

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 4 February 2008

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

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), Tim Sadler and Michael Crofton-Briggs (Interim Executive Directors), Andy Brooks (Finance), Jeremy Thomas and Brenda Lammin (Legal and Democratic Services).

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: Andrew Davies (Legal and Democratic Services), Graham Stratford, Craig Buckby and Julia Tomkins (Community Housing and Community Development), Paul Warters and Anne Harvey-Lynch (Customer Services), Mark Jaggard, Laura Goddard and Matthew Bates (City Development), Colin Bailey (City Works), Gail Siddall and Paul Spencer (Environmental Development), Chris Pyle (Oxford City Homes), Sarah Fogden, Anna Winship and John Kulasek (Finance).

255. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

256. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of personal interest were made in respect of the item on grant allocations for 2008/09 (minute 265).

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Reason for Declaration</u>
Altaf-Khan	Involved with Anjuman-e Adab
Bance	Member of Oxford Credit Union, worked for an organisation that may apply for a grant at some point in the future and had been involved in discussions with advice centres and credit unions
Campbell	Member of the North Oxford Association
Fooks	Member of the Cutteslowe Community Association
Malik	Co-chairman of the Anglo Asian Society (also referred to in minute 257, question 1)

257. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were asked.

1. Question from John Power addressed to Councillor Campbell – Allotment rent rebate (minute 264)

Is the Executive aware that our association have been good loyal tenants of the City Council since 1853 and have never been late, or defaulted with our rent payments since 1853?

Accordingly the Association instructed me to write a letter to the Council on 18 September 2007. Since then correspondence has been exchanged with the Revenues Section who are insisting we pay the full amount.

The summer floods devastated us both in terms of crops and finances. The terms of our lease with the Council is that the land is let for the purpose of growing vegetables and that any dispute can be referred to an independent arbitrator.

We are asking the Executive Board to concede to the reasonable request in our letter to avoid that course of action and to show some reciprocation for 155 years of loyal tenancy.

Mr Power added that due to recent flooding, which had taken place since his letter was written, many allotment holders had now lost spring crops as well as losing last summer's harvest.

Summary of response from Councillor Campbell

I would like to place on record my appreciation how much John Power has done to raise the profile of allotments in general, as well as for his own allotment association. In recognition of the raised profile for allotments an additional quarter of a million pounds was included in the current budget, some of which was allocated to Bullstake Close Allotments for security fencing. This demonstrates that the Council is providing good support for allotment holders, even though it was not specifically for flood damage. However, I do not support the granting of a rent rebate as requested. Adverse weather conditions are an occupational hazard and a rebate could set a precedent. Many other allotment associations have also suffered flooding, as well as arson and vandalism incidents, but have not put in requests for rent rebates.

2. Question from Dr Martin Conway addressed to Councillor Altaf-Khan – Grant allocations (minute 265)

In view of the inadequate and in large part inaccurate summary (on p.12 of the full paper dated 18 December) of the application for a Council Grant from the Anglo-Asian Association for Friendship in East Oxford, of which

both Cllr Sajjad Malik and I are the Co-Chairmen, and noting the strong encouragement from the East Area Parliament at its meeting on January 23rd, is the Executive Board willing to arrange for this application to be reviewed, even at this late stage of the total process for the year 2008-09, so as to prepare for a decision at its March meeting ?

Summary of response from Councillor Altaf-Khan

This was an East Area Parliament matter and it is not for the Executive Board to decide. East Area Parliament have the budget to fund this if they so wish, and the Area Parliament could consider seeking matched funding from other relevant Area Committees. It may also be possible for the organisation to make an application to the small grants fund, which is able to consider applications throughout the year.

3. Questions from Sue Tanner (Secretary of the Management Committee of Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre and convenor of the Oxford Advice Centres Forum) addressed to Councillor Altaf-Khan – Grant allocations (minute 265)

Recognising the Council's commitment to the advice sector and its work in the most deprived areas of the city, could the portfolio holder explain why he is recommending that the Executive Board ignore the recommendations of the Area Committees in relation to the £44,720 which is as yet unallocated in the grants budget for "advice" (see recommendation (7)?)

