

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 7 December 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Leader), Turner (Deputy Leader), Cook, Lygo, Smith and Tanner.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bance, Coulter, McManners and Timbs.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

42. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Full written questions with answers were distributed at the start of the meeting. These are attached to the minutes as an appendix.

43. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Chair of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted two reports (previously circulated, now appended) on the Benefits Fundamental Service Review and the Asset Management Framework.

The Chair of the Finance and Performance Panel of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee also submitted two reports (previously circulated, now appended) making comments on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-42 and Corporate Plan performance.

The Chair of the Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) on Partnership working and increased public involvement in decision making.

Resolved to thank the Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Panel for their useful input and to accept the recommendations in the reports, namely:-

Benefits Fundamental Service Review

- (1) That the Board should be satisfied that the re-allocation of support service charges from Customer Services away from Benefits and towards other service users did not increase the total cost of those services;
- (2) That the Board should be more ambitious in its setting of economic targets for the Review and work towards a benchmark that reflected the best of those local authorities with similar ambitions.

Asset Management Framework

- (1) That the Board should agree to affirm its commitment to providing good and sustainable budgets to tackle the maintenance backlog and investment in order to provide for the most effective use of the Council's assets and that each political group should support this within their own budget proposals;
- (2) That the Board should set a target in the Asset Management Framework of a 5% rate of return on investment assets.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

- (1) To review as a matter of urgency the Council's current policy and partnerships for rent debt and debt advice management in order to ensure that the Council has in place the resources and systems to support tenants, and otherwise to do all the Council can to avoid or contain debt;
- (2) That the Housing Fundamental Service Review should aim for clear value for money targets and ambitions so that robust and transparent delivery could be achieved;
- (3) In the context of co-regulation and performance management, to take all opportunities to ensure that the Housing Service offered represented good value for money when compared to the best and that management costs per dwelling be set in comparable terms.

Corporate Plan Performance

- (1) That the information presented for the Corporate Plan targets should represent the accurate position at the point of measurement.

Partnership Working and increased public involvement in decision making

- (1) That an extension to the performance reporting framework that was already in place around the Corporate Plan be developed to show up to 12 targets from partnership action plans that were specific to the City and contributed to or directly delivered the Council's corporate priorities and to report to members twice yearly on progress;
- (2) That Scrutiny members should have early access to the organisational forward planning of the Policy Framework and strategies so they are clear on development and progress;
- (3) To agree that Councillor Wilkinson should take the lead on Scrutiny involvement in the Oxford Strategic Partnership refresh;
- (4) To agree that a Scrutiny member should 'shadow' the Board member engaged in the Health and Well Being Partnership;
- (5) That a quarterly newsletter on partnership working be produced for residents' groups and other interested parties.

44. LEISURE FEES AND CHARGES 2012/13

The Head of Leisure and Parks submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) proposing amendments to fees and charges for leisure facilities for 2012.

Resolved to approve the following as the basis for fees and charges for leisure facilities from 1 January 2012:-

- (a) All Bonus concessionary memberships to not increase; and
- (b) All other charges to increase by 4.5%.

45. CAR PARKS CHARGES - REVIEW

The Head of Direct Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) proposing amendments to the level of charges in some Council run car parks.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the proposed variation to coach parking arrangements and tariffs as set out in paragraph 13 of the report, to be effective, subject to consideration of any representations received, from 1 February 2012; and
- (2) Note that charges were not proposed to be varied at any other City centre, suburban or Parks car parks.

46. CONSULTATION BUDGET

Resolved to:-

- (1) Agree the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2012-13 to 2015-16 and the 2012-13 General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital budgets for consultation as set out in Appendices 1-7 to the report;
- (2) Instruct officers to proceed with delivering the efficiency savings as set out in Appendix 3 to the report in line with prudent financial management;
- (3) Thank officers from the Finance Service for producing a high quality budget document for consultation; and
- (4) Place on record thanks to all staff across the Council for their continued hard work and positive attitude during challenging financial times.

