

Reports to CEB from Scrutiny Committee for City Executive Board - Wednesday 10 April 2019

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To: City Executive Board
Date: 10 April 2019
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning Fusion Lifestyle

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for City Executive Board consideration
Key decision:	Yes
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Linda Smith, Deputy Leader (Leisure and Housing)
Corporate Priority:	Strong and Active Communities
Policy Framework:	n/a
Recommendation: That the City Executive Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Introduction and overview

1. On 2 April 2019, the Scrutiny Committee received a report which was also considered by the Council's Audit Committee concerning the Audit of Fusion Lifestyle. This specifically included an audit of data recording processes concerning visitor numbers, following a recommendation made by the Scrutiny Committee in 2018. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Smith, Deputy Leader of the Council, Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager, and Mark Munday and Graham Ashby from Fusion Lifestyle for attending the meeting.

Summary and recommendations

2. The Committee noted that the audit report had made favourable conclusions about the reliability of the participation data provided for 2018/19. The data was "as robust as should be expected," and data capture was undertaken in accordance with national standards. No recommendations in this area were made by the Auditor.
3. Questions were raised over the validity of data presented in the previous year, which saw a significant drop in visitor attendance. A subsequent rise of 28% was recorded in the following year, bringing the visitor numbers back to 'normal' levels. It was

confirmed that the audit methodology only considered current data, and was not retrospectively applied to previous years. The Committee heard that much of the fluctuation in data was associated with swings in seasonality trends particularly at Hinksey Pool and the Ice Rink.

4. The Committee discussed how repairs were responded to, and how this was communicated to customers. Detailed responses were provided, but the Committee heard from some councillors that the responsiveness to repairs needed to improve, based on feedback from residents. The Committee indicated that it may wish to carry out site visits to various leisure centres in the new council year to gain a better understanding of the condition of the centres across the City.
5. Councillors reiterated their wish for Fusion Lifestyle engage more effectively with schools and younger people, as similarly set out in a recommendation by the Committee made in June 2018. Attending the university fresher's fairs was raised as another space for engaging with young people. The Committee noted assurances that engagement with schools was widespread.
6. The Committee previously gave feedback on 5 June 2018 concerning the need for time appropriate sessions for female only pool sessions in Blackbird Leys, which should be overseen by women. The Committee felt that sufficient progress had not been made in scheduling these sessions, or in having women only sessions at appropriate times, since it provided feedback and this was a priority that should be acted on. It was noted however that these sessions did exist in the Fusion Lifestyle programme, but the Committee specifically wanted to see this accommodated in Blackbird Leys.

Recommendation 1: That further work is undertaken to accelerate the consistent scheduling of time appropriate female only pool sessions in Blackbird Leys, and that a date is provided for when this will be done.

Further Consideration

7. The Committee has reviewed the performance of Fusion Lifestyle at several intervals throughout 2018/19, following significant fluctuations in performance. However, principal concerns about the reliability of data and visitor trends have been addressed through the Audit. Whilst reviewing leisure performance remains a priority for the Committee, it was agreed that the Committee would undertake less frequent reviews in future and at 6 month intervals. The Committee asked that, as part of the Annual Services Plan, which is received by the Committee each year, risks identified by the Audit continue to be reported as part of this process.

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Appendix 1 – Draft City Executive Board response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 2 April 2019 concerning Fusion Lifestyle

Draft response provided by the Board Member for Leisure and Housing (Deputy Leader)

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Recommendation 1: That further work is undertaken to accelerate the consistent scheduling of time appropriate female only pool sessions in Blackbird Leys, and that a date is provided for when this will be done.	Yes	Fusion are very aware of the need and benefits of adding a further ladies only session and they are now finalising how they can adjust the swimming programme accordingly. We expect that this new session will start in the next few months.

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To: City Executive Board
Date: 10 April 2019
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Oxford Living Wage

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for City Executive Board consideration
Key decision:	Yes
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
Executive Board Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council
Corporate Priority:	A vibrant and sustainable economy
Policy Framework:	n/a
Recommendation: That the City Executive Board states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Introduction and overview

1. On 2 April 2019, the Scrutiny Committee received a report which set out progress made against the recommendations made to the City Executive Board by the Oxford Living Wage Review Group in March 2018. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council, and Matt Peachey, Economic Development Manager, for attending meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

2. The Committee noted that 11.1% of jobs in the City were estimated to pay below the Real Living Wage in 2015, falling to 10.3% in 2018, showing a move in the right direction. This was well below the 22.8% UK average. However, this is couched against Oxford being the most unaffordable City in the UK, with a significant portion of people leaving in some of the most deprived areas nationally.
3. The Committee expressed support for the direction of travel, and the need to continue promoting the Oxford Living Wage with local employers. The increasing number of local employers becoming living wage accredited was also positive to note. A discussion took place on the challenges faced in certain sectors and supply

chains, where outsourced work to third party employers was often paid at the minimum wage only. The retail, catering, care and cleaning sectors were highlighted in particular as often paying below the Oxford Living Wage. The Committee also gave support to the Leader for writing to Oxford University's Colleges to ask them to pay the Oxford Living Wage to their staff, the majority of which did not.

4. The Committee asked what opportunities there might be to incentivise businesses to pay the Oxford Living Wage. It was explained that some councils including Ealing and Brent were offering a business rates discount scheme for London Living Wage employers. In Ealing for example, a discount of £50 to £1000 is offered to businesses depending on the number of employees, which accounts for two years' worth of living wage accreditation fees.¹ The Committee did not recommend pursuing this approach specifically, but instead they are recommending that this and other incentives be explored as options in the future.

Recommendation 1: That the Council continues to seek out ways to incentivise local businesses to become Oxford Living Wage accredited employers.

5. The Committee made clear that it wished to see more promotion of the Oxford Living Wage targeted towards customers. Specifically, there is a need to highlight which companies are Oxford Living Wage employers, and promote conscience driven spending by the public with these shops and services. This means delivering a campaign that asks the public to think twice before spending (both online and in person) with companies which do not offer the Oxford Living Wage to their employees. The process will also highlight the social value added by supporting fair wage employers.

Recommendation 2: That the Council's promotional activity around the Oxford Living Wage incorporates customer facing marketing, which encourages conscience driven spending with Oxford Living Wage accredited shops and services.

6. The Committee noted that that Council is not the only partner in driving forward the Living Wage agenda. Several campaign and pressure groups are undertaking similar activities to encourage Living Wage and Oxford Living Wage accreditation. The Committee is therefore recommending that further engagement takes place with these groups to maximise the cumulative effect of their work.

Recommendation 3: That the Council engages with trade unions, campaign groups, parish councils and other community groups to broaden the pool of pressure groups in the City and better coordinate the local Oxford Living Wage campaign.

¹ Ealing Council, 2019. Available at:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201014/business_rates/2118/london_living_wage_business_rate_discount/5

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Appendix 1 – Draft City Executive Board response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 2 April 2019 concerning the Oxford Living Wage

Draft response provided by the Leader of the Council

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Recommendation 1: That the Council continues to seek out ways to incentivise local businesses to become Oxford Living Wage accredited employers.	Yes	We will explore best practice and consider what ways businesses can be incentivised to ensure positive social and environmental impact through initiatives such as the Oxford Living Wage
Recommendation 2: That the Council's promotional activity around the Oxford Living Wage incorporates customer facing marketing, which encourages conscience driven spending with Oxford Living Wage accredited shops and services.	Yes	We will consider ways to incorporate this into the annual programme of activity.
Recommendation 3: That the Council engages with trade unions, campaign groups, parish councils and other community groups to broaden the pool of pressure groups in the City and better coordinate the local Oxford Living Wage campaign.	Yes	Officers will work alongside the Living Wage Champion who already undertakes this work

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