

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 3 December 2007

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors John Goddard (Chair), David Rundle (Vice-Chair) Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Antonia Bance, Jim Campbell, Jean Fooks, Matthew Sellwood and Caroline Van Zyl.

**OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING:** Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), Sarah Fogden (Financial and Asset Management), Jeremy Thomas and Brenda Lammin (Legal and Democratic Services).

**OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING:** Pat Jones and Andrew Davies (Legal and Democratic Services), Colin Barlow, Steve Holt and John Wade (Leisure and Cultural Services), Mark Jaggard, Sarah Harrison and Tom Morris (Planning), John Hill and Steve Smith (Built Environment), Alan Brown, Claire Taylor and Louisa Dean (Policy, Performance and Communications), Paul Robinson and Paul Spencer (Environmental Health), Colin Bailey (City Works), Craig Buckby (Neighbourhood Renewal), Sue Newman (Customer Services), Graham Bourton, Chris Pyle and Roy Summers (Oxford City Homes), John Kulasek (Financial and Asset Management).

## 196. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sajjad Malik and Patrick Murray.

## 197. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sellwood declared a personal interest in the item on the Carbon Management Programme (minute 209) because he worked for a charitable organisation that had dealt with the Council regarding carbon management issues.

## 198. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions from Councillor Pressel on Flooding addressed to Councillor Goddard

1. Would the Board agree that the so-called "Action Plan" on page 17.5 would have been more reassuring to residents if it had included target dates, as is our usual practice? Why wasn't this done?

Response

I agree that this is a good practice and one that has been introduced by this administration; it would have been better if they had been included here. The Chief Executive would be taking overall responsibility until new Executive Directors were appointed to ensure that actions were being taken immediately and not delayed because of the management restructure.

2. Would the Board agree that it would have been better to spend at least some of the £60K that we received from the government on measures to reduce the risk of future flooding, instead of giving it out to individuals, most of whom were very well looked after by their insurance companies? There have been at least three other flood relief funds giving money to individuals, one distributing more than £250,000.

#### Response

At full Council it was agreed that individuals should be allowed to apply for a small sum immediately. Any unallocated funds will be used for flood prevention measures.

#### Questions on Peers Sports Centre addressed to Councillor Rundle

Councillor Rundle expressed his admiration for the work carried out by Ruth Wilkinson and others in the campaign to save Peers Sports Centre.

#### Questions from Vim Rodrigo

a) Was the report prepared by the Leisure and Cultural Services influenced by the much talked of Peers School becoming an Academy specialising in sports?

#### Response

Yes it was.

b) Is the Executive Board aware that the sponsors have now declared that they don't intend to cater for swimming or other associated sports?

#### Response

Yes, and we are surprised that the proposed new sports academy has chosen not to include pool based activities. We have asked them to reconsider but so far they have refused to do so.

c) Is the Executive Board aware that this centre serves the Littlemore and Rose Hill Communities?

i) the report has totally ignored the centre's SOCIAL value

ii) caters for all age groups

iii) caters for a number of small clubs and associations within the locality

iv) within walking distance

v) located in a deprived area

vi) it is about the only amenity that is remaining

### Response

I am very much aware of the value of facilities to the local community. I have been working hard to achieve maximum community access to the new facilities and will continue to do so. The decision taken today is not the end of the matter and I will continue to work on your behalf.

d) Figures bandied about at the full Council meeting appeared to show that the pools at Blackbird Leys and Hinksey showed worse expenditure and maintenance costs. Why weren't these pools considered for closure?

### Response

All figures presented in the report were subject to a "health check". However they were based on 100% transfer income assumptions, and that may not be a safe assumption, so they were being looked at again. The Hinksey Pool was seasonal and no direct comparison could be made. As far as Blackbird Leys is concerned we would like to replace that facility with a new bigger pool and work on that will begin as soon as the Peers issue has been sorted out.

e) Knowing that a very big housing development is about to start in Rose Hill and no new amenities provided

i) Why weren't DEVELOPER contributions under Section 106 requested?

ii) Why wasn't BMW approached for a contribution? - after all their football team (I believe) practice at the centre

iii) Were the sponsors of the new Academy approached to fund the centre until they could replace it with new facilities catering for leisure activities?

### Response

No response given?

Supplementary question) Council asked for other savings to be considered in order to provide funds to allow Peers Pool to remain open for longer – is that being done?