47. HRA 30 YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

The Executive Director for Housing and Regeneration submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) requesting approval to undertake public consultation on the current draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve consultation on the current draft HRA Business Plan principles through the tenant and leaseholder road shows; and
- (2) Note the current draft HRA Business Plan which would be developed further as Department for Communities and Local Government funding principles were confirmed.

48. CORPORATE PLAN - CONSULTATION

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) introducing the Council's Corporate Plan for 2012-17 for consultation.

Resolved to agree copy and targets for the Corporate Plan 2012-2017 and authorise its release for consultation.

49. PERIODIC REPORTING - FINANCE 2011/12

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) setting out the forecast outturn position for the Council's Capital and Revenue budgets as at 30 September 2011.

Resolved to note the report.

50. PERIODIC REPORTING - PERFORMANCE 2011/12

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) providing an update of the Council's progress against the twenty Corporate Plan targets for the period April to September 2011.

Resolved to note the progress made in the first half of 2011/12 against the Corporate Plan targets set for 2011/12.

51. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - HALF YEAR REVIEW

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) providing details of the performance of the treasury management function for the period April to September 2011 and changes to operational investment activities for the remainder of the financial year.

Resolved to note:-

- (1) The performance of the treasury management function in the first half of 2011/12; and
- (2) The proposed changes in operational investment activities for the remainder of 2011/12.

52. PLAYING PITCHES STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

The Head of City Leisure and Parks submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval to release the Playing Pitches Strategy for public consultation.

Resolved to approve the draft Playing Pitches Strategy for public consultation.

53. GREEN SPACES STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

The Head of City Leisure and Parks submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval to release the Green Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

Resolved to approve the draft Green Spaces Strategy for public consultation.

54. NEW CEMETERY SPACE PROJECT.

The Head of Leisure and Parks and the Head of Corporate Assets submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) updating the Board on the findings from phase one of the burial space review and recommending the next steps.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Agree the principles for the provision of additional burial space and to remain a provider of burial services going forward; and
- (2) Agree that more detailed work as referred to in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5 of the report be carried out at the site north of Oxford Road, Horspath to assess viability prior to a full business case being developed.

55. OUT OF HOURS CALL HANDLING CONTRACT

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) making recommendations for the procurement of an out of hours calls service and lone worker monitoring system.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Grant project approval for the provision of out of hours call handling and a lone worker monitoring system; and

- (2) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for City Services to enter into new out of hours call handling and lone worker monitoring contract(s) for the next 3 years with the possibility of a further 2 year extension.

(This item was called in to Scrutiny but the decision was not referred back to the Board by Scrutiny)

56. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE REQUESTS CONFIGURATION

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) on changes to the service offered by Environmental Development.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Agree the proposed changes to the response to low priority services outlined in the report; and
- (2) Authorise the Head of Environmental Development to implement the changes.

57. BENEFITS FUNDAMENTAL SERVICE REVIEW

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) updating the Board on the ongoing review of the Benefits Service.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the Benefits performance standards as follows:-
 - i. To process new benefit claims within 14 days
 - ii. To process changes in circumstance within 10 days;
- (2) Note the proposed reconfiguration of the Service to achieve the efficiency savings in the budget and meet customers' reasonable expectations; and
- (3) Note that the processing of new benefit claims in 2010/11 was in the top quartile for performance nationally according to the Department of Work and Pensions and that this position had been maintained in Quarter 1 of 2011/12.

58. APPLICATION OF FEED-IN TARIFF TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval to proceed with the pilot of a scheme to realise the benefits of the feed-in tariff.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Grant project approval for installation of photovoltaics on the buildings set out in the report;
- (2) Make available £670,000 of capital expenditure to fund the project and include in the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes subject to sufficient shortfall being identified in the Quarter 3 monitoring report;
- (3) Authorise the Executive Director for City Services to undertake the project subject to the payback period not exceeding 15 years.

