

Law and Governance

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Central Number: 01865 249811

09 December 2013

Dear Councillors

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD - WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2013

Attached are additional papers for the above meeting. Please bring these with you to the meeting

Yours sincerely

William Reed

4. **Scrutiny Committee Reports (Pages 1 - 2)**
 - Housing Strategy Refresh

8. **Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2017/18 and 2014/15 Budget (Pages 3 - 22)**
 - Appendix 10 - Equalities Impact Assessment



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



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To: City Executive Board

Date: 11th December 2013

Report of: The Housing Panel (Panel of the Scrutiny Committee)

Title of Report: HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN - REFRESH

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the comments and recommendations of the Housing Panel on the Housing Strategy Action Plan - Refresh.

Key decision: Yes

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Val Smith

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Rd Turner

Policy Framework: Housing Strategy 2012-15

Recommendation(s): For the City Executive Board to say if it agrees or disagrees with the following recommendation.

Recommendation 1

That the implementation of a new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve the greatest impact and that the number of Landlords in the scheme be maximised.

Introduction

1. The Housing Panel considered the draft proposals for the Housing Strategy Action Plan, Refresh. They were supported in their debate by David Scholes, Gary Parsons, Tom Porter and Councillor Scott Seamons, the Panel would like to thank them for their time and advice.

Conclusions and Recommendation

2. The Panel discussed in depth the five objectives and were updated on the progress of each:

- Objective One: Provide more affordable housing
- Objective Two: Prevent homelessness
- Objective Three: Address housing needs of vulnerable people
- Objective Four: Improve housing conditions
- Objective Five: Improve quality, cost effectiveness and efficiency

The Panel particularly commented on issues surrounding homelessness and its prevention and welcomed the work in this area. The Panel notably on Objective Four, Action Point 23 in appendix A to the report, which concerned improving the quality of individual rented properties and the implementation of a new landlord and letting agency accreditation scheme, supported an accreditation scheme, but felt that any scheme should be publicised as widely as possible to achieve the greatest impact and that the numbers of landlords in the scheme be maximised..

Recommendation 1

That the implementation of a new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve the greatest impact and that the number of Landlords in the scheme be maximised.

Comments from the Director and Board Member

3. Any comments will be provided at the City Executive Board meeting.

Name and contact details of author:-

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

Oxford City Council Budget 2014-2015: “A Fair Future for Oxford” (Equality Assessment)

The following assessment gives more details from an equality and diversity perspective on the various on-going budget proposals. It provides an initial commentary on the risks and mitigating actions already in place to support the investment proposals before the wider public consultation period from 12th December 2013 to January 2014. Amendments raised by the CEB discussions and consultation will be reflected in the document.

| Budget Proposal | Increase Council Tax by 1.99%, and maintain the existing Council Tax Support Scheme |
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| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | This is an annual consideration. The Autumn 2012 budget statement lowered the local authority tax referendum threshold to 2%. The new national Council Tax Support Scheme was approved by parliament and was implemented in April 2013. The figure for 2014/ 15 will be an increase of 1.99% or £5.34 per annum (representing a Band D Council Tax of £273.53 per annum) |
| What are the likely risks? | Council Tax rises are likely to have the hardest impact on the most economically disadvantaged groups such as part time and low paid workers (although these may be mitigated by the council tax support scheme, which is not being reduced). |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Initial joint consultation with other Oxford Districts on the design of the local council tax support scheme was undertaken from August to September 2012, with 152 respondents within the City (10% from BME communities) and there will be further opportunities for comment as part of the public consultation in January 2014. |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | The Council has agreed to suffer the loss of 10% of grant and to keep the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in place. This will minimise the impact on the low paid. The anticipated Council Tax collection was reduced from 98% to 97% in 2012/2013 due to proposed welfare benefits changes anticipated to lead to greater arrears. This target was met with an end of year collection rate above 97%. Current collection targets for 2013/ 2014 continue to be above 97%. Currently the total net caseload is 12,422 receiving Council Tax Benefit & Housing Benefit, with 75% of those 10,159 receiving CT benefit on full benefit and therefore the 1.99% increase will have no effect. Of the remaining 25% in receipt of some benefits those hardest hit are likely to be part time or low paid work and will be variably impacted on a case by case basis. This means that the |

