 15d of the Inequality Panel about the Council moving towards having a single view of debt. It will still require considerable effort to make this a reality but we strongly endorse this direction of travel and the progress made to date, including the use of fraud	Y	The project to implement this software which will allow us the single view of debt is underway, and will greatly assist in the management of all outstanding debts to the Council and allow us to operate in accordance with the Corporate Debt Policy.	Cllr Turner / Tanya Bandekar	June 2016

detection software to identify individuals with multiple debts owed to the Council				
3. That consideration is given to restructuring relevant teams and resources around a single view of debt model as this initiative progresses.	Y	This is already underway as the team restructures take effect and the software is implemented. Most debt collection activities including revenues and housing rents are now under the Head of Financial Services.	Cllr Turner / Tanya Bandekar	June 2016
<b>Grant Monitoring Information for 2014/15 – Scrutiny Committee 30June</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
That the under-spend of £21,040 is rolled forwards and spent on grants to community and voluntary organisations in 2015/16.	N	I have some sympathy with this recommendation but the funding has been rolled back into the General Fund. The under-spend was in the social inclusion fund which has now been discontinued. We are working with OCVA to build capacity in this sector.	Cllr Rowley / Julia Tomkins	N/A
<b>Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (2015) – Scrutiny Committee 30 June</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
1. We endorse the draft Statement of Community Involvement in Planning and recommend that this is amended to include references to the Planning Review Committee, Area Forums and external guidance on the use of visualisation tools.	Y	Done	Cllr Hollingsworth / Lyndsey Beveridge	Y
2. That the City Council continues to explore new and improved ways of informing residents and community organisations of local planning issues, using both on-line and off-line communication methods. In particular, enhancements to ICT systems should be prioritised so that individuals and groups that have signed up can receive automatic notifications when specific planning applications are progressed or amended.	Y	These are action plan issues. We need to improve the ICT.	Cllr Hollingsworth / Lyndsey Beveridge	Dec 2015
3. That the City Council explores whether there is a lower	Y	Proposals will be put to political	Cllr	Dec 2015

cost means of informing local residents of planning applications as an alternative to “neighbouring property notification letters”. We suggest that proposals are brought forward in the next budget round.		groups.	Hollingsworth / Lyndsey Beveridge	
<b>Housing Asset Management Strategy – Housing Panel 4 June</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
1. We note that a number City Council owned garages are not in use and recommend that the City Council reviews how it could make better use of these assets (for example as sites for new affordable housing or free off street car parking for residents), treating several garage sites as a virtual site. Consideration should be given to explicitly stating this aim, currently implied, in the Asset Management Strategy.	In part	Garages are not housing assets so won't be mentioned in this strategy but we will be making better use of our garage assets.	Scott Seamons / Stephen Clarke	N/A
<b>Review of the HMO Licensing Scheme – Housing Panel 4 June</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
1. That the City Council renews the HMO licensing scheme in its entirety for a further 5 years (option 3). Consideration should be given to appropriate incentives and disincentives for landlords, and to the balance between taking a more pro-active approach to compliance whilst continuing efforts to extend the licensing scheme to cover more HMOs.	Y		Scott Seamons / Ian Wright	Y
2. That: a) Enforcement within the Private Rented Sector is a corporate priority, b) The Corporate Enforcement Policy recognises that the City Council should take a different approach to enforcement in different sectors (e.g. Private Rented Sector, Public Spaces Protection Orders, etc.), rather than a one size fits all approach.	Y		Alex Hollingsworth / Cathy Gallagher	Nov 2015