59. LIVING WAGE - OXFORD - REVIEW

The Head of People and Equalities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) recommending a change to Oxford's "living wage."

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the success of the implementation of the Oxford Living Wage; including as referred to in the Head of Business Improvement's report on its application by local suppliers; and
- (2) Agree the proposal to increase the level of the Oxford minimum wage to £8.01 per hour, with effect from 1 January 2012 thus ensuring it better reflected the cost of living in Oxford.

60. PLANNING MONITORING - ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) presenting for approval the Annual Monitoring report to be sent to the Secretary of State.

Resolved:-

- (1) To approve the Annual Monitoring Report 2010/11 for submission to the Secretary of State; and
- (2) Authorise the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.

61. SUSTAINABLE STRATEGY FOR OXFORD - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) detailing the sustainability strategy for Oxford.

Resolved to RECOMMEND Council to adopt the Sustainability Strategy as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

62. PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY REVIEW

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) giving the Council's draft response to the Boundary Commission's review of electoral boundaries in Oxfordshire.

Resolved to endorse the response to the Boundary Commission which made the following statements:-

- (1) To support the proposal to transfer Carfax Ward from Oxford East constituency into Oxford West and Abingdon constituency;
- (2) Not to support the proposed name for the new "Oxford" constituency, feeling that it should retain the name "Oxford East"; and
- (3) Not to support the proposed name for the new "Abingdon and Oxford North" constituency, feeling that it should retain the name "Oxford West and Abingdon"

63. POSITIVE FUTURES PROGRAMME - DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Housing and Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) proposing a model for the delivery of the Positive Futures Programme.

Resolved to approve the in-house delivery and commissioning model as the Council's approach for delivering activities to vulnerable young people, supported by the Council's strategy to optimise fees and charges, but that the Service should continue to look critically at different options for future service delivery.

64. CORPORATE EQUALITIES SCHEME

The Head of People and Equalities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking adoption of a new Corporate Equalities Scheme.

Resolved to approve the new Corporate Equalities Scheme 2012-2015 for implementation.

65. HOUSING STRATEGY - CONSULTATION

The Head of Housing and Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval for public consultation of the draft Housing Strategy 2012 to 2015.

Resolved to approve the draft Housing Strategy 2012 to 2015 for public consultation.

66. ICT STRATEGY

The Head of ICT Strategy submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) proposing a strategy for the procurement and management of the Council's IT systems for the forthcoming five years.

Resolved to approve the draft IT Strategy and associated action plan.

67. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) outlining the Council's Performance Improvement Framework for 2011 to 2015.

Resolved to approve the Performance Improvement Framework 2011 - 2015.

68. FUTURE ITEMS

Nothing was raised under this item.

69. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.55 pm

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CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 7 December 2011

Agenda item 3 – Public Questions

A. Questions from Nigel Gibson on agenda item 5 (Leisure Fees and Charges)

1. Paragraph 1.2 of the accompanying report states that there has been just under £4m of investment into the leisure centres and a corresponding 100,000 more people attending leisure centres each year. Can you please clarify whether you actually mean visits to the centres, or people, and if you do mean people please provide the total visits (assuming each person visited at least once)?

Response:

100,000 more visits.

2. Paragraph 1.2 of the accompanying report states that there has been just under £4m of investment into the leisure centres and a corresponding 100,000 more people (or visits, depending on the answer to the previous question). Can you please provide a breakdown of investment by leisure centre by year, and the corresponding increase (or decrease) in attendance (people or visits, depending on the answer to the previous question) by year?

