

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 18 December 2006

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Goddard (Chair), Rundle (Vice-Chair), Armitage, Fooks, Malik, Sellwood, Tall and van Zyl.

**OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING:** Caroline Bull (Chief Executive); Mark Luntley and Michael Lawrence (Strategic Directors), Sarah Fogden (Financial and Asset Management Business Manager), Lindsay Cane and Brenda Lammin (Legal and Democratic Services Business Unit).

**OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING:** Andrew Davies, Ben Smith and Claire Taylor (Strategy and Review Business Unit); Mags Mernagh, Claire Newport and Ian Sheppard (Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit); Val Johnson and Steve Northey (Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager); Rob Sproule (Business Systems Business Manager); John Kulasek (Financial and Asset Management Business Unit).

## 170. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bance and Murray and Sharon Cosgrove (Strategic Director, Physical Environment).

## 171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made in respect of the Wind Turbines Options item (minute 177): -

Councillor Phelps (who addressed the Board in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Scrutiny Committee) declared a personal interest as a shareholder of West Mill.

Mark Luntley (Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services) declared that he was a Director on the Board of West Mill.

## 172. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor Price asked questions in accordance with Procedure Rule 13(iii) relating to the Indicative Budget (minute 190).

### Question 1

There was uncertainty about the minimum level of balances. What was the minimum level acceptable and when would there be more information available on the cost of concessionary bus fares etc?

### Response (Councillors Goddard and Tall)

Councillor Goddard said that £3 million had been the generally accepted figure in recent years. However there were different pressures this year and there may be a case for changing this. Further work would be undertaken before a firm decision was taken on this when the Administration's budget proposals were submitted in January 2007 following consultation.

Councillor Tall explained that the higher level of balances in the indicative budget was appropriate because of the current uncertainties. He would be looking for evidence that the additional sum would cover the cost of uncertainties and discussions would take place with other local authorities to help establish the correct level of balances.

### Question 2

There was not enough detail in the Capital Programme proposals to undertake a meaningful consultation. Would more details be provided prior to consultation with Area Committees in January?

### Response (Councillor Tall)

Councillor Tall said that currently there was not enough money in the budget to do everything in the Capital Programme as it stood. There was a need to test the relevance of each project and to prioritise the list. This would be done in a cross party forum. He recognised the urgent time frame and gave an assurance that the information would be available very shortly.

### Question 3

There was a maintenance backlog of around £1 million. Was this included in the indicative budget? Would it be maintained? The working party established to look into the maintenance backlog had not yet met.

### Response (Mark Luntley - Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

In last year's budget £900k had been set aside for the maintenance backlog and that was still in the indicative budget. However, the situation had changed slightly in that there had been a shortfall in the amount expected from the Department of Works and Pensions and the first £1 million of that had been earmarked for the maintenance backlog.

### Question 4

There appeared to be a gap of £780 – 800k between spending and income. Did the Administration intend to fill this gap from reserves or was the policy space funding referred to in the Medium Term Financial Strategy being used for this? There appeared to be no policy space in year 1 of the indicative budget.

Response (Councillors Goddard and Tall and Mark Luntley)

Mark Luntley said that the budget assumed £300k would be drawn from reserves to cover the savings that officers had been unable to achieve over the past year. In the indicative budget the “Policy Space” of £500k had been used to plug the gap.

Councillor Tall said that if party groups could come up with proposals for reinstating the policy space he would welcome their suggestions.

Councillor Goddard said that his group had not found all of the savings or additional charges proposed by officers to be acceptable politically. The indicative budget was in essence an officers’ budget with unacceptable proposals removed.

Mark Luntley added that some officer suggestions had also been removed following consideration of the budget by Finance Scrutiny Committee because they were considered to be over ambitious or unsustainable.

### **173. OXFORD FLOOD ALLEVIATION PLAN**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Strategic Director, Physical Environment, be asked to write to the Environment Agency to:
  - a. strongly advise that there should be no sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) allowed on any part of the Oxford Flood Plain, and to submit a statement regarding their views on the matter to a future meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee;
  - b. ask that the Flood Alleviation Plan for Oxford be made as soon as practicable;
- (2) it be noted that the Planning Services Business Manager had advised that no further guidance for developers was necessary because all that needed to be said was set out in the Adopted Local Plan.

