

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Friday 27th September 2002

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Hollingsworth), Councillors Christian, Clarkson, Cook, Johnson, Smith and Tarver.

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: Marion Headicar (Chief Executive), Neil Gibson and Mark Luntley (Strategic Directors), Bhupinder Gill (Legal Services Business Manager), David Penney (Media and Communications) and Brenda Lammin and William Reed (Modernisation Unit).

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: Mark Bowler (Leisure and Culture Business Manager), Andrew Parsons (Parks and Green Spaces Business Manager), Karen Turner (Housing Management Business Manager), Steve Northey (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit), Susie Williams (Planning Policy Unit), Lyn Lawrence (Planning Policy Unit), Patricia Stevenson (Planning Policy Manager), John Bellenger (Property Investment Business Unit), Nicola Harrison (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit), Graham Bourton (Oxford Building Solutions Business Manager), Jane Lubbock (Facilities Management), Val Johnson (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager); Pat Jones (Modernisation Unit); David Hill (Strategic Policy and Research Business Manager); John Copley (Environmental Health Business Manager), Steve Pickles (Planning Business Unit); Sue Brown (Legal Services Business Unit); John Hill (Built Environment Business Unit Manager); Graham Stratford (Housing Management Business Unit).

197. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Vice-Chair (Councillor Baker), and Councillors Susan Brown and Price.

198. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

199. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor Armitage asked the following questions on Sports Centres Capital Development (minute 200) as provided for in Executive Board Procedure Rule 2.03:-

- (1) The study of potential demand (referred to in para 1.4 of the report) casts considerable doubt over the economic case for expanding the Health and Fitness facilities at Peers Sports Centre and Blackbird Leys Leisure

Centre. In the light of this, what order of increase in income is assumed as a result of the investments in these centres?

- (2) What investment in marketing has been assumed in order to ensure that the projected increased revenues are realised?
- (3) Has the possibility of building a new full-facility swimming pool for Oxford been investigated and quantified?
- (4) What assumptions have been made about the potential for the City Leisure service to attract investments in the facilities from partners over the next three years?
- (5) Why do the figures in figure 1 in Section 3 of the report not match the figures in the report on new Capital Bids?

Councillor Johnson responded that although there was some crossover of catchment areas for the Peers and Blackbird Leys Leisure Centres the conclusion had been reached that Peers would retain a local following. The potential for development at Peers was small, but the proposed investment was also small, and it was anticipated that additional income would quickly recoup the costs involved. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre provided an important local facility as well as attracting out of area people and he was confident that the income would justify the expenditure. Details of the income projections for the next 5 years had been provided.

He said the provision of local pools was considered to be of greater value to the people of Oxford than the provision of a single "Olympic standard" pool to which people might have to drive, to the detriment of the environment. It was recognised nationally that all swimming pools tended to lose money, but large pools lost even more money. There was a trend in Olympic swimming away from long pools and towards "short course" events with more turns.

He added that discussions were ongoing with user groups, local sports organisations and Sport England to find ways further to enhance the facilities provided.

Councillor Johnson explained the reasons for the apparent discrepancies between the capital expenditure figures in the two reports referred.

Resolved that the response be noted in conjunction with the discussion of the following item (minute 200 refers).

200. SPORTS CENTRES CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The Acting Leisure Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to record that the Board was minded to approve the addition of the capital spending detailed in the report to the Council's Capital Investment Programme for 2003/04, so that officers could undertake preparatory work, but that no binding commitment to proceed would be made until such time as the full capital programme had been considered by the Council later in the year.

201. PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY

The Parks and Green Spaces Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) to RECOMMEND to Council on 14th October that capital spending (amounting to £425,000) for 2002/03 for items 1-6 in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, to be funded from the slippage arising from the inability to progress the Horspath Road community facilities in the current year;
- (2) to agree that bids for capital spending in future years be considered as part of the forthcoming capital and revenue budget setting process.

202. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW

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

The Housing Management Business Manager reported orally by way of an explanation of the of the reasoning behind the recommendations consequent upon the coming into force of the Homelessness Act 2001.

Resolved:-

- (1) to RECOMMEND Council on 14th October that:
 - (a) the Council continue to maintain a General Housing Register and Transfer Register to identify persons requiring to be housed, and to prioritise those persons by housing need (as opposed to the introduction of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme);
 - (b) the current restriction limiting registration on the General Housing Register to persons living or working in the City be removed, in line with the Homelessness Act 2002, and that the points scheme be amended to give additional points to applicants demonstrating a current local connection, a report on this to be submitted to the Board at a later date;
 - (c) the Council does not exercise its newly available discretion to provide accommodation for those persons presenting as homeless who are not

intentionally homeless, but are not in priority need, as allowed for in the Homelessness Act 2002;

- (2) to agree the broad approach, scope and aims of the housing allocations policy review.