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| | <p>remaining 48,000 CT payers will be directly affected by the 1.99% increase. The 1.99% increase will see the Council gain an additional £110k of income and the £5.34 can be seen in the positive context of a capital investment programme of £60 million and a £1.4 million extra spend from the previous budget. The Council's element within CT is 17% of the overall CT rate.</p> |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | The equality risk is low/ medium and will be about proportionate rather than negative impacts. These risks were presented as part of the budget proposals to CEB in December 2012 and remain at a similar level. |
| Budget Proposal | Consider the level of Council Tax exemptions and discounts |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | October 2011 government proposals gave billing authorities greater discretion over setting "reliefs". The Council is recommended to maintain its Council Tax Support scheme on the same basis as that introduced on 1 st April 2013. It is estimated that this will cost the Council an additional £60k per annum. However, the administration believes that reducing Council Tax Support to people on low incomes would lead to higher levels of poverty in Oxford, and would add to the collection costs, as trying to get relatively small amounts of money from those on very low incomes is costly. |
| What are the likely risks? | Some income gains are expected |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | The proposals around recommended changes to exemptions will be consulted on as part of the public consultation between December 2013 and January 2014. Maintaining the Council Tax Support Scheme has already undergone full consultation in the previous budget. |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>Changes agreed in February 2013 have resulted in an increasing number of small debts being created by properties that are empty for short periods. Consequently the following changes are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change Discount Class C - to a 100% discount from the date the property becomes empty for a period of up to 1 month, then apply 0% discount • To change Discount Class A (in need of structural repair) - to give a 100% discount for 2 months, and then apply 0% discount. This would encourage council tax payers to complete the works quickly and remove the need to inspect properties, freeing up Visiting Officer time to focus on income collection. If a property requires major structural repairs then the Council would encourage the |

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| | <p>taxpayer to appeal any Council Tax Band on the property to the Valuation Office Agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Builds - to give 100% discount for one calendar month, then to remove the discount completely to encourage properties into use quicker. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low/ minimal |
| Budget Proposal | Increase in council house rents by 5.42% (in alignment with a national convergence formula that local authorities should follow. Note that the Government are exploring the option of removing the convergence element and have indicated their support to reduce the uplift from RPI to CPI. New proposals will be implemented from April 2015) |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | There is a regular review of housing rents. 5.42% is equivalent to £5.25 per week (average rent will be £102.08/ week) and is expected to produce an additional £1.58 million per annum. Rent increases follow government formulas and form part of the management of the HRA, the direct ability of the Council to meet its HRA repayments and to continue to invest in Decent Homes through insulation and other improvement programmes. |
| What are the likely risks? | <p>There is a possible risk of a rise in rent arrears (also factoring in the change to direct payments). But tenants in receipt of full or partial HB will be covered against rises. Tenants on low incomes but not in receipt of housing benefit are at a greater risk.</p> <p>The Housing service conducts a detailed analysis of the groups at greatest risk to enable proactive work to prevent social housing tenants being placed at risk of being served notices seeking possession.</p> |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Agree to consult on an increase in council rents and service charges through special focus groups of council tenants/ leaseholders |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>The Council will work in accordance with the steer from central government and the current rent calculation formula (RPI + 0.5% + £2). Going forward from 01/04/2015 rent increases are assumed to be limited to rise in line with CPI + 1%, e.g. an average overall of 3.1%</p> <p>A provision for bad debt of around £500k (3%) has been put in place as a contingency</p> <p>Note:The real risk for the social housing sector is around the government policy of welfare reform,</p> |

particularly the “bedroom tax” and benefit caps:

- To mitigate against the risk of rising homelessness the Council has earmarked reserves to meet the costs of rising homelessness or declining ability to place those to whom we owe a legal duty. At 31-03-2014 these are estimated to be around £1 million but with no further transfers into the reserve planned. It has also made a further allocation of £10million provision in the capital programme to purchase dwellings to house families requiring temporary accommodation if required.
- An initial assessment has identified around 635 tenants directly affected by this, e.g. negatively impacted financially through either 14% or 25% benefit cuts for under occupation by one or two rooms. The net result of this, coupled with a £500 p/w benefit cap, is an overall gap of £500k per year for those tenants.
- At the start of the year there were 956 households in Oxford City affected by these changes, of which 668 were Council tenants. This represented an annual loss in Housing Benefit of £534,000. However by the start of November, this number had reduced to 770. In 208 cases a Discretionary Housing Payment has been made to meet the Housing Benefit shortfall to give the claimant time to find a permanent solution. The Council receives a Government Grant for Discretionary Housing Payment which for 2013/14 is £525k.
- Oxford City Council is part of a pilot to show how a local authority can support people affected by welfare reform. This is an important part of our aspirations to mitigate the impact of welfare reform upon local people. Up until 12 November 2013, the pilot had engaged with 780 people of which 203 had been assigned a case worker and are working with the team on an on-going basis. Of these 31 have secured employment, 401 have made applications for a Discretionary Housing Payment and 315 awards have been made. In addition in 577 cases housing or work related advice has been provided.
- To proactively manage this risk the Housing Service is playing an important partnership role (in addition to linking in with financial inclusion strategies) within the DWP Welfare Reform pilot managed and led by Customer Services. An Outreach Worker liaises immediately and directly with those tenants at greatest risk, the Housing service is seconding skilled Options/ Sustainment and Homelessness officers to further assist with this project, and an online support tool covering benefits advice, education/ training providers and the network of local work clubs has also been developed.
- Welfare Reform/ Direct Payments pilot reports have been regularly presented to Scrutiny

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| | Committee and strong governance is in place which includes councillors as well as monthly highlight reports. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial impact of a rise in council house rents could be high but the longer term risk is low/medium. There could be a residual risk that some groups might be disproportionately affected. The Council is confident that arrears will be held at current levels. <i>Overall, and particularly because of the combination of high levels of deprivation in parts of Oxford, and also very high housing costs, Oxford City Council remains especially exposed to adverse financial pressures resulting from welfare reform</i> |
| Budget Proposal | Increase in council house service charges by 3.7% in 2014/ 15 and CPI + 1% thereafter & removal of the service charge limiter subject to a cap of £1 per week per annum on the increase as agreed in the 2013/ 2014 budget |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | <p>There is a regular review of leaseholder charges (caretaking, cleaning, CCTV, communal areas) and these will be linked to increases in the RPI.</p> <p>The proposal to approve a reduction of £1 per week is spread over a four year period to reduce the impact and to end the unfairness of tenants paying different rates for the same services. Council's rent accounts have "service charge limiters" that effectively reduce the level of charges payable. The removal of the limiter will see an increase in service charge income from £168k in 2103/ 14 to £50k in 2016/ 17.</p> |
| What are the likely risks? | <p>It is estimated that 2,800 tenants were potentially impacted in the last financial year. This figure reduces significantly each year as the limiters are removed.</p> <p>The Council will need to determine the greatest areas of disadvantage and whether any specific protected groups are placed more at risk</p> |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Agree to consult on an increase in council rents and service charges through special focus groups of council tenants/ leaseholders |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>The proposal will remove inequity/ anomalies that tenants living side by side and in receipt of the same benefits associated with service charges are being charged different amounts. Tenants in receipt of HB will see the service charge increases covered.</p> <p>Housemark sector benchmarking indicates that the average landlord spends £157 per property on estate services each year and that spend is increasing, therefore this is a prudent financial measure</p> |