### **174. RIVERBANK MAINTENANCE**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to note that responsibility for river bank maintenance had been delegated to Area Committees, and it was for the Central, South and West Area Committee to decide upon priorities for work to be undertaken in its area in the

light of the budgets that were available for that purpose.

## **175. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved: -

- (1) to note the Environment Scrutiny Committee's concerns in respect of delays to the Encams audit of BVI99a and the impact this had on the Committee's proposed review of litter and graffiti, and also to welcome the recent improvements in performance referred to by the Cleaner City Portfolio Holder;
- (2) in respect of the request for a timetable to address the Council's commitment to a 3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to be presented to the Environment Scrutiny Committee in February 2007 it be noted that: -
  - a. the Climate Change Action Team was already addressing the commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and there would be no benefit in the Executive Board becoming involved;
  - b. the Healthier Environment Portfolio Holder would be putting forward proposals in the budget for the creation of a full time energy manager post (on the basis that the post would save more than it would cost), and until it was known whether this post had been agreed it was not possible to set out a timetable for achieving targets;
  - c. there was a need for better communication between the Climate Change Action Team and Environment Scrutiny Committee and the Strategic Director, Housing, Health and Community, had agreed to address this issue.

## **176. OSNEY TREES**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that, once the investigation into the Osney Trees had been completed and its findings had been published, the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Manager be asked to submit proposals for managing trees within Oxford which would take account of the risk factors involved, the resources available, and the need for local people and ward councilors to be informed before actions were taken.

## **177. WIND TURBINE OPTIONS**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that the progress made to date be noted and that officers: -

- (1) continue to seek to identify suitable sites inside and outside the City on which to locate a wind turbine;
- (2) investigate the possibility of investment in third party wind farm schemes;
- (3) continue research into small scale building mounted wind turbines;
- (4) explore low risk schemes to the Council, such as those offered by companies such as Ecotricity, who will manage a wind turbine project and absorb the risk.

#### **178. CONCESSIONARY FARES**

It was noted that a report would be submitted to the Board in January 2007 on a recommendation made by the Finance Scrutiny Committee.

#### **179. PLAY AREA FACILITY ACTION FRAMEWORK**

The Board considered a recommendation of the Community Scrutiny concerning the means and method of consultation on the Play Area Action Framework.

Resolved that it be noted that: -

- (1) the Healthier Environment Portfolio Holder had agreed that consultation on the Play Area Action Framework would be extended and that therefore the outcome would be reported to the Executive Board in March 2007 instead of January 2007;
- (2) the remaining comments on the Play Area Action Framework would be considered in March 2007, alongside all other consultation responses.

#### **180. HOLIDAY PLAY ACTIVITIES – SUMMER 2006**

The Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to note that: -

- (1) that the recommendation of the Community Scrutiny Committee that the budget available for holiday play activities be increased to £200k would be considered as part of the 2007/08 Budget consultation process;

- (2) the Safer City Portfolio Holder had advised that officers were also investigating external funding streams for holiday play activities

#### **181. HEALTH SCRUTINY**

It was noted that a report would be submitted to the Board in January 2007 on a recommendation made by the Oxford Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

#### **182. MUSEUMS FREE ADMISSION TRIAL**

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

Resolved that the free trial period for the Museum of Oxford be extended for a further year, from April 2007 to March 2008.

#### **183. DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND AT WYATT ROAD – MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) Major Project Approval be approved in accordance with section 5.04 of the Contract Regulations for the development of the Council owned land for affordable housing;
- (2) approval be given to the method of disposal of the land in accordance with section 9.04 of the Contract Regulations and the terms of the disposal to Paradigm Housing in accordance with section 9.05 of the Contract Regulations, as set out in section 6 of the report and the exempt from publication appendix;
- (3) in light of recommendation (ii) above, to waive the need to seek further approval to dispose of the land to Paradigm Housing Group through a separate report, in accordance with section 9.05 of the Contract Regulations;
- (4) the Neighbourhood Renewal Manager and Legal Services Manager be instructed to draw up appropriate documentation to dispose of the land on the terms set out in the report;
- (5) the capital receipt from the sale be used to fund investment in Decent Homes.