### Response

We are looking into that at the moment

### Questions from Ruth Wilkinson

1. Is Executive Board aware that no alternative venues have yet been found for 5 a side football teams who form the majority of block bookings at Peers Sports Centre, and who have continuing home fixtures till the end of the football season in May?

### Response

Some of the teams had not engaged in the consultation process, but officers were going back to contact each team and we are hopeful that alternative venues will be found

2. In estimating the savings made when the centre closes, can EB confirm that the following factors have been taken into account:

- (i) loss of income from casual bookings?
- (ii) loss of income from group/block bookings?
- (iii) loss of income when Slice Card holders cancel their direct debit payments?  
(note: I pay £35.10 a month for my slice card = £421.20 p.a.)

#### Response

As stated above, some of the assumptions are being re-examined. We will be contacting slice cardholders who are Peers users.

3. Will the management re-structuring in the Leisure Dept. enable savings to be made on consultants' costs in the 08/09 budget?

#### Response

It is not for me to comment here on matters relating to individual employees.

4. Can the Portfolio Holder for leisure give us his full assurance that the data provided for this meeting by the officers are robust?

#### Response

It is not a member's role to provide robust figures. I have to listen to advice from experts and have done all I can to ensure those figures are robust.

Supplementary Question) We have made a good case socially, morally and politically to keep the Centre open until August. Can we trust the figures enough to close it any sooner?

#### Response

We have to re-examine the figures but it is clear that if we do not withdraw by the end of this financial year there will be an impact on next year's budget, particularly in relation to casual staff costs.

#### Questions from John Green

1. How can Leisure justify spending almost as much on consultants as it would take to keep Peers SC open until July as the school desires?

#### Response

Leisure has excellent front line staff but there have been ongoing management issues over a long period of time. The service clearly needs help and a root and branch review is being undertaken.

2. How can the EB allow the burden of running the facility until July to fall on a school which has suffered a sharp loss of funding due to the loss of 25% of its pupils since 2003?

Response

We recognise that the school is going through a difficult period, particularly in respect of swimming lessons, and that is why I will be suggesting that the withdrawal should be delayed until 31 March 2008.

3. Does the EB agree that with only 30% of Councillors, no representation on half the area committees (including South East Oxford) and a majority on only one, this administration has no mandate to close this facility, indeed no authority to run the Council, and it is therefore incumbent on this administration to stand down?

Response

You should be careful what you wish for – you may find it is not what you wanted after all.

**199. RECOMMENDATION ON MASS BALLOON RELEASES**

The Board considered a recommendation of the Environment Scrutiny Committee (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) organisations should be encouraged to abide by the Marine Conservation Society's code of practice on mass balloon releases;
- (2) information should be publicised and an education campaign launched concerning the hazards of mass balloon releases for wildlife.

*(No member voted against.)*

**200. CALL-IN RESPONSE – WITHDRAWAL FROM PEERS SPORTS CENTRE**

The Board considered recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Committee relating to the call in of the Board's decision on the report considered at its last meeting (previously circulated and now appended).

Councillor Bance moved and Councillor Sellwood seconded the following amendment to the recommendations in the report: -

That recommendation 2 be replaced with 'not to withdraw from Peers Sports Centre until August 2008'.

The amendment was put to the vote but was not carried.

Councillor Sellwood moved and Councillor Bance seconded the following amendment to the recommendations in the report: -

That recommendation 2 be replaced with 'to delay withdrawal from the joint use agreement at Peers Sports Centre until 31 March 2008, and to reconsider the final withdrawal date immediately after full Council has set the 2008/09 budget in February 2008'.

The Chief Executive explained that there could be practical difficulties in implementing the second part of the amendment.

The amendment was put to the vote but was not carried.

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to the managed withdrawal from the joint use agreement at Peers Sports Centre from 31 March 2008;
- (2) it be noted that there were discussions taking place to continue to explore whether the City Council could assist the school in making community access to dry sports facilities available at the Centre in the period from 1 April to 31 August 2008.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **201. COWLEY ONE STOP SHOP FOR COUNCIL SERVICES – CALL-IN**

The Board considered recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee relating to the call in of the Board's decision on the report considered at its last meeting (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that the report be referred to the Cowley Area Committee for its comments and that the matter be considered again at a special meeting of the Board on 10 December 2008.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **202. PLANNING ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Annual Monitoring Report be approved for submission to the Secretary of State;

- (2) the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.

