

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 8 February 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Leader), Turner (Deputy Leader), Bance, Cook, Coulter, Lygo, McManners, Smith and Tanner.

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Timbs.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made at the meeting:-

- (a) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor Bob Price - Personal - a trustee of South Oxford Adventure Playground (agenda item 16 refers)
- (b) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor Ed Turner - Personal - girlfriend attends meetings of Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre (agenda item 16 refers)
- (c) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor Ed Turner - Personal - had been named as referee in the bid from Modern Art Oxford (agenda item 16 refers)
- (d) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor John Tanner - Personal - wife is a trustee of Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre (agenda item 16 refers)
- (e) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor John Tanner - Personal - attends meeting of the Donnington Doorstep Charity. (agenda item 16 refers)
- (f) Grant Allocations to Community and Voluntary Organisations - 2012/2013 - Councillor Mark Lygo - Personal - was involved in the bid for funding from Modern Art Oxford and attends meetings of Donnington Doorstep Charity (agenda item 16 refers).

72. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Full questions with answers were distributed at the start of the meeting. These are appended to the signed copy of the minutes.

73. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Finance and Performance Panel of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted two reports as follows:-

- Response to the 2012/13 Budget (item 74 refers)
- Response to 3rd Quarter Performance data (item 78 refers).

Councillor Seamons, on behalf of the Panel, highlighted a number of recommendations which are set out in full below along with the response of the Board Member.

Budget report

Recommendation 1

Based on organisational performance, to reduce the contingency set against the non delivery of all budget reductions and increases in income to 50% for those categorised as high risk.

Response - Whilst the Council has delivered significant savings in 2011/12 it is no guarantee of future delivery. Indeed it could be argued that in the context of a four year MTFS, the easier savings were delivered first. It is also the case that less than 10% of the savings/additional income proposals have been classified as high risk. Therefore reducing the contingency as suggested would not release significant funds (£209k over the four year period, £59k in 2012/13), hence it is proposed that rather than reduce the contingency provision at this stage, all contingencies continue to be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the MTFS refresh process.

Recommendation 2

To publish to the Review Group the model used to produce the homelessness contingency along with what it is likely to be spent on if needed.

Response - Agreed. However, it should be noted that this is an area of uncertainty and this is based on our best estimate of what might happen. We will be keeping the situation under review.

Recommendation 3

To reclassify to low risk the new income in Direct Services in 2015/16 and Environmental Development from 2013/14 onwards.

Response - The income proposal in relation to Direct Services is dependent on the migration from Cowley Marsh and Horspath Road depots to a single integrated site. Having done initial site investigation, options for relocation are limited and feasibility work is only just commencing. It is therefore too early to say whether the move is achievable within the timescale and hence the additional income deliverable. For these reasons it remains high risk. The income proposal in Environmental Development relates to new income streams from fees from fault, new local licensing and taxi fixed penalty notices of around £50k in total. As these income streams are not yet 'tried and tested' a high amount of risk is considered appropriate

Recommendation 4

To see as soon as possible the detail of the models that have been used to produce the budget adjustments for the withdrawal of the housing benefit

administration grant and the service requirement to be assured that they complement each other

Response - Agreed. However, it should be noted that the DWP has not yet outlined in detail the operation and transition arrangements for the new scheme. Hence this is our best estimate of what might happen. We will be keeping the situation under review and it is likely to change.

Recommendation 5

To consider in the coming year the affects on the customer service outlet and the call centre of the transfer of benefits to the DWP. To reflect this in future budgets.

Response - Agreed.

Recommendation 6

To maintain an open mind on the administration of the Council Tax benefit scheme to ensure that nothing is ruled out and the best possible value for money is achieved.

Response - Agreed. Officers will be working up proposals during the course of the year for member consideration. At this stage no detailed guidance has been issued by the Government. However, the administration is clear that the aim of the scheme will be to minimise the increase in poverty caused by the cut to Council Tax benefit in Oxford.

