

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 17 March 2008

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors John Goddard (Chair), David Rundle (Vice-Chair), Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Antonia Bance, Jim Campbell, Jean Fooks, Patrick Murray, Matthew Sellwood 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), Sarah Fogden (Finance), 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), Graham Stratford, Craig Buckby, Nerys Parry and Dave Scholes (Community Housing and Community Development), Claire Taylor (Policy, Performance and Communication), Phil Dunsdon (City Works), Paul Spencer and Paul Robinson (Environmental Development) and John Kulasek (Finance and Asset Management).

284. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sajjad Malik.

285. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Bance, Campbell, Fooks and Rundle declared personal interests in the item on Cowley Community Centre because they were members of Oxford Credit Union, currently operating at the Community Centre (minute 292).

286. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were asked.

Questions on the call-in of the Board's decision on a request for allotment rent rebates (minute 292)

Questions from John Power

1. Is the Board aware that our association, in recognition of the Council being a very good landlord over the years, is now only seeking a 50% reduction in rent for the year March 2007 to March 2008?
2. Is the Board aware that the Revenues Department has offered to let us pay in instalments? If the Board adopts its previous position then we will negotiate those instalments.

3. Our 7 years rent review is due in September 2008. Will the Board instruct the Council's negotiators to allow lower rents for those sites most prone to flooding?

Question from Derek Barnes

We have not been able to harvest a single thing since 22 July last year - and it's not just me - there are two large sites off Botley Road in the same position. Please will you look at this request for a reduction in our rents sympathetically?

Questions from Councillor Pressel

Does the Board agree that it would be a good idea to be generous to the 5 associations that have been flooded twice in the space of one year and grant not a rent-free year, but a 50% rent rebate, in view of such facts as the following?

- other associations, for instance South Oxford Allotment Association, have had rebates in the past
- football clubs are not charged when their pitches are flooded
- businesses in Cornmarket Street were given a rent rebate during the resurfacing work
- most members lost all their summer plants as well as their winter ones
- valuable machinery was also written off and must be replaced
- the new fencing is long overdue and does not compensate for lost produce
- there is likely to be a rent increase as a result of this year's rent review.

Response to the questions as a whole from Councillor Campbell

As an allotment holder I do have a great deal of sympathy with those who have suffered as a result of this year's adverse weather but I do not believe it would be right to make concessions on rent as requested. What we need is a comprehensive look at our policies in relation to all "acts of God" rather than taking action in a piecemeal manner. I will therefore suggest that the Board asks the Environment Scrutiny Committee review the relevant policies and lease arrangements as a matter of urgency. If the Committee feel changes are necessary it can make recommendations for the Board to consider on a sensible way forward that would be fair to all concerned. The review may also consider whether any recommendations should be made in respect of the forthcoming allotment rent reviews, but deciding on the scope of the review will be a matter for the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Questions from Councillor Pressel on the management of trees under Oxford City Council's control (minute 294)

While I welcome the portfolio holder's decision to accept all the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, I'm concerned that there is still no mention of the area committees or the Forest of Oxford in either the Policy or the Procedure documents. Recommendation 7 - about liaison with the Planning Department when felling is proposed in conservation areas - is in the Policy; please could you ensure that it is also in the Procedure? (Appendix 1). Similarly, the Procedure document should mention the new, formal appeals

process (recommendation 8). On recommendation 5, the portfolio holder has agreed to instruct officers to produce a helpsheet. Please could we be told who will produce this and by when?

Response from Councillor Van Zyl

I will be proposing some changes to the tree management policy later in the meeting. These will include the following: -

- the Forest of Oxford to be advised of major tree works
- improvements in communication with members and information for area committees
- there will be reference to the appeals process.

Preparation of a helpsheet is considered good practice and will be led by John Wade on return from his holiday. It is estimated that this will take approximately 4 weeks.

287. CALL-IN: ALLOTMENT RENT FREE YEAR REQUEST

The Board considered a report of the Finance Scrutiny Committee (previously circulated and now appended) concerning the call in of the decision contained in Executive Board minute 264.

Councillor Sellwood moved and Councillor Bance seconded a proposal that the Board agree a rent rebate of 50% as requested. The proposal was put to the vote but was not agreed.

Resolved that: -

- (1) the decision contained in minute 264 (not to agree a rent rebate) be reaffirmed;
- (2) the Environment Scrutiny Committee be requested to review the Council's policy on allotment rents as a matter of urgency and make recommendations to the Board on whether there should be any allowances made against rent levels as a result of factors outside of the Council's control.

(Councillors Bance and Sellwood voted against.)

288. OXFORD SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP – COMMUNITY SAFETY ROLLING PLAN 2008-11

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

Resolved to: -

- (1) endorse the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership Community Safety Rolling Plan 2008-11;
- (2) note and endorse the response to the Community Scrutiny Committee's recommendations, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

(No member voted against.)

