

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 22nd July 2002

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Hollingsworth), the Vice Chair (Councillor Baker), Councillors Susan Brown, Christian, Clarkson, Cook, Johnson, Price, Smith and Tarver.

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: The Chief Executive (Marion Headicar), Isobel Garner, Neil Gibson and Mark Luntley (Strategic Directors) and William Reed (Modernisation Unit).

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: John Hill (Built Environment Business Manager), Val Johnson (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager), Nicola Atkin and Peter McQuitty (Corporate Strategy Business Unit), Graham Stratford (Housing Management Business Unit), Steve Daniels and David Steele (Strategic Policy and Research Business Unit), Georgina Harrison and Mark Jaggard (Planning Policy) and David Penney (Medium and Communications).

122. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made of the type specified by the undermentioned Councillors in respect of the matters listed against their names:-

- (1) Councillor Cook - South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan (minute 130) - personal interest because his partner was employed in work in which Oxford Brookes University was involved.
- (2) Councillor Johnson - personal and prejudicial interest in any matters associated with Oxford United Football Club or land at Minchery Farm because he was an Oxford United Football Club season ticket holder.
- (3) Councillor Price - South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan (minute 130) - personal and prejudicial interest as an employee of Oxford Brookes University.

124. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor Campbell asked the following questions on Area Committee budget delegation:-

- (a) Was the Board aware that at a recent North Area Committee meeting there had been a debate upon budget disaggregation and allocation to Area Committees? There had been an equality of votes on two propositions, namely that there should be an immediate devolution of budgets, and that a more cautious and gradual approach to budget devolution should be adopted. There was thus a distinct divide of views among local members on budget devolution to area committees;
- (b) Did the Board agree that area committees should have budgets and appropriate spending powers?;
- (c) Could a clearly defined and specific budget (eg Parks and Green Spaces) be devolved to area committees straight away?

The Leader responded. He said that area committees should have budgets and appropriate spending powers but that the size and shape of Business Unit budgets had not yet been determined. A round of budget savings or reductions needed to take place to achieve a global saving of £2½m as envisaged in the Council's budget but not yet allocated across Business Units. In this circumstance, the size of area committee budget allocations could not be established and thus not be made. This applied to all budgets including those that, on the face of it, were easy to define. Moreover, budget delegation to achieve spending powers for area committees was not as simple as might be thought. Delegated budget could not all be made available for Area Committees to spend as they wished because, for instance, some budgets were locked into long-term service contracts, for example with City Works for refuse collection.

125. BEST VALUE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

The Corporate Strategy Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to agree that Phase 2 of the community buildings review should proceed along the lines set out in the report for the three categories of community buildings identified in the report, namely leisure centres, community centres and the Town Hall and Museum.

126. BULKY ITEMS COLLECTION SERVICE

The City Works Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) to RECOMMEND Council that the collection of bulky items of domestic refuse be free of charge to the user with effect from 1st August 2002;
- (2) (i) to note that Council was being recommended in minute 100 of the Executive Board's recommendations of 8th July 2002 to fund a bulky items collection service in the current financial year;
- (ii) to RECOMMEND Council to approve the budget for the service of £60,500 in the current financial year and £62,000 in subsequent financial years, these sums being made up as set out in paragraphs 7-10 of the report;
- (iii) to approve the methodology and operational strategy for the introduction of the service as set out in the report.

127. CORNMARKE STREET ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - FUTURE OPTIONS

The Built Environment Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

The Head of the Modernisation Unit submitted the views (previously circulated and now appended) of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had considered the report on 15th July 2002.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Board's favoured option for the environmental improvement of Cornmarket Street was to resurface it in tarmac with an appropriate coloured surface and to provide York stone paving for the footway areas (option (iv) in the report);
- (2) (i) that the decision in (1) above be reported to the County Council by the Strategic Director responsible for the Built Environment Business Unit, and that negotiations as to financing be commenced on the basis that the City Council's contribution would be reduced commensurate with the lower specification finish now favoured;
- (ii) that any meeting between the City and the County Council's Executive Boards was dependent upon the nature of the County Council's response to the decisions set out in (1) and (2)(i) above.

128. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE - REVIEW

The Strategic Policy and Research Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) that the two options for future management of Oxford's Tourist Information Centre, namely in-house management and Southern Tourist Board partnership management be worked out and presented to the Board's meeting on 30th September 2002;
- (2) to request that the further report should make it clear how the Business Plan proposed the generation of extra income and the reduction of the Council's subsidy.

129. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION WORK PROGRAMME

The Strategic Policy and Research Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

The Head of the Modernisation Unit submitted the views (previously circulated and now appended) of the Social Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had considered the work programme and action plan on 11th July 2002.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the economic development and regeneration work programme and related action plan be adopted subject to the incorporation of the changes referred to in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's minute;
- (2) to ask that in due course details of disadvantage based on the new Ward boundaries be worked upon and presented to members.

130. SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN - THE CITY COUNCIL'S COMMENTS

The Planning Policy Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

The Chief Executive submitted the views (previously circulated and now appended) of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had considered the report on 15th July 2002.

Resolved to authorise the Planning Policy Manager to respond to South Oxfordshire District Council's first draft deposit Local Plan 2011 as included in the appendix to the report, and in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments:-

- (a) that adjustments to the response included in the appendix be made to reflect the views set out in (3), (4) and (5) of the Committee's minute;
- (b) that the views set out in (1) and (2) of the Committee's minute be not accepted.

131. RENT RESTRUCTURING AND SERVICE CHARGES - CONSULTATION PAPER

The Financial Management Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) that no comment of detail be made upon the Government's Consultation Paper;
- (2) to ask the Financial Management Business Manager to ask the Government whether clearer or further guidance upon the matter of rent restructuring and service charges would be issued and to find out from the CWOIL comparator authorities what their procedures were likely to be in relation to rent restructuring and service charges.

132. TENANTS' HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

The Housing Management Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to accept the proposal from AON Ltd for the administration of the Tenants' Home Contents Insurance Scheme.

133. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Human Resources Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) (i) to RECOMMEND Council to adopt the Race Equality Scheme and that the Scheme be made part of the Council's Policy Framework;
- (ii) that minor textual changes as mentioned at the meeting be made to the Scheme and also:-
 - (a) on page 9 (Implementation of the Scheme) that the wording be changed to make responsibility for implementation that of the Chief Executive, the Executive Board, Strategic Directors and Business Unit Managers delivering services rather than the Diversity Co-Ordinator;

- (2) that a working party of members and officers be established to monitor implementation of the Scheme;
- (3) that the Scheme be published on the Council's website;
- (4) to note that the Scheme would be reviewed annually.

134. HOMELESSNESS - FIRST STAGE ACCOMMODATION - SHORT-TERM LEASING OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Strategic Director, Housing and Health, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) to approve the report as a major project for the immediate short-term leasing of properties for use for first stage homeless persons' accommodation;
- (2) to authorise the Strategic Director, Housing and Health, to select properties and take residential leases for use for first stage homeless persons' accommodation, and to note that in the order of 150 units of accommodation would be involved;
- (3) that rents be set for the tenants of the properties at a level above the housing benefit threshold;
- (4) to note that there were administrative and management cost consequences in the course of action set out above, and to ask that the costs be carefully monitored;
- (5) to thank all officers for their recent work on homelessness.

135. CONSTITUTION - REVIEW

The former Head of the Modernisation Unit submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to RECOMMEND Council to agree the changes to the Constitution set out in the appendices to the report.

136. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Chief Executive reported that the current members' allowances scheme had been agreed by Council with effect from 16th October 2001 following consideration of a report by an independent panel. In its report the panel had proposed that the scheme should be reviewed annually. Since last October one of

the panel members had notified the Head of the Modernisation Unit of his resignation from the panel.

Resolved:-

- (1) that no review of the members' allowances scheme be carried out at this stage;
- (2) for 2003/2004 members' allowances be adjusted in line with the Local Government national pay settlement;
- (3) to ask the Chief Executive to identify a replacement on the panel for the member who had resigned;
- (4) to invite the panel to convene in September 2003 to review members' allowances.

137. SAFEGUARDS AGAINST THE FUTURE DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL "TREASURES"

The Chief Executive reported that at the Council meeting on 24th April the following Motion, proposed by former Councillor Pope and seconded by Councillor Hollingsworth had been adopted:-

"This Council strongly recommends its Executive to have regard to the public opposition to the sale of the FC1 number plate and to agree not to proceed further with any proposal to dispose of it.

Furthermore this Council resolves to inform its Executive that the heritage treasures of the City, including the City Plate, charter documents, paintings and important donations need to be safeguarded against any future unwarranted disposal. To this end it requests that a report be prepared with recommendations as to the feasibility of the setting up of a Trust in which the guardianship of these treasures could be permanently vested and entrusted. In order to achieve this, membership of such a Trust should comprise 50% Councillor representation and 50% representation from another body or bodies such as the Freemen of Oxford, and a two-thirds majority of its membership should be required in order to agree to the disposal of any of the treasures entrusted to its guardianship."

