

To Executive Board – 13 June 2005

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Housing Scrutiny Committee –28 April 2005

147. HOUSING STRATEGY

The Housing Strategy Adviser submitted a report and a copy of the Housing Strategy for Oxford 2005-2008 (Draft consultation March 2005) (previously circulated now appended)

The Committee agreed to INFORM the Executive Board that the Housing Scrutiny Committee had not commented on the report, but would do so at their meeting on 27th June 2005.

Housing Scrutiny Committee – 23 May 2005

12. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING (HMO) - UPDATE

The Environmental Health Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which updated the Committee on the licensing of houses in multiple occupation.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To INFORM the Executive Board of the Housing Scrutiny Committees concern of the lack of information from the Government on the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation and that this is causing operation difficulties for Environmental Health Officers, and to request that the Executive Board writes to the local Members of Parliament for Oxford concerning this;
- (b) To INFORM the Executive Board of the Housing Scrutiny Committee concerns at the lack of resources available to allow Environmental Health Officers to recruit to vacant posts faster.

13. REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD (RSL) PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

The Strategic Director, Housing, Health and Community, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended) concerning the review of the internal housing enabling function and the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Partnership.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To endorse the establishment of an Affordable Housing Steering Group;

- (b) To endorse the Action Plan;
- (c) To RECOMMEND the Executive Board to also endorse recommendations (a) and (b) above;
- (d) To request the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager to submit an update report, to the August 2005 meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee.

(Report appended)

Finance Scrutiny Committee 27 April 2005

146. BEST VALUE

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

During the course of discussion, reference was made to: the fact that best value reviews needed to be carried out in a rigorous and challenging manner and the need for councillors to be involved at the first and third stages of the review process.

Michael Lawrence, in response to comments by members, outlined steps being taken to review services provided by the Housing Services and Oxford Building Solutions Business Units.

Resolved: -

- (1) to RECOMMEND the Executive Board to carry out best value reviews this year of Leisure and Parks and Housing Services and Oxford Building Solutions the latter as an extension to the work already being carried out by the Strategic Director (Housing Health and Community) and in relation to the forthcoming inspection of housing services;
- (2) to ask the Strategic Director (Finance and Corporate Services) to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee setting out proposals for carrying out best value reviews, over two or three years, of the four other areas identified by the Committee at its last meeting;
- (3) that the process used for carrying out best value reviews should be that recently adopted by Council, with members being involved at stages 1 and 3 of the process;
- (4) to record the fact that the proposed best value reviews of Internal Audit and Information Services were not new initiatives but had been underway according to information previously given to the Committee and to request that they be concluded as soon as possible.

NOTE: Recommendations from the Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 May 2005 will be reported orally at the meeting.

Environment Scrutiny Committee – 9 May 2005

96. AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Director Physical Environment submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

David Steel introduced the report which had been endorsed by the West End Partnership consisting of SEEDA and the County and City Councils and which explained the current position regarding the West End Development proposals.

Further to Members' questions, Mr Steel explained a number of issues as follows: -

- Cultural issues were a key element of the regeneration proposals with an intended mix of shops, cafes and cultural outlets;
- Cycle and pedestrian access around Osney Mead would need to be accounted for in the planning stage;
- assurance had been given that the appearance of the multi-storey car park would be much improved on the usual style for this type of building;
- It was intended that the proposals should dovetail with the Westgate development scheme;
- A form of street pattern would be in place but it was not known how it might match what had existed some time previously;
- There would be enhancement of riverside green space
- the situation regarding buses in Queen Street was subject to ongoing negotiations between the developers and the bus companies;
- Members also expected the highest standards with regard to energy conservation, appearance and use of materials and sustainability so that the development would achieve beacon status.

Mr Steel said that he would liaise directly with the planners on all of the issues.

Resolved to ASK the Executive Board:

- (1) to welcome the Area Development Framework (ADF) as a significant step towards the renaissance of Oxford's West End, based as it is on joint

working between SEEDA and the City and County Councils, and building on the comments received from last autumn's consultation exercise;

- (2) to endorse the Design Concept and the Development Principles in the ADF as material planning considerations, to enable the work in the ADF to be taken forward into the Local Development Framework and to form the basis for an Area Action Plan;
- (3) to confirm the next steps as described in paragraph 8 of the report;
- (4) that the initial emphasis for the requirement for issues of environmental sustainability, such as energy efficiency, to be required of all new developments in the Area Development Framework be reinforced in all related documents. We also recommend that this requirement be clearly stated in all briefing documents produced for potential planners and developers of the area, including the need for optimising the potential for the use of renewable energy, in the form of passive and active solar systems, in all new buildings and master plans of the area.

(The Board considered this report on 4 April 2005.)

Community Scrutiny Committee – 26 May 2005

14. GRANTS REVIEW – SCOPE AND PROGRESS

The Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed the review of the Grants process.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To approve the objectives of the review as detailed in the report;
- (b) To approve the timetable of actions as detailed in the report;
- (c) To REQUEST the Executive Board to provide funding for an External Funding Officer to allow organisations who apply for grants, but are not successful, to receive advice and support in seeking alternative funding sources.
- (d) To request the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager to submit a further update report, to the July 2005 meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee.