

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD - THURSDAY 3 JULY 2014

4. Scrutiny Committee Reports

The following Scrutiny Committee reports are attached:

- Community Engagement Plan
- Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 4 2013/14



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



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To: City Executive Board

Date: 3rd July 2014

Report of: The Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: Community Engagement Policy Statement

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the Community Engagement Policy Statement.

Key decision: No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons

Executive Lead Member: Councillors Simm and Price

Policy Framework: Strong Active Communities

Recommendations:

- 1. To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.**
- 2. To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.**
- 3. To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.**
- 4. To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.**

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the Community Engagement Policy Statement at their public meeting in June. They were supported in their debate by Sadie Paige and Val Johnson; the Committee would like to thank them for their time and advice.
2. The Committee considered this Policy during its consultation period and made a number of recommendations to the City Executive Board that were agreed. These recommendations included comments on the “principles” and also levels of engagement. The Committee wishes to comment further on these.

Conclusions and Recommendation

3. The Committee welcomed the statement of principles but was not convinced that these were strong enough to support the empowerment of communities that is needed to deliver excellent engagement. The document as it stands seems to be more about breadth rather than depth.
4. Members commented that the level of engagement by communities and groups in the development of this Policy Statement was very low and heard from officers that this was so with most engagement exercises. The Committee expressed the view that communities will, and can only be, expected to engage when they perceive they have some power to make a change and this needs to be demonstrated more actively and regularly.
5. It was not obvious to the Committee how the views expressed by respondents to this Policy Statement had been incorporated or otherwise into the final document. The Committee wants to see this information.
6. Officers outlined processes in place to support good outcomes from consultation/engagement. The Committee welcomed a more robust approach and asked to see information on the ambition set for engagement within consultations during the last year and what was achieved. In addition, the Committee would like to see a pilot project set to demonstrate the levels of good quality engagement that can be produced by the application of the principles in the Policy Statement.

Recommendation 1

To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.

Recommendation 2

To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.

Recommendation 3

To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.

Recommendation 4

To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.

Comments from the Head of Service and Board Member

7. Comments at the meeting.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

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To: City Executive Board

Date: 3rd. July 2014

Report of: The Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: End of Year Integrated Report 2013/2014

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the integrated report for performance and spending.

Key decision: No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Turner

Policy Framework: Improving value for money and service performance

Recommendation(s):

- 1. The Committee supports the purchase of the Iffley Road building as an asset of value to the community and recognises that negotiations are on-going. There is a gap between the asking price and the money available and the City Executive Board is asked to do what it can within reasonable value for money criteria to secure the purchase of this property.**
- 2. To consider the contingency available to support homelessness in light of county proposals for implementing cuts in the Supporting People and if underspends from 13/14 should be maintained within this budget.**

Introduction

- 1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the 2013-2014 out turn for corporate performance and spending at their public meeting in June. They were supported in their debate by Nigel Kennedy; the Committee would like to thank him for his time and advice.**

2. The Committee agreed to mirror the scrutiny process adopted last year and have set a Finance Standing Panel (Liberal Democrat member to be agreed) which will consider the budget elements of this report as they progress through the year and also undertake a review of the budget proposals. In addition a group of members has been set to appraise all the corporate and service measures available to decide which will be reviewed by scrutiny and where they will be reported.

Conclusions and Recommendation

3. The Committee welcomed the performance of the Council in delivering its budget and the positive financial picture as we go into 2014/2015.
4. Representations were made to the Committee by members of the Management Committee of the Gladiator Club who outlined that the building they used was up for sale, the importance of this asset to the community and asked for support in their request for the Council to buy the building to secure it for the community. The Committee noted the commitment in the report to funding this purchase but had concerns that the money allocated would not be enough to secure the purchase.

Recommendation 1

The Committee supports the purchase of the Iffley Road building as an asset of value to the community and recognises that negotiations are on-going. There is a gap between the asking price and the money available and the City Executive Board is asked to do what it can within reasonable value for money criteria to secure the purchase of this property.

5. The Committee considered the contingencies available for dealing with homelessness and noted the underspend in 13/14. Concern was expressed about the level of these reserves particularly in relation to the cuts in the Supporting People budget and the likely effects of this in Oxford.

Recommendation 2

To consider the contingency available to support homelessness in light of county proposals for implementing cuts in the Supporting People and if underspends from 13/14 should be maintained within this budget.

Comments from the Head of Service and Board Member

6. The Council is aware of the community value of the Club and regret the decision of the Charity trustees to ignore the value of the Club facilities in selling the site. The council will continue to negotiate in association with the Club and a third party organisation that has expressed an interest in part of the site, whilst ensuring that subsequent offers

continue to provide value for money for the Council's investment of public money.

7. The Council has made provision for increased pressures from homelessness and the impact of expenditure reductions in supporting people from the County Council, in an earmarked reserve. The County Council are currently consulting on their proposals and current cost pressures from the homelessness service are being contained within existing budgets. Consequently at this point in time it is not considered necessary to add to the reserve although this position will be reviewed over the course of the coming year and at year end

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List of background papers: None

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