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| | to help to maintain the quality of housing stock and services. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low/ medium |
| Budget Proposal | Increases in Fees and Charges across Council services |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | <p>The MTFS allows for fees and charges to increase over the medium term in line with “what the market can bear”</p> <p>Increases are proposed in the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure charges average 3.4% for the majority of activities & CHOICE memberships by 10% (City Leisure) • License fees approximately 2% for a small number of miscellaneous licensing changes, but with pest control increases around 5%(Environmental Development) • Garden waste bins 3.5% to 5.1% (Direct Services) representing a maximum increase of £2 • Car Parking 4.76% (5p) in Parks & 2%-9% (10p) in Car Parks and Off Street (following a two year freeze to 2012/ 2013) (Direct Services) • Cemeteries from 0% to 12.5% for exclusive burial rights (a £100 increase for purchasing 50 year adult grave rights) • The Town Hall charging strategy aimed at ensuring the Town Hall remains the centre of civic and cultural life in the city; but on a more financially sustainable basis, will mean that there will be additional pressures on the availability of rooms for community groups. A full proposal is being developed for a future CEB meeting. Note that the charges for Town Hall roomshave been static for the last three years. |
| What are the likely risks? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some potential risks around the loss of income/ service users, the loss of some HMOs, as well as some community groups being disproportionately affected by specific fee increases and the possible loss of free access to or discounts for Town Hall room bookings. Some fees have been determined by central government but it is important to note that, for example, a 10% rise in planning pre application charges (set by Council as part of its budget last year)followed no increase for three years and that 2012/ 2013 saw anincrease in the number of pre-application requests. Similar outcomes are anticipated around the small increase in service charges • The Council has recognised that affordability of services is a significant problem for those in receipt of benefits. It has built in protections accordingly: with c. 2400 residents (accounting for 23.5% of all service users) receiving free garden waste services. Given the current economic |

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| | <p>climate for the public sector the ability to sustain this free service will be reviewed but any proposal to change would seek to minimise the impact on vulnerable communities. It remains an aim to maintain a universal and free service wherever possible and to minimise the impact of any charging to minimal or zero levels for those in receipt of benefits. Previous charges for garden waste collection services have been set below market rates. Note also that over 1000 residents receive assisted collections and that cases are reviewed annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Development has continued to maintain subsidised services and have regard to the ability to pay where it is not a business transaction. There is no evidence to suggest that service users are dissuaded from making initial applications or renewing licences. Although pest control charges for people in receipt of benefits will increase they are still lower than for other customers and the ED service has put plans in place to develop a different and more cost effective way of delivering pest control services, e.g. to develop an online resource that will give advice and guidance and allow for more cost neutral/ low cost treatments to be purchased from the Council, with a pest controller delivering the products (in a sense a DIY treatment option) and an advice sheet to service users. |
| <p>What public consultation has been planned/ taken place?</p> | <p>Budget consultation annually (December 2013/ January 2014).</p> |
| <p>What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Council service area proposing fee increases will undertake an analysis of service users (where identifiable) to assess any issues of potential adverse impact. For example, City Development has put a process in place since 2011 where the Council's Equalities Business Partner receives the Weekly Planning List in order to flag up any potential issues around access at an early stage. • Crucially, the Council is committed to continuing with protections and exemptions in place. Discounts and subsidies have been put in place, with the concessions continuing for Fusion/ Council Slice Card leisure membership and initiatives such as free swimming for U17s preserved for the duration of the MTFS. Price increases for single activities have been proportionate and generally between 10 to 90 pence per session. The larger total increases in the fees for annual memberships have in part been buffered by the fees for 2012/ 2013 giving discounts of 12 months for the price of ten. • All fees and charges have been applied across the board. In many cases, the small increases being proposed follow a period of two years where no increases were applied. Where |