Report of the Local Economy Panel – 2 June Scrutiny Committee				
Recommendations	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / update due date
<p>1. That the City Council:</p> <p>a) Ensures that information about appealing to the Valuation Office Agency is made available to local businesses. In particular, this information should be communicated to all independent traders who may be affected by the major redevelopments taking place in Oxford.</p> <p>b) Takes any opportunities to join with other local authorities to lobby the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for more council controls over business rates.</p>	yes	There is no doubt that business rate reform and/or local capacity to benefit from business rate growth on a more generous basis are major issues for local government. The devolution agenda will also have a bearing on these issues.	Matt Peachey	Feb 2016
2. That the City Council works with the County Council through the Town Team to agree on a single united channel of regular communications to businesses, such as about travel disruptions, supported by a single online source of information.	yes		City Centre Manager	Feb 2016
3. That the City Council develops a more corporate approach to communicating with businesses, including guidance for all departments whose work has an impact or involvement with businesses. This could take the form of defining a central point of contact within the City Council, which can identify the appropriate unit to respond on specific issues, including the County Council as appropriate.	no	The Communications team will examine this recommendation and consider what elements of it will be feasible and useful to take forward	Head of Comms	Feb 2016
4. That the City Council works with partners through the Town Team to reinforce the coordinated overall marketing and publicity campaign for Oxford in ways that cover all major potential audiences.	yes	The Town Team should also work closely with the Chief exec of Experience Oxfordshire on marketing and publicity for the city	City Centre Manager	Feb 2016
5. That the City Council develops a one stop shop function for events. This exercise should include a	Possibly (no)	The Events Team already provides a pretty comprehensive one stop	Peter McQuitty/A	Feb 2016

review of the costs and processes associated with aspects such as permission for road closures, stall licences and permits for distributing leaflets.		shop function within the City Council but they have to work alongside County Council officers on highways issues, which inevitably results in a less than fully comprehensive service. Worth exploring the scope for greater integration	lison Drummond	
6. That the City Council produces a simple analysis of the costs and benefits of pop up shops to landlords and the City Council.	no	The costs and benefits will vary so widely that this is likely to be a nugatory exercise.		Feb 2016
7. That the City Council takes a lead in establishing and facilitating a city centre commercial property landlord forum. This would be intended to bring together the owners of commercial properties, including the City Council, to ensure that there is a coordinated approach towards issues affecting the city centre, such as the minimisation of the time during which premises are empty. The forum could be chaired by the Leader of the Council, linked to the work of the Town Team and constituted based on the model of the previous Pensions and Language School forums. We also suggest that its membership should include a representative of each political group and that City Councillors should be able to observe meetings of the forum.	yes	This is a worthwhile initiative and worth trying, although there is an obvious danger that it would simply replicate the Town Team's work. The TOR would have to be very carefully written.	Jane Winfield	Feb 2016
8. That the City Council leads on the development of a long term strategy for the city centre as a whole. This should include a commitment to developing and supporting vibrant and distinct city quarters away from prime sites, in locations such as Gloucester Green, Jericho/Observatory Quarter, Market Street, Broad Street and a possible arts quarter around the Ashmolean Museum.	yes	Work is already under way in the Planning Policy team on a city centre strategy.	Rachel Williams	Feb 2016

9. That dedicated officer time is allocated to the development and delivery of this city centre strategy. This could be funded wholly or in part via a BID and by additional business rates income that the role will generate, via reduced voids in commercial properties.	Premature (no)	When we have an agreed strategy, the resource implications will be assessed. The Town Team will be continuing their consideration of a BID over the next few months. The initiative lies with the business community		Feb 2016
10. That the City Council's next Asset Strategy (2016-2020) builds upon the aim (not always presently achieved) of utilising City Council assets in ways that can provide wider strategic benefits to the city centre. The Asset Strategy could provide clear guidelines on the use of City Council-owned commercial premises to ensure the diversity and vitality of the city's wider retail offer.	no	This recommendation will be remitted to the Asset management team for consideration with the portfolio holder and key officers when work on the 2016-20 strategy is started.	David Edwards/ Jane Winfield	Feb 2016
<b>Covered Market Leasing Strategy – Scrutiny Committee 2 June</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agreed Y/N</b>	<b>Executive response</b>	<b>Lead Member &amp; Officer</b>	<b>Implemented Y/N / due date</b>
That the City Executive Board approve the updated Covered Market Leasing Strategy 2015 with the following amendments: a) The word 'discouraged' in paragraph 4.4 is strengthened to 'avoided'. b) The word 'typically' in the sixth bullet point of paragraph 4.9 is changed to 'usually'. It could also be stated that exceptions will be considered for larger independent retailers that originate from Oxford.	Y	Happy to accept these changes	Bob Price / Elaine Philip	Y

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