Recommendation 7

To express disappointment that partners are not contributing to the upfront costs of the delivery of the Olympic Torch Celebration and ask the Board Member to raise this at least with the two Universities and the County Council.

Response - The County Council is contributing to the Olympic Torch Celebration through 'benefits in kind', for instance repairs to potholes and road closures. Thames Valley Police are paying for the deployment of police for the event. Oxford University are organising and paying for the 'torch leaving' event.

Recommendation 8

To request that the Board Member considers with the Review Group information being prepared by officers on apprenticeships and to decide if the scheme as currently outlined presents the best opportunities for employment and training for young people in the City.

Response - We note Scrutiny's points on this, and will look to maximise the impact of the proposed scheme for young people in the City. Officers have been asked to work up papers and present options to maximise the outcomes from the apprenticeships, educational attainment and youth services funding.

Recommendation 9

For the Review Group to review the broad scoping of the Educational Attainment Improvement Project as soon as possible (April/May?) and in particular the mechanisms for focus and project selection as soon as they are available.

Response - Agreed.

Recommendation 10

To review at the end of the first year the investments made by the City Council and those made by the County Council in City Schools alongside progress against expected outcomes/milestones.

Response - Response - Agreed. However, at the end of the first year data will be limited in terms of outcomes.

Recommendation 11

For the Review Group to review the broad scoping of the Youth Services Provision as soon as possible (April/May?) and the detailed mechanisms for focus and project delivery as soon as this is available.

Response - We will look to involve Scrutiny as soon as possible in this work.

Recommendation 12

That a more simplistic approach is taken to the spending of money for free swimming rather than the complex measures and considerations of health and wellbeing discussed. The Review Group's suggestion is that the money is used to teach "x" number of children from areas of deprivation to swim confidently who would otherwise not learn.

Response - Agreed. We will be advised by officers on an appropriate target.

Recommendation 13

For the organisation to consider all new investments as they relate to regeneration and young people together to provide for a coordinated steer, efficient use of resources and sound governance arrangements.

Response - All work of Oxford City Council should be coordinated, have sound governance and use resources efficiently. However, these are separate pieces of work being delivered by different sections of organisation so there will not be a single, detailed "project plan".

Recommendation 14

For scrutiny to be part of arrangements to monitor delivery and outcomes.

Response - The ongoing input of Scrutiny in monitoring our ambitious plans to improve attainment by and provision for young people in Oxford will be welcome.

Performance Report

The Board agreed all of the following recommendations of the Finance and Performance Panel:-

Recommendation 1

For the apprenticeship target to be rethought to include a reflection of the opportunities provided to City residents. To consider giving a target to each Service Head rather than leave delivery centrally.

Recommendation 2

To reconsider the mechanism used to measure the number of people volunteering in Oxford, possibly in conjunction with our neighbouring authorities and the voluntary sector.

Recommendation 3

To reconsider the method used to measure all environmental outcomes so that they adequately and fairly reflect the views across all Wards. To consider doing this through locally set panels and surveys.

Recommendation 4

To ensure that measures of customer satisfaction in future include those using the web. To consider a range of methods throughout the year that may combine to provide a more accurate and useful customer view.

Recommendation 5

To reset the target to measure the use of utilities in leisure centres to a weighted measure per customer.

Recommendation 6

To reset the target that measures complaints to one that reflects response and progress.

Recommendation 7

To reconsider all the financial targets set to ensure they are not duplicated elsewhere and are expressed in the most useful terms.

Recommendation 8

To take out all strategy milestone measures within the Service Framework and if appropriate replace these with measures against the key outcomes from strategies.

Recommendation 9

To include in the Corporate Performance Framework for 2012/13 onwards outcome measures that reflect the expectations of the new budget investments in young people.