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| | statutory provisions allow, discretionary reductions will be applied to be both responsive to and influence best practice around compliance (rewarding high standards). |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Generally low/ medium, but there may be groups adversely affected by specific service fees. Consultation and monitoring will take place with these groups once identified. |
| Budget Proposal | New Homes Growth Bonus Payments |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | A system introduced by central government in 2011/ 2012 to pay grant based on the net growth in housing |
| What are the likely risks? | The net growth in housing and affordable homes will have a positive impact on regeneration projects and impact strongly on groups in receipt of benefits and in work but on lower incomes; supporting strategic housing and other local economic growth priorities through Local Enterprise Partnerships |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | The Council will monitor potential growth estimates until 2016/ 17 |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | Conservative estimates indicate a positive return above £1 million for each of the years. The New Homes Bonus will continue to at least 2020. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | |
| Budget Proposal | Safeguarding |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults (£24k per annum over the 2014/ 15 and 2015/ 16 budget years) The Council's policy is available on the following website page: http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/Policies_and_Plans_occw.htm |
| What are the likely risks? | The Council have committed these resources as a result of a recent Safeguarding audit and to ensure that, in discharging its functions, it has regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. |
| What public consultation | N/A |

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| has been planned/ taken place? | |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council continues to play a representative role in the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) see hyperlink http://www.oscb.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OSCB/Home/ • The Council has recently undertaken a significant programme of staff training to mitigate against safeguarding risks • Safeguarding considerations are built into every Equalities Impact Assessment where relevant |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low risk with a high positive impact |
| Budget Proposal | Low Carbon Oxford |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | Maintain contribution to Low Carbon Hub at £50k for 2014-15. The funding will facilitate low carbon innovation and on-going partnership with LCO “pathfinders” (the larger local businesses) to assist them to find solutions to meeting the Council’s 40% carbon reduction target by 2020. |
| What are the likely risks? | This funding will assist the City Council to maintain its active leadership of the low-carbon agenda and ensure that Low Carbon Oxford is able to continue its successful work for a further two years. £25k per annum. This is an effective way of securing and leveraging significant EU intelligent energy match funding and will enable the LCO to continue work relevant to the LEP strategy objectives for low carbon innovation through ESIF funding (county wide but relevant for getting the most from the two Universities’ research and development spin offs). |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | N/A |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | Budget was reduced in 2013-14 budget process as part of Member investment list. The £50k commitment will act as a stimulus to secure match funding on EU grant and enable LCO to plan for when European structural funding might not be available. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low |
| Budget Proposal | Apprenticeships |
| Is this proposal new or | There is an existing approved/ signed off £200k budget for a current cohort of 11 apprentices over |

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| subject to an annual review? | two years. This cohort of trades and administrative apprentices was recruited in September 2012. There is a further commitment to invest £150k in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and to develop the principle of an apprentice cohort being recruited every two years, with the aspiration to recruit between 5-10 apprentices each cohort. |
| What are the likely risks? | It is not anticipated that there are any negative risks. The proposal represents a further opportunity for positive action in recruitment and community leadership, targeting the 16-19 age group and increasing employment from areas of deprivation across the City. |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Undertaken through the budget consultation processes |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | Targeting Oxford City postcodes to develop local talent and potentially underrepresented groups within the Councils' current workforce profile (returns from the 2011 census indicate that the 15-29 group in Oxford has experienced the largest growth). The Council continues to take positive action in recruitment and promotion provisions within the Equality Act 2010 (s.159) to suggest that candidates aged 16-24 meeting the essential criteria will be guaranteed an interview/short listing (similar to a reasonable adjustment for disability under the Two Ticks scheme). Section 158 & 159 might also enable the Council to encourage more women and BME groups to apply for roles in the trade areas. The current successful scheme will be extended over the life of the plan with a commitment to plan a new cohort of apprentices every two years. It also potentially gives the Council a broader opportunity to engage with NEETs through Traineeships and other work experience initiatives that could act as bridges into Apprenticeships |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low risk with a high positive impact |
| Budget Proposal | Educational Attainment |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | There is an existing £400k per annum budget allocation ring fenced for the duration of the MTFS. This initiative provides additional funding (to that provided by the County Council) to assist with enabling children from underachieving primary and secondary schools and communities to access extra support to deliver a step change in educational attainment, which in Oxford City is amongst the lowest in the country. |
| What are the likely risks? | There is likely to be a significant positive equalities impact as the instructional programme aims to |

