

# **CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Wednesday 5 December 2012**

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Price (Leader), Cook, Coulter, Curran, Lygo, Seamons, Sinclair and Tanner.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Lindsay Cane (Law and Governance), Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of City Development), Simon Howick (Head of Human Resources and Facilities), Sebastian Johnson (Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Finance), William Reed (Law and Governance), Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services), Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), Lois Stock (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer), Anna Winship (Financial Accounting Manager), Nick Worlledge (City Development) and Jackie Yates (Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services)

## **54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Smith and Turner.

## **55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received

## **56. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions were received.

## **57. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The following reports from scrutiny were submitted:-

- (1) Periodic reporting, Finance, Performance and Risk 2012/2013 – integrated report, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2012/2013. Councillor Mike Rowley presented this report to the Board. Comments are detailed under the appropriate agenda item (minute 64 refers);
- (2) Treasury Management mid year review - Councillor Mike Rowley presented this report to the Board. Comments are detailed under the appropriate agenda item (minute 65 refers);
- (3) Homelessness Strategy Review – Councillor Stuart McCready presented the report. Councillor Scott Seamons gave the following responses to the scrutiny recommendations:-
  - (a) The City Council had reached an agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to keep the hostel open for 2013, and will work together to develop and approach for the future. This cut is the responsibility of

Oxfordshire County Council. District Councils within Oxfordshire have a desire to protect this budget;

- (b) The ring fence around the Supporting People budget was removed by Government, thus enabling councils to use the funding elsewhere. Many Councils have started to cut budgets;
  - (c) Consultation with landlords is ongoing and the suggestion made at recommendation 2 will be taken forwards;
  - (d) The Action Plan that is to be presented to CEB in February will deal with mediation services and monitoring;
  - (e) It was agreed that the Action Plan could be presented to the Housing Scrutiny Panel for review and monitoring.
- (4) Procurement Strategy - Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer presented the report to the Board. Comments are detailed under the appropriate agenda item (minute 59 refers);
- (5) Parking in Car Parks - Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer presented the report to the Board. This item was the subject of a call in which was not upheld, but comments were made about signage. Tim Sadler Executive Director, Community Services, observed that he was mindful of all the recommendations, however he felt that the balance of signs was now correct and that there was nothing further to do.
- (6) Area Forum – Review of first year - Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer presented the report to the Board. Councillor Bob Price explained that a cross party working group was considering the whole issue of Council Governance, and intended to have a report ready by the end of the Council year. He noted that “variable geometry” had always been part of Area Forums since their inception. Councillor Dee Sinclair thanked Councillors Saunders and Wilkinson for all their hard work on this topic. She noted that forums were only one of many tools for engaging the public. She endorsed the scrutiny recommendations.

Resolved to agree the following recommendations:-

- (1) That an informed debate takes place between Councillors in their area grouping and community development officers to agree how Councillors’ community leadership roles can best be delivered and supported in their areas, within the Councillor, officer and likely resident resources available;
- (2) For the various mechanisms already available to councillors to champion the views of their communities within the organisation to be detailed clearly within protocols and made clear to all;
- (3) That the Chief Executive facilitates a cross party debate on the various roles played by elected councillors as ward representatives and members of the Council. The aim of these debates would be to get broad agreement on the expectations and requirements to allow training and support programmes to be designed, put in place and command the respect and engagement of all.

The following was not accepted because this matter was already in hand and would be picked up as part of the review of Governance structures:-

(4) That the Council considers within its governance structures how the community voice can be heard in a way that allows:

- Ideas, issues and solutions from communities to be heard and considered by decision makers through their ward councillors in a timely manner.
- For service and officer protocols to exist that link community views within service construction and outcomes.
- In all circumstances for the views and challenges of communities to be responded to via their local councillors or decision makers whichever is more appropriate.

## **58. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which presented for approval and adoption a new Organisational Development Strategy.

Councillor Bob Price introduced the report to the Board and invited Simon Howick, Head of HR and Facilities, to give some background and context.

Simon Howick informed the Board that sickness levels had improved greatly and that the Council was heading towards 7 days per employee this year. Over 700 members of staff had no sick leave during the last year and a further 200 had fewer than 3 days sick leave. If this was placed on a table for comparison with other local authorities, the City Council would be mid-range. The target was to achieve 6 days per employee. It was more difficult for the City Council than it was for many other authorities because Oxford City had a large operative workforce. The public sector average was 6.5 days.

Councillor Price noted and thanked the Unions for their support in this process over the past year.