74. BUDGET 2012-13 - 2015-16

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) presenting the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Chief Executive indicated that, as an addition to the matters set out in the report, it would be highly beneficial if Council could be recommended to release funds to install photovoltaic panels on certain council owned premises. In order to qualify for the current higher rate of tariff, the work needed to be completed within a very short timescale. Given the clear cross-party support voiced at the meeting by the leaders of the Liberal Democrat and Green Groups, the Board agreed this additional recommendation, and also agreed to enable the timely letting of the required contracts by way of the resolutions set out in minute 78 below.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the outcome of the consultation on the Budget;
- (2) Approve the proposed amendments to the Budget as set out in tables 3, 5 and 6 of the report
- (3) RECOMMEND that Council:-
 - (a) Approves the General Fund budget requirement for 2012/13 of £24.113 million as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report and in so doing to agree a Council Tax freeze for 2012/13, thereby resulting in an average Band D Council Tax of £262.96;
 - (b) Approve the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2012/13 as set out in Appendix 4 to the report and an average dwelling rent increase of 7.83% and service charge increases of 6.1%;
 - (c) Approves the Capital Programme for 2012/13 - 2015-16 as set out in Appendix 6 to the report subject to the inclusion of £300,000 in the 2011/12 Capital Programme in respect of the installation of photovoltaic works to General Fund Leisure properties to be funded by capital receipts and the inclusion of £400,000 for Council house properties in the HRA for similar works to be financed from underspends within the HRA capital programme; and
 - (d) Approve Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix 7 to the report.

75. HRA 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Executive Director for Housing and City Regeneration submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) advising the Board of the public consultation on the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and to advise the latest funding position.

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the outcome of the consultation; and
- (2) To note the latest draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which reflected an improved Treasury funding framework;
- (3) To RECOMMEND Council to adopt the Business Plan as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

76. CORPORATE PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Head of Policy Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) on the Corporate Plan 2012-2017 which had been amended in the light of community consultation.

Resolved to RECOMMEND Council to adopt the Corporate Plan 2012-2017 subject to the amendments to performance targets in light of third quarter results.

77. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - 2011/12 STRATEGY UPDATE AND 2012/13 STRATEGY

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) presenting a revised Treasury Management Strategy for 2011/12 to take account of HRA reform, and the Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2011/12 – 2015/16.

Resolved to RECOMMEND Council to:-

- (1) Adopt and approve the revised Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators and limits for 2011/12, which had been amended to allow for Housing Revenue Account borrowing, as set out in sections 71 - 95 of the report;
- (2) Adopt and approve the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2012/13 to 2015/16 as set out in sections 71 - 95 of the report;
- (3) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision statement at paragraphs 15 - 19 of the report which sets out the Council's policy on repayment of debt;
- (4) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2012/13, and the Treasury prudential indicators at paragraphs 20 – 48 of the report; and

- (5) Approve the Investment Strategy for 2012/13 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, and the detailed investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 49 – 70, and appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

78. PERIODIC REPORTING - BUDGET 2011/12

The Head of Finance submitted report (previously circulated, now appended) setting out the forecast outturn position for the Council's Capital and Revenue budgets as at 31st December 2011 compared to the approved 2011-12 budget as well as information on key financial indicators in order to provide an assessment of the overall financial health of the organisation.

Resolved to:-

- (1) RECOMMEND Council to:-
- (a) Agree the inclusion of £400k feed-in-tariff solar panel capital works to the 2011/12 HRA capital programme and the approval of the use of Capital Programme underspends to fund this project;
 - (b) Agree to the inclusion of £300k feed-in-tariff solar panel capital works within the 2011/12 General Fund Capital Programme in the absence of any underspend on the Programme and the approval of such funding as appropriate;
 - (c) On the basis of Council agreeing the additional funding in regard to the fitting of solar photovoltaic panels (as set out in Minute 74 above), to grant project approval for the fitting of such solar photovoltaic panels to appropriate Council-owned sheltered housing accommodation blocks and leisure centres; to waive the Council's procurement rules in regard to selecting an appropriate contractor or contractors for this work on the basis that following such rules would not help to achieve overall best value; and to delegate the authority to award such contract or contracts to the Chief Executive;
 - (d) Agree that £50k of capital expenditure be brought forward from 2013-14 to 2011-12 to fund feasibility work associated with the £2m Depot Relocation Project planned for 2013/14.
- (2) Approve the budget movements within the HRA as detailed in the report relating to the virement of £500k from the responsive repairs budget to both planned gas maintenance (£300k) and void repairs (£200k), together with budget movements of £212k from other planned maintenance schemes to cover overspends within the Tenancy Management area.