Response (to question 2):

Investment in leisure facilities	2009/10 (Apr to Mar)	2010/11 (Apr to Mar)	2011/12 (Apr to Dec)
Barton Leisure Centre	£91,000	£634,000	£130,000
Blackbird Leys leisure Centre	£118,000	£542,000	£200
Blackbird Leys Pool	£3,000	£56,000	Nil
Ferry Leisure Centre	£89,000	£735,000	Nil
Hinksey Outdoor Pool	£53,000	£87,000	£126,000
Oxford Ice Rink	£41,000	£845,000	£25,000
Temple Cowley Pool	£14,000	£84,000	£2,000

Rounded to the nearest £1,000 / £100. The remaining investment costs are committed

Increase (decrease) in visits to leisure facilities	2009/10 (Apr to Mar)	2010/11 (Apr to Mar)	2011/12 (Apr to Oct)
Barton Leisure Centre	4,800	10,000	15,300
Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre	44,600	50,500	(13,700)
Blackbird Leys Pool	(6,000)	(9,600)	(2,900)
Ferry Leisure Centre	(9,700)	33,200	71,600
Hinksey Outdoor Pool	980	(5,000)	(200)
Oxford Ice Rink	(28,100)	(4,000)	3,300
Temple Cowley Pool	33,100	30,300	(33,200)

Rounded to the nearest 100 visits

3. In Paragraph 1.4 of the accompanying report, the case is stated for moving the annual increase in admission charges from April to January. Can you please explain how not increasing the charge until April 2012 would place a 'financial strain', since the previous increase was brought in 3 months early in January 2011?

Response:

It would lead to a 15 month period with no price increases over a time when costs have increased.

4. In Paragraph 2.3 the increase in charges is related to the Retail Price Index. Can you please explain why you do not use the price index that is now recognized as standard within the public sector, the Consumer Price Index, as surely that would provide better value for users?

Response:

The Retail Price Index was the chosen indices when the contract was implemented.

5. With reference to Paragraph 2.6, can you please explain and provide more detail around the "benchmarking data" and "level of Council investment into leisure assets" and how this provides "very good" value for money?

Response:

Fees and charges proposals were benchmarked against leisure providers in neighbouring districts, other Fusion Lifestyle leisure management contracts, and against the Councils Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) nearest neighbour groups (i.e. Cambridge, Guildford, Watford, Winchester, Wycombe, etc).

Leisure investment has assisted in the overall reduction in subsidy per visitor, reducing the cost of service to the local taxpayer. Additionally the quality of provision has significantly improved and a wider leisure offer is now available to users.

6. With reference to Paragraph 4.1, can you please list precisely the opportunities to reduce carbon impact that Fusion Lifestyle has explored in partnership with the Council?

Response:

Voltage optimisers; Lagging and insulation for hot water piping, as well as valve and flange covers; Waste management; Biomass boilers; General programme of

energy management enhancements to building management systems; Lighting; Repair or replacement of circulation pumps; Repair and replacement of building management equipment; Installation of photovoltaic panels on leisure facility roofs; Combined heat and power (CHP Unit); Heat recovery systems; Uplift lighting; Environmental awareness delivered to staff; Automated Meter Reading devices; Light Emitting Diodes (LED); Carbon Champion representation and engagement; Collaboration in achieving the energy reduction verification kitemark; Advanced monitoring and targeting approaches to eliminate energy wastage; Usage of waste heat to offset energy usage for other processes.

7. With reference to Paragraph 4.1, can you please explain why, despite the assertion on your website to the contrary, you have not provided rigid pool covers at Temple Cowley Leisure Centre, since they will provide a payback of under 12 months in terms of energy savings, and the centre will remain open until at least early 2013?

Response:

The analysis for mechanical pool covers was for a longer payback than the remaining life of the facility.

8. With reference to Paragraph 4.1 can you please what the partnership has done to continue to encourage access by public transport or none (sic) vehicular methods to reduce the carbon impact?

Response: Barton and Ferry have had increased and improved bike racks installed and public transport is promoted.

9. With reference to Paragraph 2.4, can you please tell me how many corporate memberships of the City Leisure Centres are currently held, what their value is, and how much you propose to increase each of them by as part of this Agenda Item?

Response:

This information has been requested from Fusion Lifestyle.