289. PEERS SCHOOL LEISURE CENTRE

The Executive Director, City Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to confirm that the City Council will continue to fund the running of the sports centre at Peers School until 31 August 2008.

(No member voted against.)

290. USER GROUPS AT LEISURE CENTRES

The Executive Director, City Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that officers review the mechanisms for user consultation and engagement at the City's leisure centres, reflecting the principles set out in paragraph 4 of the report, and report back to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

(No member voted against.)

291. MARKET TESTING LEISURE CENTRES

The Executive Director, City Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) project approval be granted to commence the market testing of leisure facilities;
- (2) the Executive Director, City Services, be authorised to appoint consultants to support the project in accordance with the Constitution;
- (3) £75,000 be allocated from the Invest to Save Fund to support the project;

- (4) a cross party member advisory group be formed to support the officers in the implementation of the project, and comprise the Portfolio Holder and Leader or Leader's nominee from the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green Groups.

(Councillor Sellwood abstained.)

292. COWLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE – INTERIM OPTIONS

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

Resolved to: -

- (1) approve option ii) as set out in paragraph 3 of the report (to remove asbestos, demolish the building and secure the perimeter fence);
- (2) endorse the timeline and actions, as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

(Councillor Sellwood abstained.)

293. ALL WEATHER PITCH PROVISION

The Executive Director, City Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved to: -

- (1) approve the granting of a lease for the Court Place scheme, on the terms outlined in paragraph 6 of the report;
- (2) approve the granting of a lease for the North Oxford Sports Association site, on the terms outlined in paragraph 9 of the report;
- (3) note the position in respect of the Blackbird Leys area all-weather pitch project.

(No member voted against.)

294. THE MANAGEMENT OF TREES UNDER THE CITY COUNCIL'S CONTROL

The Executive Director, City Services, submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Operational Policy on the Management of Trees under the Control of the City Council be approved subject to the following amendments: -

- Page 5 of the Operational Policy - at the end of the penultimate paragraph add a new sentence: “The Forest of Oxford will be advised of major tree works.”
 - Appendix 1 to the Operational Policy (Procedure)
 - paragraph 3 b insert “and the Forest of Oxford” after “Inform Ward Councillors”
 - insert a new paragraph 5 as follows: “Each Area Committee will receive a comprehensive account of the rolling maintenance programme on completion of the inspection cycle in the area.”
 - renumber paragraph 5 as paragraph 6.
 - insert a new paragraph 7 setting out the appeals process: “Where the area committee disagrees with a recommended course of action for a particular tree, the matter will be passed to the Executive Director for a final decision.”
- (2) the Executive Director, City Services, be authorised to make any necessary editorial changes to the Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder;
- (3) it be noted that it will only be possible to give information on tree works being undertaken by Council officers.

(No member voted against.)

295. ABANDONED LUGGAGE AND SHOPPING TROLLEYS

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Authority adopt the powers to deal with abandoned trolleys under the Environmental Protection Act (1990) Section 99 and Schedule 4;
- (2) the Authority, on adoption, set a charge of £65 to cover the costs of removing, storing, and disposing of abandoned trolleys;
- (3) the powers commence not less than three months from the date that this resolution was passed.

(No member voted against.)

296. OXFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP BUDGET APPROVAL

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership's budget for 2008/09 be approved;;
- (2) any surpluses remaining after Oxfordshire Waste Partnership budget contributions have been taken be passed back to partner councils, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

(No member voted against.)

297. HOUSING ADVICE – OPTIONS FOR FUTURE DELIVERY

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) Oxford City Council commission an organisation or organisations to provide housing advisors, to work preferably from a central location in Oxford providing a supplementary independent housing advice service;
- (2) officers negotiate an extension to the contract with Turpin Miller to begin after 31 March 2008, for a period of up to three months while a new contract for independent housing advice was being put in place;
- (3) officers be authorised to agree a further extension of the contract for up to one additional month should the new contract not be ready to start at the end of this period;
- (4) the recommendations of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the appendix to the report, be accepted.

(No member voted against.)

298. ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT HHSD FUNDING AND OXFORD CITY COUNCIL'S HOMELESSNESS GRANT

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) approval be given to the drawing down of the Homelessness and Housing Strategy Directorate (HHSD) government allocation for the financial year April 2008 to March 2009;
- (2) approval be given to the following financial grants from the HHSD budget for 2008/09 to external agencies: -

Rough Sleepers Street Services and Reconnection Team (CRI) -

£238,218

1 Substance Misuse worker, Simon House (CRI) - £44,610
2 Resettlement Workers, ECHG - £ 63,881
1 Specialist Alcohol Worker, Night Shelter - £34,066
1 Tenancy Sustainment Worker, Night Shelter - £34,066
1 Prevention and Resettlement Worker, The Gap Oxford - £37,917
1 Multiple Needs worker, Elmore Community Team - £38,712
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1 Life Skills Worker, Simon House - £38,072
1 Move-on Co-ordinator, Simon House £11,091
Severe Weather Beds - £3,588
Subsidised Service Charge for 8 x Young People at Simon House
£5,116
Joint funding of the Joint Housing Team and Supported Lodgings
Scheme, in partnership with Oxfordshire Council - £30,000
Home Choice Rent Deposit Scheme (Community Housing) - £2,392;

- (3) Approval be give to the following allocations of Oxford City Council's homelessness grant: -

O'Hanlon House Day Centre - £133,432
The Bridge Oxford - £42,992
Elmore Community Services - £42,230
The Gap - £95,938
The Gatehouse - £9,502
Steppin Stone - £51,250
Simon House - £12,121
Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store - £28,505;

- (4) the day centre at O'Hanlon House and The Bridge Project be jointly commissioned with Supporting People;
- (5) the service currently provided by Elmore Community Services be jointly commissioned with Supporting People and the Primary Care Trust;
- (6) the Furniture Store be transferred from OCVA to Emmaus Oxford
- (7) savings be made by cutting the funding to Cranstoun, Life Housing, Connection Floating Support and the Drugs Recovery Project (decommissioned);
- (8) the Head of Community Housing and Community Development be authorised to allocate the balance of the HHSD budget (£58,271) and the homelessness grants budget (£26,309).

(No member voted against.)

299. THE OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (ROUND 2)

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication submitted a report

(previously circulated and now appended). The Board also considered additional information concerning the progress of negotiations to agree the indicators contained in LAA2.

Resolved that: -

- (1) the process and timescales for progressing the agreement of the Local Area Agreement Round 2 (LAA2) be noted;
- (2) officers be authorised to further develop the LAA2 list of targets;
- (3) it be noted that a further report would be submitted to the Board in June 2008 to adopt the LAA targets;
- (4) the comments and recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee and the Portfolio Holder's response, as set out in paragraph 37 of the report, be noted;

(No member voted against.)

300. OXFORD CITY COUNCIL CULTURE STRATEGY 2008-2013

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) it be noted that the draft Strategy had been amended to take account of the recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee, as outlined in paragraph 20 of the report;
- (2) Council be RECOMMENDED to adopt the Culture Strategy 2008-2013, as appended to the report;
- (3) the Board's appreciation and thanks for all the work that had gone into preparation of the Cultural Strategy be recorded.

(No member voted against.)

301. AFFORDABLE WARMTH ACTION PLAN 2008-2010

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the contents of the Affordable Warmth Action Plan 2008-10 be noted and endorsed and environmental development officers be instructed to implement the work programme as described and to secure support from

other relevant departments as required;

- (2) the comments of the Community Scrutiny Committee be noted and it be agreed NOT to write to the Government in the terms suggested.

(No member voted against.)

302. 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 addition of two additional sites for the potential siting of community-scale wind turbines on Council-owned land be welcomed;
- (2) officers be authorised to negotiate with PfR Ltd in respect of their disposal and that a further report be submitted to the Board (target date 21 April 2008) detailing the suitability of all four sites and terms for their potential disposal.

(No member voted against.)

303. THIRD QUARTER 2007/08 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the comments of the Finance Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (3) the recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny Committee be endorsed.

(No member voted against.)

304. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS 2008/09

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended).

Resolved that: -

- (1) the target setting process and change in reporting indicators from April 2008 be noted;
- (2) the BVPI targets be adopted.

(No member voted against.)

305. THIRD QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2007/08

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

Resolved that the overall financial position be noted.

(No member voted against.)

306. DISPOSAL OF 16 TYNDALE ROAD, OXFORD

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

Resolved that: -

- (1) the best offer currently available (as set out in the exempt from publication appendix) be accepted;
- (2) in the event that the proposed purchase does not proceed the Head of Finance be authorised to proceed with a disposal to an alternative party at the maximum price achievable at or above the open market value.

(No member voted against.)

307. AREA COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

This item was withdrawn because it was a technical matter that had been resolved.

308. FUTURE ITEMS

No issues were raised.

309. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Board held on 28 January and 4 and 25 February 2008 be approved as a correct record.

(No member voted against.)

310. 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 | information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | 311 |

311. DISPOSAL OF 16 TYNDALE ROAD, OXFORD

The Head of Finance submitted an exempt from publication appendix (previously circulated and now appended) to the report referred to in minute 306.

Resolved that the exempt from publication appendix be noted.

(No member voted against.)

The meeting began at 9.00 am and ended at 11.05 am.