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| | <p>narrow the gap for children from areas of disadvantage and who have English as an additional language. All school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants in 12 schools serving communities of poverty and with the greatest need will be provided with support. In the schools that receive the support, all children in the 12 schools doing the leadership programme will benefit, and in the schools delivering the instructional programme all children benefit as this programme is delivered through whole class teaching in an inclusive way.</p> |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Through the budget consultation processes |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>The exam results showing the difference in the programme take place in Summer 2014. In the meantime we have tracked the programme in some schools doing informal assessments. The current highlights are</p> <p>41 school leaders from 12 schools participated in a year-long programme to develop world class leadership skills run by Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University. This involved 3 day workshops, 6 half day action leaning sets and 6 seminars with leading edge speakers. Feedback from those attending the programme is that this has helped learn best practice from other schools, improve staff skills through coaching, engage parents more and help teachers improve the quality of teaching and learning. A further 40 leaders will start the next course in January.</p> <p>7 schools are undertaking instructional programmes in schools in reading, writing and maths. Early results show children have made significant progress, for example in two schools children have made a year's progress in 6 months and in 2 schools children have made accelerated progress in mathematics. The programmes have been running between 6 months to a year so far and the full impact of the programmes is not expected to be seen until they have been running for 18 months.</p> <p>The City is also supporting schools through an assisted housing scheme and two schools have initially taken up the offer to advertise posts with an offer of assistance.</p> |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low risk with a high positive impact |
| Budget Proposal | Youth Activities |

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| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | Existing £240k per annum ring fenced for the duration of the MTFS |
| What are the likely risks? | The greatest risks are that the provision is not targeted to areas of greatest need and the Council is unable to expand extra activities to improve life-chances, or that any budget underspend might be then used for other projects. |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | Through the budget consultation processes&Youth Ambition Strategy consultation between April-June 2013 and an earlier extensive review 2012/ 2013. The Youth Ambition Strategy 2013-2017 document and action plan can be found via the link below and contains evidence of local needs analysis, NEET (Not in Employment, Training or Education) figures and the key performance targets http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/Policies_and_Plans_occw.htm |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>This initiative will in part help address the County Council's reductions in youth provision (where appropriate and to the extent affordable)and will target key areas of deprivation across the city. The initiative also offers the possibility of potential partnership funding levered from other organisations such as Sport England. It also offers opportunities under the Youth Ambition grant programme.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the investment can in part be evidenced through parts of theannual grant commissioning reports to City Executive Board that outline assessments of the impact/ value for money of commissioned projects across the city.</p> <p>Case studies are also being developed by the Positive Futures Programme Manager covering effective interventions and expanding the reach of the programme through more widespread commissioning of positive futures services by community groups and through the Youth Ambition Programme pilot, aninnovative part of Oxford's ambition to provide a better service for young people through 50k of grants available for youth activities up to the end of March 2014. The current corporate target is for positive activities to reach 4000 through holiday activity programmes and to increase participation by 5% year on year and with 12 NEETs moving into work or education/ training in year 1 of the strategy.</p> <p>A full needs assessment was undertaken before the writing of the strategy, which also opens up new inclusion and participation routessuch as a campaign to increase the numbers of young people registering to vote.</p> |

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| Overall assessment of the equality risks | There is a risk of deprived communities not receiving critical youth services or of the Positive Futures programme employing fewer sessional staff, but the Council's decision to invest in this area can only have positive impacts at a time when County Council funding is under threat of cuts. |
| Budget Proposal | Prior investments deleted from the budget |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | Homeshare (£10k) and Elderly person support (£50k) |
| What are the likely risks? | None estimated |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | N/A |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | A review of the Homeshare programme indicated that it had not achieved the aim of being effective at promoting more inter-generational home sharing through letting, with only one successful home share. Age UK are an Oxfordshire County Council supported partner and will continue to work with the City Council to provide advice, guidance and support to grant commissioned initiatives aimed at reducing social isolation in older groups where it is thought they can add value and aid sustainable programmes. Future partnership work will be subject to full monitoring. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low |
| Budget Proposal | Living Wage |
| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | This will fund an increase in the "Living Wage" for all Oxford City Council employees and contractors to £8.36 per hour. We will seek to promote this living wage to all employers in Oxford City. £9k per annum. Oxford City Council has an underlying commitment to pay rates that will always exceed the national rate. The proposal to uplift the living wage should not be confused with normal pay bargaining mechanisms nor will it act as a unilateral agreement on pay. It recommends a way to prudently manage consequential contractual inflation in alignment with medium term financial planning for 2014/ 15 onwards. The Council has already paid considerable attention to its lowest paid staff as part of its five year pay |