Is he aware that last year Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre received £12,000 from Area Committees in addition to the main grant of £62,233? Is he therefore aware that, if this Advice Centre is allocated only £62,233 in 2008/9, as currently proposed, this will in reality be a cut of £12,000 and will inevitably result in a significant reduction in service to the residents of Rose Hill, Donnington and Littlemore?

Finally, does the portfolio holder accept that the Advice Centres in Oxford carry out vital work within the areas of the city which have high indices of multiple deprivation? Does he not therefore agree that the whole of the budget earmarked for advice should be allocated to Advice Centres, particularly those which are in financial difficulties?

4. Questions from Fran Bennett (Treasurer of the Agnes Smith Advice Centre on Blackbird Leys) addressed to Councillor Altaf-Khan – Grant allocations (minute 265)

Recognising the Council's commitment to the advice sector and its work in the most deprived areas of the city, could the portfolio holder explain why he is recommending that the Executive Board does not follow the recommendations of the Area Committees in relation to the £44,720 which is as yet unallocated in the grants budget for 'advice' (see recommendation 7)?)

Is he aware that the Agnes Smith Advice Centre submitted an application for additional grant funding for the coming year, but that this was not considered because it was mislaid? Is he further aware that - over and above these funding needs, which are additional to the £57,044 currently proposed - the Centre is in urgent need of new and larger premises? and that it is now in negotiation about a possible property, and is therefore highly likely to require resources to meet this need as well?

Finally, does the portfolio holder accept that the advice centres in Oxford carry out vital work within the areas of the city which have high indicators of multiple deprivation? Does he not therefore agree that the whole of the budget earmarked for advice should be allocated to advice centres, particularly those which are in financial difficulties?

Summary of response to questions 3 and 4 from Councillor Altaf-Khan

There seems to be some confusion over the “unallocated” balances.

Within the general grant budget there was an unallocated balance of £20,526. Of this £5,000 was to be used to increase the small grants budget and £15,526 was to be held back as a contingency to look into advice.

Within the commissioning budget there was a sum of £44,720 for advice that was not currently allocated to any organisations. It was proposed that this would be used to support equalities and other advice services in need of additional financial support.

Area committees had received some additional funding based on multiple deprivation indices and advice centres should apply direct to the relevant area committees to access that funding.

I, and the Executive Board, appreciate and value the work carried out by the advice services in Oxford and we will do our utmost to help you carry on providing those services.

258. EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

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

Resolved to note that Councillor Rundle had spoken to the Chair of the Community Scrutiny Committee to gain a better understanding of the request for Councillor Williams to be able to assist officers regarding European Social Fund bids. Councillor Rundle was currently having further discussions with officers, after which he would respond to the Community Scrutiny Committee

(No member voted against.)

259. CANACT

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

Resolved to note that a review of the Community Safety staffing structure was currently taking place and it would not be appropriate to make an appointment prior to any re-organisation. However, other officers were covering the work of the inter-agency co-ordinator. Councillor Altaf-Khan gave an assurance that the Family Support Officer's post would be retained in any revised staffing structure.

(No member voted against.)

260. STREET WARDENS

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

Resolved to note that Councillor Goddard was satisfied that new Portfolio Holder had carried out his duties to a very high standard as soon as he was appointed and had been properly briefed by officers as necessary. Officers had apologised for errors made in respect of the letter sent out requesting funding for street wardens and the matter was now closed.

(No member voted against.)

261. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS AND INTERVENTION WORK

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

Resolved to confirm that the City Council regarded domestic violence incident monitoring and intervention work as a high priority and Councillor Altaf-Khan was working with partners in the field of community safety to ensure the City Council's views were properly taken into account.

(No member voted against.)

262. DECISION TRACKING

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

Resolved to note that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services was developing a decision tracking system to assist members when following up the implementation of decisions made.

(No member voted against.)

263. ENFORCEMENT PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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

Resolved that the responses from Councillor Fooks and the Head of City Works, as set out in the report, be agreed.