Resolved: To approve and adopt the Organisational Development Strategy as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

## **59. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2013-2016**

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval from CEB to adopt the Council's new Procurement Strategy 2013-2016.

Councillor Bob Price presented the report to the Board. He informed the Board that the City Council was now within the County Procurement Hub.

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted comments. The response from the Board Member and Director are attached as an appendix to the minutes. The Board accepted the following scrutiny comments:-

- (1) In order to meet the requirements of the Social Value Act 2012, the Council should review all new tender opportunities and include within all

tender evaluation criteria a range of criteria that meets the requirements within this Act to encourage a more diverse range of organisations to be able to successfully win Council business;

- (2) That the strategy as a living document should be kept under frequent review.

The following recommendation was not accepted:-

- (3) That a more formal and robust environmental assessment of the impact of products and services procured by the Council should be required as part of the tender process.

## **60. TENANCY STRATEGY AND POLICY - APPROVAL**

The Head of Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) seeking approval for the Tenancy Strategy and Policy for Oxford following consultation with stakeholders, tenants and the public.

Councillor Scott Seamons presented the report to the Board. He confirmed that the Council intended to stay with the social rent model.

Resolved to recommend to Council for formal adoption the Tenancy Strategy for Oxford City and Tenancy Policy for Council homes.

## **61. HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES, APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2012/2013 - REVIEW OF PROGRESS**

The Head of Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which gave an update on the Council's progress against the Housing Strategy Action Plan priorities for April to September 2012.

Councillor Scott Seamons introduced the report to the Board.

He indicated that the comments made by scrutiny had been taken on board and that he would be happy to work with them to produce a more accessible document. Councillor Seamons confirmed that there would be 6 monthly reviews in September and March each year.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report;
- (2) Request that a further update concerning the progress on debt advice (and other items that are currently "in the red") be emailed to all Councillors before March.

## **62. TRADING STRATEGY (EXTERNAL INCOME GENERATION) - UPDATE REPORT**

The Executive Director, Community Service, submitted a report which updated the City Executive Board on the progress of charging for discretionary services, following the approval of the approach in a report to CEB on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011.

Councillor Bob Price presented this report to the Board and explained its background. Peter Sloman (Chief Executive) observed that many other public sector bodies wanted to trade with the Council, and that the Council had a long tradition of doing this.

### Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report;
- (2) Continue to support the recommendations agreed in the report to CEB given on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011.

## **63. DOMESTIC WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION - POLICY CHANGE FOR SITES WITH COMMUNAL BIN STORAGE AND HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION**

The Head of Direct Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought a revision of the policy in respect of waste collection from flats. The intention was to ensure that adequate recycling facilities were available at privately owned or rented flats, and that recycling rates at these properties should increase to at least 50%.

Councillor John Tanner presented the report to the Board. He confirmed that the Council would contact landlords, not tenants, and that although the Council could not afford to subsidise landlords, it would advise on where the cheapest bins could be obtained.

Lindsay Cane (Legal) asked for confirmation of his understanding that this would be rolled out on a pilot basis. This was confirmed.

### Resolved:-

To approve the following proposed change to the Council's waste and recycling collection policy:-

"At all relevant sites, the Council shall seek to collect no greater quantity of waste from domestic refuse bins than from domestic recycling bins"

#### **64. PERIODIC REPORTING - FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK 2012/13, INTEGRATED REPORT 2ND QUARTER 2012/2013**

The Head of Finance and the Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which updated the Board on Finance, Risk and Performance statistics at the end of Quarter 2 (30<sup>th</sup> September 2012). This was the first integrated report and intended to give a more holistic picture.

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Finance, presented the report to the Board and explained its aims and intention.

The Finance and Performance Panel presented its comments on the report which were noted by the City Executive Board. The Board Member and Director comments in response are attached as an appendix to this agenda.

##### Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the report;
- (2) Inform the Finance and Performance Panel that, should it wish to make further comments about pressures for this year as part of its scrutiny of the budget process, it would be appreciated.

#### **65. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR REVIEW**

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) that reported the performance of the treasury management function for the period April to September 2012, and outlined the investment strategy for the remainder to the financial year.

The Finance and Performance Panel had submitted comments. The Board Member and Director comments in response are attached as an appendix to this agenda.

Jackie Yates, Executive Director, Finance, added that it was not clear, in the recommendations from scrutiny, what type of "local investments" the panel had in mind. Investing to ensure a decent return was difficult at present.

City Executive Board noted the comments from the Finance and Performance Panel and the responses given.

##### Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the performance of the treasury management function for the first six months of 2012/13;
- (2) Agree the Investment Strategy for the remainder of 2012/13 and the continuation of the operational strategy as highlighted in paragraph 37 of the report.

## **66. PLANNING ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/12**

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval of the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/2012 (Local Development Framework).

Councillor Colin Cook presented the report to City Executive Board. He noted in particular the continuing vitality of the City centre and District centres in terms of retail, and that there had been a considerable improvement in vacancy rates.

Councillor John Goddard asked four questions. These, with responses, are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Michael Crofton Briggs, Head of City Development, informed the Board that Oxford Brookes University had apparently met its student housing targets. The Board noted paragraph 14 of the report, which explained that, for Oxford University during the 12/13 academic year, an additional 154 places would be available arising from recent developments including Pembroke College, and a further 279 places were under construction. This would bring Oxford University below the 3,000 threshold.

It was intended that a mid year review of these figures would be carried out, and that CEB would be asked to approve the Sites and Houses Plan in Spring 2013.

It was noteworthy that there had been pre-application discussions about 3 sites of 200 (plus) housing units; the first such discussions for approximately 4 years.

### Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12 for publication;
- (2) Authorise the Head of City Development to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document prior to publication.

## **67. INSURANCE SERVICES SUPPLY - AWARD OF CONTRACT**

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which recommended project approval and award of contract for the supply of insurance services to the Council to Tenderer B.

### Resolved to:-

- (1) Grant project approval for the supply of insurance services to Oxford City Council, and award the contract to Tenderer B from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for 1 year plus 1 year;
- (2) Agree the changes to excesses outlined in paragraph 4.4 to 4.5 of the report.

## **68. URBAN BROADBAND FUND (PHASE TWO) - OXFORD SUPER CONNECTED CITIES BID**

The Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration, submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning a bid to Government for £5m from the Urban Broadband Fund (Phase 2) Super Connected cities programme.

Councillor Price explained that the report had been somewhat superseded as the Council had heard that its bid had been successful.

Sebastian Johnson (City Partnerships Manager) added that the Council had not yet been given details of its winning bid, so it was still not clear how much the funding would be. Further details were expected in the next few days. The time frame for spending the funding was quite tight – everything needed to be done by March 2014.

The City Executive Board congratulated Sebastian Johnson for his hard work which had resulted in a successful bid.

### Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the bid;
- (2) Recommend to Council a £300,000 capital commitment and £25,000 revenue and staff resource required as the bid has been successful;
- (3) Delegate authority to David Edwards, Executive Director Housing and Regeneration, to lead on negotiations with Government on the bid as required;
- (4) Receive a further report following the successful bid.

## **69. OXFORD HERITAGE ASSETS REGISTER - CRITERIA AND PROCESS**

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended), concerning the preparation of a city-wide register of local heritage assets.

Councillor Colin Cook presented the report to City Executive Board. Nick Worledge (Heritage and Specialist Services Team Leader) gave further information about the purpose of the proposed register, including that there would be 3 initial pilot areas.

### Resolved to:-

- (1) Endorse the proposal for a Heritage Assets Register for Oxford;
- (2) Adopt the proposed criteria and selection process, including clarifications recommended by Area Planning Committees;
- (3) Recommend to Council that it endorses the proposal for a Heritage Assets Register and adopts the proposed criteria and selection process.



## **70. FUTURE ITEMS**

Nothing was raised under this item.

## **71. MINUTES**

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 20<sup>th</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012.

It was noted that an announcement about the low carbon project will be made shortly, and that the Deed of Dedication for Oxpens is going ahead.

## **72. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

None

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.33 pm**

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## City Executive Board - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

### **Procurement Strategy 2013 – 2016 (supplementary agenda page 25)**

#### **Board Member and Director Comments**

##### Recommendation (a)

The wording of recommendation (a) is agreed.

##### Recommendation (b)

It would be difficult to do an environmental assessment for every product and service we procure through a new contract. We do already take into account a range of environmental criteria as part of the evaluation to enable the tender evaluation panel to judge the full proposal. For products this is simpler and for many commodities we can and already do request suppliers also offer environmental alternatives.

##### Recommendation (c)

The strategy will be reviewed annually and updated as required to take account of any new priorities and / or legislative changes.

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## City Executive Board – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012

**Integrated Report 2<sup>nd</sup>. Quarter 2012/2013 (supplementary agenda page 17)**

### **Board Member and Director Comments**

The latest budgeted position, as at the end of Quarter 2, is showing a favourable variance of £745k for the General Fund and £730k for the HRA.