**184. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

Resolved that in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 the press and public on be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule I2A of the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason for exemption</u>	<u>Minute No</u>
C1	information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	198

**185. DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND AT WYATT ROAD – MAJOR PROJECT APPROVAL**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager submitted an exempt from publication appendix (previously circulated and now appended) to the report referred to in minute 183.

Resolved that the information contained in the appendix be noted.

**186. OXFORD CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL INCLUSION AUDIT**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the social inclusion audit findings, including policy statements and recommendations, be noted;
- (2) the audit findings be endorsed as a statement of how the Council will address social inclusion through the services covered by the scope of the report;
- (3) the guiding principle was that money should follow need and it was recognised that a flexible approach was needed because super Output Areas alone could not always recognise smaller pockets of deprivation.

**187. OXFORD CITY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PLAN**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Services Business Manager submitted a report

(previously circulated and now appended). The Board was also made aware of comments on the draft Plan made by Oxfordshire County Council.

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Oxford Children and Young People's Plan be endorsed;
- (2) it be noted that a progress report would be submitted in Autumn 2007;
- (3) the Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager, in consultation with the Safer City Portfolio Holder, be authorised to amend the draft Plan as necessary in the light of comments made at the meeting.

#### **188. ICT 5 YEAR PLAN AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the long term cost pressures, and the potential risks and costs of not addressing them, be noted;
- (3) these issues be built into the Budget, Business Planning and Risk Management processes.

#### **189. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT - LOW EMISSIONS ZONES FEASIBILITY STUDY**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) progress in respect of the Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study be noted;
- (2) the five scenarios agreed by the Steering Group for further assessment in Stage 1 of the Feasibility Study be noted.

#### **190. SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

Resolved that the report be noted.



**191. SECOND QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2006/07**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the budget position be noted, with particular consideration of the potential impacts on the 2007/08 budget;
- (2) the Directorate Action Plans to reduce the forecast overspend in 2006/07 be noted.

**192. THREE YEAR INDICATIVE BUDGET 2007/08 TO 2011/12**

The Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). Councillor Bob Price addressed the Board in his capacity as Chair of Finance Scrutiny Committee and raised the Committee's concerns about (a) inconsistencies in the savings targets quoted in the report, (b) the very general nature of the indicative budget and the lack of certainty on several aspects of it, including the lack of detail in the capital programme, and (c) the need to improve the budget setting process for the following year.

Councillor Tall and the Strategic Director, Finance and Corporate Services, responded to Councillor Price saying that (a) further work was going on to clarify the apparent inconsistencies and more information would be provided as soon as possible, (b) because the level of risk relating to cost pressures and proposed savings was being identified at an earlier stage than in previous years it could be argued that there was in fact greater certainty than in previous years, and (c) work would begin early on the 2008/09 budget , probably in May 2007.

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Budget Book, incorporating the budget summaries and the capital programme, be approved as the basis for public consultation on the Council's Indicative Budget for 2007/08;
- (2) it be noted that, following consultation, the Administration would prepare and recommend to the Executive Board and Council a Budget for adoption in February 2007.

**193. WESTGATE REDEVELOPMENT - PROPOSED COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER**

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

Resolved that the plan at Appendix A of the report be substituted for the plan attached as Appendix 1 to the report approved by the Board on 20 November 2006 (minute 168 refers).

(Councillor Sellwood requested that a recorded vote be taken. Councillors Goddard, Rundle, Armitage, Fooks, Malik, Tall and van Zyl voted in favour of the above resolution, and Councillor Sellwood voted against it.)

#### **194. AREA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were no such recommendations for the Board to consider

#### **195. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTIONS**

There were no such questions for the Board to consider.

#### **196. DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no such decisions for the Board to consider.

#### **197. FUTURE ITEMS**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a list (previously circulated and now appended) of future agenda items.

Resolved to note the list of future items.

#### **198. MINUTES**

Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of the Board dated 6 and 20 November 2006 be approved as a correct record.

#### **199. DEPARTURE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Councillor Goddard commented that this would be the last Executive Board meeting that Caroline Bull, the outgoing Chief Executive, would be attending before she left the Council.

Resolved to record the Board's gratitude for all the work Caroline Bull had done during her time at the Council and to wish her well for the future.

The meeting began at 9.00 am and ended at 11.20 am.