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| | <p>bargaining deal and is already paying staff above the living wage.</p> <p>Note that rates for unskilled/ new Apprentices will be different depending on existing industry rates. It is the aspiration of the Council's apprenticeship programmes that qualified apprentices are succession planned into full time positions where posts are available at the end of their initial fixed term apprentice contracts.</p> |
| What are the likely risks? | It is anticipated that the only direct potential impacts are (1) those on the future costs of procurement rather than on an individual level, and (2) ensuring that adjustment mechanisms to the OLW are applied each April to allow time for budgeting and implementation. |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | The basis for determining and applying any future increase in the OLW will not require wider consultation as it merely appends a current policy commitment reflecting significant leadership as an employer and in terms of our community and wider social responsibilities. |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | <p>The Council has identified that the biggest single financial impacts will be that the annual costs of the Fusion contract will increase by another £36k (the difference in the uplift from the £8.13 already budgeted for to the new rate of £8.36), and potentially that future costs of procurement might rise. However, it is not anticipated that significant adjustments in the medium term financial plan will be necessary to meet these additional costs.</p> <p>The proposal to introduce and maintain a percentage differential between the Oxford Living Wage and the London Living Wage will be subject to an annual review by the Head of HR and sign offs from Finance and Legal.</p> |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | <p>The Council believes by being only one of 18 local authorities committed to paying the national living wage (£7.65), and indeed going well beyond this level (to a proposed rate of £8.36 effective from April 2014), that the policy has a strong socio economic impact across all protected characteristics recognised under the Equality Act 2010 and might encourage other local employers to follow suit.</p> <p>The most significant impacts of paying an OLW are therefore likely to have positive effects on the Council's recruitment and retention, improved staff morale, motivation, productivity and the broader reputational impacts of being an ethical employer, campaigner and community leader.</p> |
| Budget Proposal | Oxford Cycle City |

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| Is this proposal new or subject to an annual review? | This will allow the targeted creation of more cycle lanes and better signage. £10k per annum as part of a four year programme. The Oxford Cycle City Plan sets out a vision and 'living' programme for the improvement of cycling infrastructure and promotion in Oxford. The strategic vision is to encourage cycling at all levels in Oxford, and in particular encourage new cyclists |
| What are the likely risks? | None estimated |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | No formal consultation but extensive analysis of indices of deprivation reports |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | There is a clear spatial relationship between the popularity of cycling and the relative degree of deprivation (with low levels of cycling evident in more deprived wards). This suggests more potential to improve levels of cycling in more deprived wards, which in turn would improve the deprivation indices through improved physical activity, and benefits to income by dint of cycling being a very low-cost form of transport. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | It is considered that enabling Oxford residents, workers and visitors to cycle safely and comfortably will have a positive impact on social inclusion and equality. Travelling by bicycle is very low-cost, even taking into account bicycle purchase and maintenance; therefore there are potentially significant benefits for those on low incomes. Oxford Cycle City also links strongly with the City and County Councils' joint role in promoting healthy active communities, for example through the work of Get Oxfordshire Active and the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership. There may also be some perception of inequality particularly where improvements to on-road cycle paths are not able to fully accommodate cycles with child trailers, or where shared use footways limit the width of pavements for pedestrians which have an impact on those with children, including use of pushchairs. The perceived problems are balanced against the benefits to pedestrians, and particularly wheelchair users and buggy users, of upgrading routes to provide quality level surfacing. By way of example, Sustrans have identified a huge increase in use by walkers and wheelchair users of upgraded routes on the National Cycle Network |
| Budget Proposal | Conversion of council flat sites to recycling food waste |
| Is this proposal new or | This will convert remaining council flat sites to recycling; with improved bin stores. £27k per |