*(No member voted against.)*

**203. OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001-16 SCHEDULE OF SAVED POLICIES PLUS UPDATE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

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

Resolved that Council be RECOMMENDED to: -

- (1) approve the schedule of Saved Local Plan Policies to be submitted to the Secretary of State (via GOSE);
- (2) authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any necessary editorial corrections to the submission document;
- (3) approve an amendment to the Local Development Scheme that, following receipt of the South East Plan Panel Report, the timetable for submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State be revised from January 2008 to October 2008.

*(No member voted against.)*

**204. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) ON BALANCE OF DWELLINGS**

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

Resolved that Council be RECOMMENDED to: -

- (1) adopt the Supplementary Planning Document on Balance of Dwellings;
- (2) authorise the Planning Policy Manager to make any necessary editorial corrections.

*(No member voted against.)*

**205. SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

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

Resolved that the report be noted.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **206. ASSET TRANSFER OF COMMUNITY CENTRES**

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the bids made in respect of the asset transfer of South Oxford Community Centre and the Asian Community Centre be noted and endorsed;
- (2) it be noted that a further report would be submitted if the bid was successful setting out the proposals and seeking approval for the capital projects.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **207. OPTIONS TO PROVIDE WEEKEND BURIALS**

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

Resolved that option 1 (to provide a short notice weekend burial service as outlined in paragraph 10 of the report) be approved.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **208. APPOINTMENT TO THE PORCH STEPPIN' STONE CENTRE**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seek nominations from all political groups and to make an appointment (noting that Councillor Campbell had volunteered to fill the vacancy if there were no other expressions of interest).

*(No member voted against.)*

## **209. OXFORD CITY COUNCIL CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

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

Resolved that support be given for ongoing development of a carbon



management approach (including an energy and water management function) at Oxford City Council, support for carbon reduction investment funds in subsequent in subsequent financial years and to provide proactive input to the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan when published.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **210. ABANDONED SHOPPING AND LUGGAGE TROLLEYS**

The Head of City Works submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that approval be given for formal statutory consultation to be carried out with a view to the future adoption of the powers to deal with abandoned trolleys under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) Section 1990 and Schedule 4.

*(No member voted against)*

## **211. THAMES TOWPATH RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Head of City Works submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to the implementation of the Environment Scrutiny Committee's recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15;
- (2) the Head of City Works submit a further report to the Environment Scrutiny Committee in 6 months' time, on the implementation of the above recommendations.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **212. FLOOD EMERGENCY – LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE OPTIONS**

The Head of City Works submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the actions taken by the Council and other agencies since the flood emergency be noted;
- (2) the 13 priorities that have emerged following consultation with affected residents and the review by the Environment Scrutiny Committee be noted;

- (3) work in progress with actions to deal with the identified priorities and the potential for budget pressure for the City Council in 2008/09 be noted;
- (4) the virement of £50k from underspends in the Built Environment budget to support additional ditch clearing (Wolvercote Common), improved logistics (sandbags, etc.) purchase of alternatives to sandbags, and the purchase of an additional pump, be noted;
- (5) the Sustainable Environment Portfolio Holder (Councillor Van Zyl) set up an informal arrangement as a matter of urgency to ensure that there was an ongoing dialogue with all ward councillors affected by flooding issues.
- (6) it be noted that the following would be considered as part of the 2008/09 budget process
  - a. whether a senior officer should be appointed to take sole charge of all flood related issues for the Council;
  - b. whether revenue and capital funding should be diverted from other priorities to support further work on minimising the risk of flooding and/or improving the Council's response to flooding.

*(No member voted against.)*

### **213. HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN – THE NEXT PHASE**

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that

- (1) the progress made against the key targets set out in the Housing Improvement Plan December 2005 be noted;
- (2) the contents of the Housing Revenue Account Improvement Plan shown in the appendix to the report be endorsed as a working framework for Oxford City Homes following the Housing Quality Network review.

*(No member voted against.)*

### **214. REVIEW OF HOUSING VOIDS PILOT**

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the current voids pilot across the City be continued for the remainder of

2007/08;

- (2) a working group be set up, as detailed in paragraphs 33 and 34 of the report, to determine a lettable standard and make recommendations on this standard, taking into account the issues details in paragraph 36 of the report.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **215. TOWER BLOCKS STRATEGY**

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) all five tower blocks be brought up to decent homes standard by 31 December 2010 and a feasibility study be undertaken on the longer term options, as set out in option (e) in the report;
- (2) a clear long-term strategy for Hockmore Court be determined, as set out in option (f) in the report.