10. Paragraph 1.2 talks about the annual savings of £660,000 and the £4m of investment. Can you please confirm that this investment is part of the £5.5m capital investment contractual obligation the Council has to Fusion?

Response:

By making the saving the Council has freed up monies to improve its facilities.

11. Further to the above question, can you please confirm that when the projected operational savings from the Fusion contract of £7m are considered with the contractual obligation of £5.5m investment, that the overall saving over ten years is only approximately £150,000 per year?

Response:

The 660k is the revenue savings. The investment is capitalised as it enhances the value of the buildings which remain in the ownership of the Council.

12. What proportion of the admission charges are paid back to the Council?

Response:

Answer is given in paragraph 6.1 of the report.

13. What is the value of the admission charge repayment to the Council from Fusion in each year of the contract to date, and what is the projected repayment value for the current financial year (assuming you vote to increase charges in January 2012) and the next financial year ie 2012/13?

Response:

This is also answered in paragraph 6.1.

B. Question from Mark Pitt on agenda item 21 (Planning Monitoring)

Will the CEB accept that:-

As:

The latest SHLAA Update report referred to in the Housing Monitoring Report April 2010 – March 2011 (In Agenda) concludes that housing targets, even without windfalls, will be met, and possible large windfall sites have not yet been assessed via the DPD process:

And:

The Oxford City Green Spaces Final Report (Update 2007) identified the North East suburbs surrounding Ruskin as having the lowest green space provision in the city:

“In general, accessibility to City level formal sites is good, except an area in North Marston and Headington Villages and including Barton and Sandhills and Risinghurst Urban Villages. Access to Informal sites is good in the west and east of the City but poor in Marston, Headington, Blackbird Leys and Littlemore Urban Villages.”

And:

The lack of gardens at Barton

Further:

That Barton's per capita green space provision will be reduced even further by the loss of the Barton AAP area, and the attendant increase in population

And:

The change in the Barton AAP area was presented after the Core Strategy was voted by the Full Council

That there is no "Clear and Convincing" justification under PPS5 to destroy part of designated conservation asset at Ruskin Fields, and it should be brought into use as a green space for all to use and should be excluded from the Barton AAP?

Response:

Thank you for your question. This comment is comparable to quite a number that the City Council received in response to the public consultation it held into the Barton Area Action Plan preferred options document in the summer. It also received counter comments that consider some land at Ruskin should be allocated for housing.

The Council is to consider the next version of the Barton AAP at its meeting of Full Council on 19th December. One of the things that Members will be deciding at that meeting is whether or not this land should be identified for development.

The Committee papers will be in the public arena on the Council's website from 12th December onwards. This will indicate what officers are recommending to Members.

C. Question from Audrey Mullender on agenda item 21 (Planning Monitoring)

The Housing Strategy states that a strategic objective is to provide more affordable housing. Can the committee please comment on how the strategy in terms of delivering affordable housing is able to influence the Core Strategy that takes the lead in delivering housing in Oxford, to ensure that benefits and constraints of schemes, such as The Ruskin Fields proposal currently being considered within the Barton AAP and Site

and Housing DPD, are considered fully and appropriately in terms of the affordable housing provision offered.

Response:

The Adopted Core Strategy includes a policy that requires all qualifying housing development to provide 50% affordable housing. One role of the Housing Strategy is to provide support to the Core Strategy, for example by providing greater clarification in relation to the nature of the affordable housing that will be sought on qualifying sites at the planning application stage.

Therefore if and once potential housing schemes are allocated such as through the Barton AAP or Sites and Housing DPD then the Housing Strategy comes into play not visa versa.

The Council is to consider the next versions of the Barton AAP and the Sites and Housing DPD at its meeting of Full Council on 19th December. One of the things that Members will be deciding at that meeting is whether or not this land at Ruskin should be identified for development.

The Committee papers will be in the public arena on the Council's website from 12th December onwards. This will indicate what officers are recommending to Members.

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