(No member voted against.)

264. REQUEST FOR RENT REBATE ON OSNEY ST THOMAS AND NEW BOTLEY ALLOTMENTS AS A RESULT OF FLOODS IN JULY 2007

This item was placed on the agenda by Councillor Cook to enable Mr John Power to ask a question during the public question section of the meeting.

Resolved to refuse the request for a rebate on allotment rents for the reasons set out in Councillor Campbell's response to the question from John Power (minute 257).

(Councillor Bance voted against.)

265. COMMUNITY GRANTS ALLOCATION 2008/09

The Head of Community Housing and Community Development submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). The Board also considered additional comments/recommendations from the East Area Parliament and additional information regarding organisations that came under the commissioning process.

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Area Committee grant approvals for 2008/2009, and comments received from Area Committees and Community Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Appendix A, be noted;
- (2) the City-wide recommendations for 2008/2009, as set out in Appendix B, be approved;
- (3) officers be authorised to take forward the commissioning process to fruition, for the period 2008/09, 2009/10 & 2010/11, as set out in paragraphs 17 to 21 of the report;
- (4) the Community Soup Kitchen be moved into the homelessness commissioning process, commencing in 2009/10;

- (5) the Community Safety objective fall under the commissioning umbrella, commencing in 2009/10;
- (6) where savings were made through the commissioning process, that funding be kept within the grants budgets for activities/projects falling within the same area where the saving was found (for example any saving made within the homelessness allocations be kept specifically for other homelessness related grants);
- (7) approval be given to the allocation of £5,000 from the £20,526 unallocated in the grants budget (see table 1) to increase the small grants budget, and the balance of £15,526 be held back as a contingency to look into advice services;
- (8) the £44,720 for commissioning advice services that was not specifically allocated to any organisations be used to support equalities and other advice work, and the officers be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (Councillor Altaf-Khan), Councillor Rundle and Councillor Bance, to determine how those funds would be allocated;
- (9) approval be given to the permanent transfer of £95,000 from the grants budget into Community Housing Business Unit to go towards the costs of the Lord Mayor's Deposit Guarantee Scheme;
- (10) approval be given to commissioning with Oxford Inspires through the Arts commissioning process.

(No member voted against.)

266. WRITE-OFF OF UNCOLLECTIBLE DEBTS

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). The Board also considered additional information regarding provisions for bad debts in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (Council tenant and leaseholder recharges), as reported at the meeting.

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to the write-off of the amounts shown in the report totalling £30,530,07;
- (2) it be noted that, if new information or payments were received, the debts previously written off would be resurrected and credits applied.

(No member voted against.)

267. THE VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – ADOPTION OF ‘LOCAL LISTS’ OF INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

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

Resolved that Council be RECOMMENDED to adopt the reviewed ‘local lists’ of information requirements for the validation of planning applications, as part of the 1APP project.

(No member voted against.)

268. CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO DRAFT PPS12: STREAMLINING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the response to draft PPS12: Streamlining Local Developing Frameworks be approved for submission to the Secretary of State subject to the “No” box in section C8 of Appendix 1 being ticked (instead of the “Yes” box) in respect of extending the lifespan of the Core Strategy to 15 years;
- (2) the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to make any necessary editorial corrections to the City Council’s response.

(No member voted against.)

269. RESPONSE TO SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE CORE STRATEGY (ISSUES AND OPTIONS)

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the draft response to South Oxfordshire District Council, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved;
- (2) the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to make any necessary editorial corrections prior to submission.

270. UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE ENCAMS AUDIT ON STREET CLEANSING

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

Resolved that the completed actions set out in Appendix A be noted, and the action plan set out in Appendix B be endorsed.

(No member voted against.)

271. RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT: COMMUNITY-SCALE COMMERCIAL WIND TURBINES ON OXFORD CITY COUNCIL LAND

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the report be welcomed in principle and officers be authorised to continue (with a view to early conclusion) negotiations with PfR Ltd in respect of disposal of the lease of the shortlisted sites for community-scale wind turbines on Council-owned land;
- (2) a further report be submitted to the meeting of the Board on 17 March 2008 concerning a decision whether to support lease options to Pfr Ltd for both of the sites in question.