203. HOUSING SERVICE CHARGES - REVIEW

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

The Board also considered an extract from the minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 19th September 2002:

Resolved:-

- (1) to agree to the carrying out of a review of housing service charges as set out in the report;
- (2) to RECOMMEND Council on 14th October to agree to the allocation of £20,000 from HRA reserves to fund additional staff time and consultation costs associated with the housing service charges review as a change to the budget framework.

204. ALBION PLACE - TEMPORARY NIGHT SHELTER DECANT - MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL

The Strategic Director, Housing, Health and Community and the Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Mr. Northey reported upon the concerns of the Central South and West Area Committee and Councillor Smith referred to the concerns of residents of Brookes Taylor Court.

Resolved:-

- (1) to grant major project approval for the provision of a temporary Night Shelter at the Albion Place Car Park;
- (2) to RECOMMEND Council to approve the scheme budget as a change to the approved budget framework in that additional funding of £75,000 was required for the decant scheme (thus increasing the Council's contribution to the Luther Street development and the decant to £1,425,000) and that the sum be found as referred to in paragraph 7.5 of the report;

- (3) to record that consideration needed to be given in due course to the use of the Albion Place site once it ceased to be needed for Night Shelter purposes.

205. NIGHTCARE SERVICE - FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

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

Resolved:-

- (1) to approve the change of the present daytime vacant mobile warden post to that of 2 part-time night-time mobile warden/control centre operator posts;
- (2) to instruct officers to monitor the night-time call rate and report back to the Executive Board in March 2003;
- (3) to ask the Chief Executive to arrange to take up with the County Council concerns regarding the withdrawal of the Social Services night care service;
- (4) to record appreciation for the work undertaken by the warden service.

206. BUDGET SAVINGS 2002/03 AND FUTURE YEARS

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

The Board also considered the following extract from the minutes of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had considered the Chief Executive's report on 25th September 2002.

- "1) To RECOMMEND the Executive Board:
- To consider developing and funding marketing strategies for leisure and Town Hall facilities as high priority recognising that such strategies could generate additional income.
 - To regret that the savings had not been categorised according to the three criteria of services no longer needed; whether the service could be delivered more cheaply; and whether the service could be delivered in different ways.
 - That no budget be reduced to a level such that the service became ineffective.

- To ask Business Unit Managers now to consider potential savings for the next 3 years to improve budget planning and scrutiny.
 - To ask that the staff sickness policy be reviewed as a matter of urgency in view of the levels of sickness absence.
 - To review the effectiveness of all the Council's partnerships and whether funding could be obtained from outside the Council.
 - To review the level of training provision in relation to the size of the employees' salaries and service budgets.
- 2) To invite the Strategic Policy and Research Business Manager (if the overview and scrutiny function was transferred to his Unit) to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the future of scrutiny work;
 - 3) In the light of comments made by a number of employees in their presentations about the proposed changes in the management structure, to ask the Vice-Chair (Councillor Stannard) to raise the points made at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the management restructuring at the meeting of Council on 30 September and also to raise concerns about the transfer of the International Officer to the Facilities Management Business Unit and of the Town Hall receptionists to the Customer Services Business Unit as no advantages in these moves had been demonstrated in the report;
 - 4) To support the work being undertaken to improve performance in the Revenues and Benefits Business Unit."

Resolved:-

- (1) to RECOMMEND to Council on 14th October the savings in Appendix 1, as amended by the withdrawal of the introduction of evening parking charges (Transport and Parking Business Unit) and updated savings options (Revenue and Benefits Business Unit), recording that each Business Unit Manager was expected to ensure the total amount of savings submitted was fully achieved, and must identify alternative savings to compensate for any that proved to be not capable of achievement;
- (2) to ask officers to establish whether any current spending on capital projects could be legitimately charged to the capital programme;
- (3) to agree that all the Strategic Directors' suggestions for additional savings in 2002/03 (as set out in paragraph 15 of the report) be pursued, but to express a note of caution at the consequence of the possible £50,00 saving in the work commissioned from the Oxford Building Solutions Business Unit;
- (4) to agree that all of the cross-cutting savings suggested by Business Unit

Managers (set out in paragraph 16 of the report) be explored urgently for 2003/04, together with ideas for additional income generation, and that further reports be submitted as appropriate;

- (5) to note the observations of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (6) to note the comments of the Section 151 Officer about risks in achieving savings in Property Services, and the need to keep this area under close review;
- (7) to note the comments of the Monitoring Officer concerning the consequences of non delivery of statutory services which might arise from savings identified by the Environmental Health Business Unit and to instruct that Business Manager to make alternative savings to protect statutory obligations should this prove necessary, and to also note that the comments of the Monitoring Officer applied to Business Unit Managers generally.