79. PERIODIC REPORTING - PERFORMANCE 2011/12

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) providing the Board with an update of the Council's progress against the 20 Corporate Plan targets for the period April to December 2011.

Resolved to note progress made by the third quarter of 2011/12 against Corporate Plan targets set for 2011/12.

80. PERIODIC REPORTING - RISK 2011/12

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) providing an update on the Corporate Risk Register and Service Risk Registers as at end of Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 of 2011/12.

Resolved to note the report.

81. WESTGATE DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Corporate Assets submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval of revised commercial terms with the Westgate Oxford Alliance to enable the entering into of a revised Development Agreement and Agreement to Lease in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the Westgate Centre.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Grant delegated authority to the Executive Director for Housing and City Regeneration to authorise the Council's entry into required legal documentation with the Westgate Oxford Alliance to give effect to this matter, the terms to be consistent with the contents of the Not For Publication Appendix to the report;
- (2) Agree the placing of any voluntary notice in regard to this matter as was considered appropriate to give adequate notice of the Council's intention to enter into development documentation as detailed in the report; and
- (3) Note the progress of discussions with the Westgate Oxford Alliance.

82. OXPENS MEADOW - SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC AMENITY AND COMPENSATORY FLOOD STORAGE

The Executive Director for Housing and City Regeneration submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) reporting the current position on the Town Green application and the proposals to safeguard Oxpens Meadow.

Resolved to agree to apply for Town Green status for Oxpens Meadow after works to the area for compensatory flood storage were completed.

83. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Head of People and Equalities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) presenting, for approval and adoption, five new employment policies and procedures and seeking the removal of two policies.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the following policies, agreed with Trade Unions and appended to the report with immediate effect:-

Maternity Policy
Adoption Policy
Paternity Policy
Parental Leave Procedure
Flexible Working Policy

- (2) Remove the Fixed Term Contract Policy and Procedure and Job Share Policy because their contents were now included in other policies; and
- (3) Authorise the Head of People and Equalities to implement the approved policies and procedures and make changes to the policies and procedures if required to put right clerical mistakes or to reflect changes in the law.

84. OXFORD CYCLE CITY

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking endorsement of the Oxford Cycle City project and draft Project Plan contained in the report.

Resolved to endorse the objectives and draft project plan set out in the report and request a subsequent report in due course on the specific initiatives and schemes proposed by the working group.

85. GRANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - 2012/2013

The Head of Housing and Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) detailing proposals for the allocation of grant funding for community and voluntary organisations in 2012/2013

Resolved that subject to full Council agreeing the grants budget for 2012/13 as set out in Table 1 of the report to approve the:-

- (1) Recommendations for commissioning in 2012/13, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) Recommendation to allocate Oxford Community Work Agency additional funding of £28,611; and
- (3) Recommendations for the applications received to the grants 2012/13 open bidding programme as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

86. EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION - CHANGES

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) proposing changes to the Executive scheme of delegation contained within Part 4 of the Constitution.

Resolved to amend the Executive scheme of delegation in Part 4 of the Constitution in accordance with the contents of the report with effect from the adoption by full Council of the consequential amendments to the Finance and Contract Rules.

87. FUTURE ITEMS

Nothing was raised under this item.

88. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

89. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

Resolved that under regulation 21(a) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to information) (England) Regulations that the public be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as indicated below and it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

90. WESTGATE DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Corporate Assets submitted two confidential appendices containing not for publication information on certain financial aspects of the proposed development of the Westgate Centre (minute 81 refers).

Resolved to note the detail in the report.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.05 pm

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