(No member voted against.)

272. ADDITIONAL HMO LICENSING

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that approval be given to the submission to the Secretary of State of an application to introduce additional HMO licensing, as set out in the report.

(No member voted against.)

273. STRATEGY FOR NON-TRADITIONAL HOUSING

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). The Board also considered the recommendations of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the report on 17 January 2008

Resolved that: -

- (1) the non-traditional properties be brought up to decent homes standard by 31 December 2010, the only exceptions being Orlits and Glen Lyon bungalows;
- (2) option 7(b) be adopted for Airey houses (structure repairs at reduced cost);
- (3) Glen Lyon bungalows be designated for future demolition and redevelopment;
- (4) feasibility studies be commissioned on the Leiden Road and Sheriffs Drive areas;
- (5) residents be informed of options/strategies at an early stage, as deemed appropriate.

(No member voted against.)

274. AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS FOR DISABLED PERSONS – PROCESS CHANGES

The Head of Oxford City Homes submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended). The Board also considered the recommendations of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, which had considered the report on 17 January 2008.

Resolved that: -

- (1) all aids and adaptation works for tenants continue to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account, and option (d), as set out in paragraph 35 of the report; be adopted;
- (2) any requests from new tenants for reinstatement of a property to its original pre-adaptation works state be refused, unless works were agreed at the voids stage as a tenants' choice;
- (3) approval be given to fund and employ 0.6 of an Occupational Therapist (OT) post, initially for one year from 1 April 2008, so that the impact could be assessed and a further report submitted to members.

(No member voted against.)

275. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR BANKING SERVICES

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

Resolved that the contract be awarded to tenderer 2 and project approval be given for the banking services contract.

(No member voted against.)

276. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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

Resolved that Council be RECOMMENDED to: -

- (1) adopt and approve the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2008/09 to 2010/11 contained in the report;
- (2) approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement contained within the report, which sets out the Council's policy on MRP;
- (3) approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2008/09;
- (4) approve the Investment Strategy 2008/09 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy, and the detailed criteria.

(No member voted against.)

277. GUARANTEE FOR ST MARGARET'S INSITUTE LEASE REPAYMENTS

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) £30,000 be released from the provision to guarantee the St Margaret's Institute lease repayment;
- (2) note that there was no counter-indemnity for this loan, so there was a risk of the Council not recovering the loan, but this was considered to be a low risk;
- (3) note that the loan would be interest free for the first 12 months, and if it was not repaid within 12 months interest would be charged at the Council's pool rate.

(No member voted against.)

278. DISPOSAL OF ROWLANDS HOUSE, RISINGHURST

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to disposal of Rowlands House to bidder A and the Head of Finance be authorised to proceed with a disposal satisfying the requirements of Clause 20.20(c) of the Constitution;
- (2) should bidder A not proceed the Head of Finance be authorised to proceed with a disposal at the maximum price achievable in excess of the independent valuation.

(No member voted against.)

279. DISPOSAL OF 202 COWLEY ROAD

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to acceptance of the best offer currently available (as detailed in the exempt from information appendix to the report);
- (2) should the proposed purchase not proceed at this level the Head of Finance be authorised to proceed with a disposal at the next best price, at or above the open market value.

(No member voted against.)

280. FUTURE ITEMS

No issues were raised.

281. 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 and C2	information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	178 and 179

282. DISPOSAL OF ROWLANDS HOUSE, RISINGHURST

The Head of Finance submitted an exempt from publication appendix (previously circulated and now appended) to the report referred to in minute 278.

Resolved that the exempt from publication appendix be noted.

(No member voted against.)

283. DISPOSAL OF 202 COWLEY ROAD

The Head of Finance submitted an exempt from publication appendix (previously circulated and now appended) to the report referred to in minute 279.

Resolved that the exempt from publication appendix be noted.

(No member voted against.)

The meeting began at 9.00 am and ended at 10.33 am.