*(No member voted against.)*

## **216. HRA STOCK – DECENT HOMES STRATEGY**

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that the following action be taken: -

- (1) Sheltered Blocks - Four schemes be sold at market value and the proceeds be used to fund decent homes and re-modelling works on the remaining blocks. This would result in an estimated surplus of £2,184,327 being available to top-up the decent homes budget. Further consultations/negotiations should take place with RSL partners with regard to off market deals, as described in paragraph 23.
- (2) Tower Blocks - Option (e) as set out in paragraph 45 of the report be adopted, to bring all five blocks up to decent homes standard by 31 December 2010 and, in the short term, employ a specialist consultant to appraise the options and produce a report setting out a realistic timescale and financial profile. It is estimated that this will cost in the region of £40k and this bid has been included in the consultation budget as a pressure bid for the next financial year (2008/09).
- (3) Non-traditional properties – That a feasibility study in be carried out in 2008 on the re-development of the Leiden Road area and the Glen Lyon

bungalows be included within Phase 2 of the Rose Hill Re-development. Within a similar timeframe, consideration be given to developing the site of the Airey houses to provide a capital receipt and provide new-build social housing. That Minox properties be internally insulated, as highlighted in paragraph 47(e) of the report. This work would be completed when decent homes works were carried out.

- (4) Satellite estates – That these properties be retained as it was noted that with a low decent homes cost, these estates remained good assets for the Council.
- (5) Garages – That the category 4 sites be marketed and the receipts be used for repairing/upgrading the remaining sites, noting that this was expected to be cost neutral. That the marketability of Category 3 sites be assessed in order to make funds available for decent homes work. This assessment would be carried out by the end of December 2007.
- (6) Options for Bullstake Close be investigated with a view to preventing the recurring flooding of the properties.

*(Councillor Sellwood abstained.)*

## **217. DISPOSAL OF 198 COWLEY ROAD, OXFORD**

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

Resolved that approval be given to accept the best offer currently available, as detailed in the exempt from publication appendix to the report, and in the event that the sale does not proceed at that level the Financial and Asset Management Business Manager be authorised to proceed with a sale at the next best achievable price, at or above the open market value.

*(Councillor Sellwood voted against.)*

## **218. AREA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Board considered a recommendation (previously circulated and now appended) of the South East Area Committee.

Resolved to note that the Safer City Portfolio Holder (Councillor Altaf Khan) had given an assurance that there were no plans to reduce the number of Street Wardens in the Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys areas, and that temporary cover was being provided while the recruitment process was underway to fill two vacancies in the area.

*(No member voted against.)*

**219. FUTURE ITEMS**

Resolved to note a request for items relating to the Local Area Agreement 2/ Sustainable Communities Strategy to be listed in the Forward Plan at the appropriate time.

*(No member voted against.)*

**220. MINUTES**

Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Board held on 5 November 2007 be approved as a correct record.

*(No member voted against.)*

**221. 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 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>Items</u>	<u>Reason for exemption</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
C1, C2 C3 and C4	information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	222, 223, 224 and 225

**222. DISPOSAL OF 198 COWLEY ROAD**

The Financial and Asset Management Business Manager submitted an exempt from publication appendix (previously circulated and now appended) to the report referred to in minute 217.

Resolved that the exempt from publication appendix be noted.

*(No member voted against.)*

**223. PROPOSALS FOR THE DISPOSAL OF 9 FISHER ROW**

The Financial and Asset Management Business Manager submitted an exempt from publication report (previously circulated and now appended)

Resolved that approval be given to the initial marketing of the freehold interest in the property.

*(No member voted against.)*

#### **224. DISPOSAL OF A SITE IN UNION STREET**

The Financial and Asset Management Business Manager submitted an exempt from publication report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that approval be given to the marketing of the freehold interest in the property.

*(No member voted against.)*

#### **225. DISPOSAL OF A SITE IN CRANHAM STREET**

This item was withdrawn.

The meeting began at 9.00 am, the resolution to exclude press and public was taken at 11.01 am, and the meeting ended at 11.30 am.