The Council's budget monitoring process looks at the underlying causes of budget variations. Where these variations are considered to be ongoing they are included within the annual refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Variations identified within the current years monitoring that have been factored into the MTFP refresh include:

- Legal services - shortfall in base budget for employee costs.
- Human Resources and Facilities Management - unachievable Town Hall income target.
- Corporate Assets - Additional investment property income.
- HRA – lower than anticipated debt financing costs.

Other variations are considered to be either one off in nature or are subject to mitigating action plans being put in place.

However, should Scrutiny as part of its review of the budget process in the New Year; wish to make comments about pressures from this year that are not taken account of in the budget and which they feel should have been, that will be appreciated.

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City Executive Board – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

**Response to comments from the Finance and Performance Panel.**

**Treasury Management Mid Year Review (supplementary agenda page 27)**

**Board Member and Director Comments**

In accordance with the current Treasury Management Strategy the treasury team review the counterparty list on a daily basis, using credit rating information provided by Sector, the Council's treasury management advisors. The Treasury Team also utilise an operational strategy which allows for the temporary suspension or reduction in the amounts placed with specific counterparties, following a downgrading or warning on their credit rating. This ensures that all counterparties meet the specified limits and that counterparty risk is mitigated when investment decisions are made.

On a monthly basis a review of the operational strategy and counterparties is undertaken with the Executive Director, Organisational Development and Corporate Services and the Section 151 Officer as part of the consideration of action to be taken on maturities arising in the next month.

In light of current market conditions, officers are minded to make proposals to Council in February; as part of the Strategy review; to consider investing a proportion of the Council's core cash in property, subject to an agreed rate of return being achieved. If Scrutiny is minded to recommend other types of investments it would be helpful to have these specified in order that they can be considered in terms of their Security, Liquidity and Yield.

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**City Executive Board 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012  
Item 13: Planning Annual Monitoring Report 2011/12**

**Response to questions from Councillor John Goddard**

**Q 1. 3000 target for students not in university purpose-built accommodation not yet met by either university.**

Answer: This issue is addressed in paragraphs 12-15 of the covering report. The Annual Monitoring Report provides a snapshot of the number of students living in the community at a particular point in time during the previous monitoring year (up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012).

Due to the additional developments at Dorset House and Westminster Hall, which were completed in time for the 2012/13 academic year, Oxford Brookes University are now expected to be below the 3,000 threshold.

There was an increase in the number of students at the University of Oxford living in the community as a result of a modest increase in the number of postgraduate students. The university has, however, developed new hall places for use in the 2012/13 academic year, and a significant number of further units are currently under construction. This will bring the university under the 3,000 threshold.

Officers will work with the universities to produce a within-academic year update to the student accommodation section of the AMR in spring 2013.

**Q 2. No more than 18 affordable homes completed in the last year.**

Answer: It is recognised in the Annual Monitoring Report that this was a very disappointing total. A number of examples can be cited of how the City Council is being proactive in using its own assets to bring forward additional affordable housing, notwithstanding the difficult economic outlook.

The Barton Area Action Plan will be put to Council for adoption later this month, with an outline planning application expected in spring 2013. Funding has been obtained from the Homes and Communities Agency to help bring forward 112 affordable homes on various small sites owned by the Council and design work is now being progressed. A planning application is also expected soon in relation to a scheme to provide new affordable housing and community facilities on City Council owned sites at Northway and Cowley.

**Q 3. The reasons for delay in starting work on the Northern Gateway.**

Answer: The delay is due to the need to establish a workable transport solution before starting work on the Area Action Plan. Background technical work will be required on behalf of the developers/landowners to resolve the outstanding transport issues, in dialogue with the City Council, County Council and the Highways Agency. If and when this work has been completed, it may be possible to move forward with the Area Action Plan process.

**Q 4. The shift from 3-bed to 1-bed accommodation**

Answer: In previous years since the introduction of the Balance of Dwelling SPD, there has been an increase in the proportion of family units. Last year saw a reversal of this trend, which is most likely due to the fact that the majority of the homes built in the 2011/12 monitoring year were on small sites. It is often more feasible to achieve a balanced mix of housing units on larger sites than it is on small infill sites, where site specific factors may limit the opportunity to provide family-sized units. The figures for last year may be a one-off, but this will require careful monitoring in future years to see if any changes are needed to the implementation of the Balance of Dwellings policy.

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