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| subject to an annual review | annum. This will be part of a three year programme to roll out food waste recycling to all HRA flat sites across over 500 locations. It will be a city wide programme and bring services in line with standard services to all households (including assisted collections where identified). |
| What are the likely risks? | The lead in time for the procurement of a bespoke vehicle to undertake the recycling is estimated to be 4-6 months. The programme therefore has a realistic starting date of October 2014 (subject to the previous caveat). The service will necessitate a full review of the collection round and establishing a new schedule. |
| What public consultation has been planned/ taken place? | A pilot scheme has been running involving 1200 tenants which is currently seeing 0.8 tonnes of food waste being recycled and positive feedback has been received from elected members on this. |
| What mitigating actions will the Council implement to offset any negative impacts? | Monitoring reports (including Scrutiny committee) and annual reassessments will enable Council officers to forecast trends and pressures and to put in place any remedial actions as might be necessary to ensure communal flat sites are treated fairly. Leaflets and publications on waste and recycling are clear and simple for residents including pictorial leaflets anyone who first language may not be English. The Council will ensure all leaflets and publications on waste and recycling are written in plain English and are clear and simple for residents across all communities to understand. This will include producing pictorial leaflets to further assist anyone whose first language may not be English. At this stage it is not considered an effective or proportionate use of resources to produce leaflets translated into a number of specific community languages, although this may be reconsidered if future recycling initiatives need to target key post codes or community groups. |
| Overall assessment of the equality risks | Low |
| Budget Proposal | The following positive equalities initiatives and investment proposals established in the budget in2012/13 are assumed to continue within the Council's base budget and will provide on-going support for the Councils Corporate Plan objectives for aVibrant |

Sustainable Economy, Meeting Housing Needs, Strong Active Communities and a Cleaner Greener Oxford:

Cricket festival, cricket nets and tennis cage: This provides an annual cricket festival, enjoyed by players from all backgrounds, in Cowley Marsh park. In addition, a new cricket cage and tennis nets in Cowley Marsh park have been provided. -£2k per annum

Promotion of free swimming: This will deliver a substantial programme to ensure that young people, notably from backgrounds which are less likely to access free swimming, are aware of and take advantage of the opportunity -£28k per annum

Leisure / school partnership activities: This budget is intended to mitigate the impact from cuts to youth sport by the Government and County Council- £33k per annum

Locking of Florence Park: This provides continued funding to lock Florence Park in the evenings, to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. £5k per annum.

Additional hours for litter picking and maintenance in parks: Following the successful modernisation of play areas across the City, usage of parks has increased substantially. This fund allows improved maintenance and litter picking in our parks. £15k per annum.

Legal aid – welfare advice: Following Government cuts to Legal Aid for many needing advice and support on welfare issues, this will create a two-year support post to mitigate the impact on those in need. -£29k per annum

Groundworks Environmental Improvement Programme: This will deliver a social enterprise programme to clear watercourses, ditches and streams to improve flood protection. £6k per annum.

Stronger private rented sector enforcement: This fund will allow greater proactive enforcement of standards in the private rented sector -£68k per annum

Events – providing events in the city - £50k per annum

Carbon reduction: This fund is intended to enable a reduction in Oxford City Council's carbon footprint to 5% per annum.

New low-emission litter picking vehicle in city centre: This additional vehicle enables side-waste to be removed more effectively from around bins in the City Centre.- £2k per annum

Proactive riverbank enforcement: This budget provides a targeted programme of enforcement to deal with the growing problem of illegal moorings.- £22k per annum

Proactive night time noisy party patrol: This budget provides proactive work to reduce noise problems in areas and at times where there has been a history of noise complaints. £12k per annum

Cleaner greener area based door-to-door campaign: This budget extends successful work to promote the “Cleaner Greener” Oxford agenda, improving recycling and street cleanliness throughout the City. £12k per annum

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