She said that Councillor Pope acknowledged in moving his Motion that the first part of his proposal had been overtaken by events because the Executive Board had agreed on 23rd April 2002, in response to the public consultation which had been carried out, not to sell the FC1 number plate.

Councillor Price reminded the meeting that some five years ago the former Civic and Property Sub-Committee (or its predecessor) had been presented with a list of City art treasures and that this might represent a useful starting point for an inventory of City heritage treasures.

Resolved to nominate Councillor Baker as the portfolio-holder appropriate to pursue the Motion.

138. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

1. Appointments to Outside Bodies - Single Regeneration Management Boards - Call-in

The Chief Executive submitted a minute extract (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to invite the East Area Committee, the South East Area Committee and the North East Area Committee to appoint members to the SRB Management Boards.

2. Night Shelter - Temporary Relocation - Call-in

The Chief Executive reported that the call-in by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Board's decision of 8th July to favour the Albion Place staff car park for the temporary decanting of the Night Shelter had not been upheld. The Board's decision therefore stood.

Resolved to note the position.

3. Trap Grounds Allotments - Call-In

The Chief Executive submitted a minute extract (previously circulated and now appended) of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 10th July 2002.

Resolved to defer consideration of the matter to the special meeting of the Executive Board to be held on 29th July 2002.

139. AREA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rose Hill Community Centre Facilities

The Chief Executive reported that the South East Area Committee on 1st July 2002 had decided to recommend the Board to make funding available to allow a feasibility study to be carried out into the possibility of community centre facilities being provided at Rose Hill.

Resolved:-

- (1) to note that the community buildings review would look at community facilities at Rose Hill;

- (2) to note that the issue would be looked at in the context of the capital programme review at the end of September.

2. Abingdon Road Public Conveniences

The Chief Executive reported that the Central South and West Area Committee on 9th July 2002 had decided to recommend the Board to remove the Abingdon Road public conveniences from the disposals list at least until the completion of the review of public conveniences had been carried out.

Resolved:-

- (1) to note that the Environment Portfolio Holder intended to review public convenience provision to see whether any closed facilities should be reopened, any existing facilities should be closed and whether facilities should be provided on any new sites;
- (2) to advise area committees that public convenience facilities could be reopened, closed or newly provided if this had a neutral effect on Business Unit budgets.

3. Aristotle Lane Allotments

The Chief Executive submitted a minute extract (previously circulated and now appended) of the North Area Committee of 4th July 2002.

Resolved to defer consideration of the matter to the special meeting of the Executive Board to held on 29th July 2002.

140. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTIONS

Resolved to note Portfolio Holder questions and answers in respect of the Oxford Resettlement Project and Homelessness and Affordable and Key Worker Dwellings and to ask that the answers be copied to a previous questioner, Mr Hannigan, a resident of Western Road.

141. DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE AUTHORITY

Resolved:-

- (1) to note that the Strategic Director, Housing and Health had taken action in the best interests of the authority under Delegated Power 28 in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to make a public service agreement submission to Central Government (minutes 8 and 76 refer), and that a further report on this matter would be submitted to the Board on 19th August 2002;

- (2) to ask that for future such actions under Delegated Power 28, details be supplied of alternative courses of action considered, as required by the delegated power.

142. MINUTES

- (1) Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Board held on 17th June 2002 be confirmed.
- (2) There were no matters arising from the meeting of the Board held on 8th July 2002.

143. FUTURE BUSINESS

The Chief Executive submitted a note (previously circulated and now appended) of the items for future Executive Board agenda.

Resolved to ask that Business Unit Managers, Strategic Directors and Portfolio Holders keep William Reed updated as to additions to and deletions from the list of future items of business.

144. CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items on the agenda on the grounds that their presence would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Summary of business transacted on Part 2 of the Agenda as required by Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972

The Board confirmed the minutes of the confidential business transacted on 17th June 2002. No matters were raised from the Board's meeting on 8th July 2002.

The Board noted the contents of the confidential annex to the report on Homelessness - First Stage Accommodation (minute 139 refers).

It noted that there was nothing to report under the agenda item on land at Minchery Farm.

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. It went into confidential session at 10.35 a.m. It closed a few moments thereafter.