207. CAPITAL PROGRAMME – CAPITAL BIDS

The Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to note the report pending the full review of the capital programme in October.

208. PROVISION OF FINANCE BY WAY OF OPERATIONAL LEASING

This item was withdrawn as the acceptance of the tender submitted by Tenderer A was now possible under officer delegation.

209. DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST

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

Resolved:-

- (1) to thank the South East England Regional Assembly for consulting Oxford City Council on the draft Regional Transport Strategy for the South East;
- (2) to agree the points set out in Appendix 1 as the basis for the officer response to the draft Regional Transport Strategy, subject to additional comments being included on the implications of uncertainty over the redevelopment or relocation of Oxford Railway Station, and the possible need to strengthen the case for greater rail (track) service capacity

through Oxford;

- (3) to record that the redevelopment of the south-western quarter of the City centre needed to be pursued as a major works project.

210. PROPOSED EXPENDITURE OF FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO THE COUNCIL UNDER PLANNING AGREEMENTS

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

Lyn Lawrence explained that the main purpose of the report was to seek agreement to the changes to the Capital Programme so design work could commence. Area Committee consultation would take place on the majority of schemes proposed.

Resolved:-

- (1) to agree the proposals for expenditure of developer contributions as set out in Appendix 1, including the changes to the title of schemes already in the Capital Programme where indicated in italics, and subject to the following amendments:-
 - (a) Appendix 1 (page 64 paragraph 1.40) - title of scheme to be changed to "Long Ford Close - Pedestrian Improvements".
 - (b) two additional schemes to be added to the Capital Programme under the Parks and Green Spaces Business Unit (Appendix 1) following the meeting of the North East Area Committee held on 17th September 2002:-

Capital Programme Scheme	City/ County	Spend Date	Contribution	Current Position
5.17 New scheme - Land off Richards Way - teenage street sports/kick about area	City B Staig	03/04	£20,000	
5.18 New Scheme - Sandhills play area	City B Staig	03/04	£32,150	The land for the play area will need to be transferred to the Council by the developer at which point a further developer contribution of £10,000 will become payable for construction of the play area.

- (2) subject to the completion of the Section 106 Agency arrangements with the County Council, to authorise the Strategic Director, Physical Environment to commission design work on the schemes to be implemented by the City Council in order to enable project appraisals and/or scheme details to be prepared;
- (3) to grant major project approval for the schemes listed in Appendix 4 to enable them to be implemented in 2002/03 by the County Council as Highway Authority, and release the developer contributions totalling £411,964.44;
- (4) to RECOMMEND Council on 14th October:-
 - (a) to agree to the inclusion of additional contributions to schemes already in the capital programme where indicated in italics and the deletion of schemes for the reasons stated where shown in Appendix 1 and as amended by resolution (1) above;
 - (b) to agree to the inclusion of the proposed additional schemes in the capital programme as set out at the end of each Business Unit Section in Appendix 1;
 - (c) to extend delegated powers to Strategic Directors to discharge obligations in planning agreements and release financial contributions for schemes to be implemented by this Council to the value of £40,000 and to vary the Constitution accordingly;
 - (d) to agree a rolling self insurance fund of £50,000 funded by developer contributions, as explained in paragraph 18 of the report.

211. PROPERTY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME - AMENDMENTS

The Property Investment Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to RECOMMEND to Council on 14th October approval of the proposed amendments to the programme to:-

- (a) "swap" revenue and capital funded projects and defer two revenue projects to make an ongoing saving of £25,000 as set out in paragraph 3 of the report;
- (b) use the £14,000 contingency sum to finance works at allotments and Port Meadow as referred to in paragraph 5 of the report.

212. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT WORKS

The Property Investment Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) to note the report and the effects of the new Code of Practice;
- (2) to agree to RECOMMEND Council on 14th October to allocate capital expenditure of £500,000 in the capital programme for Major Project Approval works in 2002/03 to the schemes as set out in Appendix A;
- (3) to agree in principle, subject to consideration of the future capital programme by Council:-
 - (a) to make allowance in the capital programme for 2003/04 of up to £850,000 for the remainder of the required works, and to note that this figure might need to be revised as further audits were carried out;
 - (b) to note that works un-funded in 2002/03 or 2003/04 would need to be undertaken in 2004/05 towards compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act by October 2004;
 - (c) to note that the issue of additional resource requirements to carry out full access audits would be considered further and the outcome built into the business planning process for 2003/04;
 - (d) to agree to the use of consultant building surveyor practices for the design and implementation of the projects as required.

213. GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS – FUTURE CRITERIA

The Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to approve the:-

- (a) grant themes set out in Appendix 1;
- (b) basic requirements for eligibility set out in Appendix 2;
- (c) further criteria to be met by organisations requesting partnership grant funding set out in Appendix 3;
- (d) grant funding themes criteria drawn up by Business Units set out in Appendix 4.

214. OXFORD BUILDING SOLUTIONS – BEST VALUE REVIEW

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

Resolved:-

- (1) to grant minor contract approval for the appointment of external consultants to conduct a Best Value review of Oxford Building Solutions, the scope of the review to include firm recommendations as to how the Council should address the challenges facing the Business Unit as outlined in the brief attached to the report;
- (2) to RECOMMEND Council on 14th October:-
 - (a) to agree to the use of up to £50,000 of Oxford Building Solutions reserves to fund the above project as a change to the budgetary framework;
 - (b) to waive Contract Procedure Rule 7 in order that only three quotes may be sought for the project in the circumstances set out in the report;
- (3) to delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Housing, Health and Community to award the contract for the project referred to in recommendation (1) to the most economically advantageous quote received.

215. INSURANCE PROGRAMME

The Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

The Chair of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported that at its meeting on 25th September 2002 the Committee had resolved:-

- (1) that risk management should be included in the Committee's work programme if time permitted (paragraph 3 of the report refers);
- (2) that it had concerns about whether or not the Council should hold terrorism cover. The premium for terrorism cover was £26,500 (paragraph 4 of the report refers);
- (3) that the costs and type of insurance cover should be made clearer in future reports.

The Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services reported orally upon the outcome of negotiations with tenderers for the Council's insurances. The negotiations had resulted in two possible options.

First, that the Council accept the best price negotiated with the current insurer on existing terms. This would result in a budget pressure (i.e. overspend) of a considerable amount.

Second, that the insurance cover be split between tenderers with the Council taking on a higher excess (as agreed by the Board on 9th September 2002).

Resolved:-

- (1) to agree, subject to Council's adoption of the recommendation in (2) below:-
 - (a) that tenders for the Council's insurance needs in revised terms whereby the Council took on a higher excess be accepted from St. Paul (for property insurances) and Zurich Municipal (for all other insurances);
 - (b) that the tender contracts be for a three year period from 1st October 2002 (the renewal date of the Council's insurance cover) with an option to extend them for a further two year period;
 - (c) that terrorism cover be purchased as referred to in paragraph 4 of the report;
- (2) to RECOMMEND Council on 30th September to agree the budget consequence which represented a change to the Council's agreed budget framework, namely that the tender prices together with the cost of claims handling (in consequence of the decision to split the insurance cover) and the cost of a risk management exercise, when allocated to the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account resulted in an overspend on the Housing Revenue Account of £14,000, and that this should be met from the Housing Revenue Account balances;
- (3) to note that a report on a risk management strategy would be submitted to a future meeting of the Board (noting in so doing that the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee wished also to be involved);
- (4) to advise Council that the Chair of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(i), that the Executive Board's decisions set out above should not be subject to call-in because they represented urgent decisions and it was not reasonable to call them in in the light of the insurance renewal date (1st October 2002).

216. CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF TEMPORARY AGENCY STAFF

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved:

- (1) to agree that Champion Recruitment be appointed as the preferred industrial agency staff provider for the remainder of the contract;
- (2) that minor contract approval be given to the contract for a back-up industrial agency staff supplier.

217. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

The Chief Executive reported that there were no recommendations ready to be considered that did not relate to items elsewhere on the agenda.

Resolved to note the position.

218. AREA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Executive reported that there were no recommendations to be considered by the Board.

Resolved to note the position.

219. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTIONS

The Chief Executive reported that no portfolio holder questions had been received. The information asked for at the previous meeting in response to questions from Councillor Goddard would be reported formally to the next meeting and would be sent to members beforehand.

Resolved to note the position.

220. DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE AUTHORITY

Resolved to note the decision (previously circulated, now appended) of the Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services in respect of the Implementing Electronic Government - Year 2 Statement.

221. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 9th September 2002 be confirmed as a correct record.

222. FUTURE BUSINESS

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

Resolved to note the list of future items of business and to ask Business Unit Managers, Strategic Directors and Portfolio Holders to let the Committee Secretary have details of all forthcoming reports so they could be included in the list of future items.

223. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no confidential items following the withdrawal of an item on provision of finance by way of operational leasing due to the acceptance of the tender submitted by Tenderer A now being possible under officer delegation.

The meeting commenced at 9.00 am and closed at 11.47 am.