

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Monday 27 April 2015

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Chair), Sinclair, Simm, Kennedy, Lygo, Rowley and Tanner.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Jean Fooks

OFFICERS PRESENT: Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), David Edwards (Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing), Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Finance), Jeff Ridgley (Business Improvement and Development Manager), Lindsay Cane (Law and Governance) and Sarah Claridge (Committee Services Officer)

169. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Brown, Turner and Seamons.

170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

171. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were presented.

172. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA

Cllr Fooks addressed the Board on item 7 Consultation response to the Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (refer minute 175). She tabled a statement from the Liberal Democrat Group on the City's submission (attached).

Her comments are included in the discussion of the item.

173. TENDER FOR WASTE COLLECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

The Executive Director for Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval to tender for commercial waste collections and environmental improvement services to a public body, and if successful to enter into a contract with that body.

The Business Development & Fleet Manager presented the report. The tender is for up to 5 years, three years to begin with a possible two years extension. If successful, the contract would require additional capital expenditure in the

purchase of equipment. This is not currently budgeted and would require Council approval.

The Head of Finance was satisfied the contact would make a good rate of return.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. AUTHORISE the submission of a tender for the waste and recycling contract referred to in this report, and, in the event that the tender is successful, to grant delegated authority to the Executive Director, Community Services, in consultation with the Council's s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, subject to a satisfactory contribution towards central overheads to enter into an appropriate contract for the supply of relevant waste and recycling services to the body identified in the Not for Publication Annex attached hereto.

2. NOTE that in the event that the tender is successful, capital expenditure will be required to fulfil the contract, for which CEB will need to make a recommendation to the Council in the sum of £55,000. In addition, there will be the need to create a Recycling Officer post, which will have a net increase of £6k per annum revenue costs, offset by income as detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the Not for Publication Appendix.

174. OXPENS' DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Executive Director for City Regeneration and Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which provided an update and sought approval to establish a private sector investor partnership and development delivery vehicle.

Cllr Price, Board Member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning presented the report. He explained that the proposal was similar to the Barton development where Oxford City Council had formed an LLP with Grosvenor Homes to deliver affordable housing.

The initial stage would be to clean up the site and to develop sewers and a road system.

The legal representative outlined the structure of the complex transaction. The proposed Oxpens Joint venture would purchase the City Council land and the former railway land to form one site. The value of the two sites as a single parcel of land would be greater than the two individual sites.

Cllr Tanner asked if a joint board made up of representatives from the partner company and Council officers was a good arrangement. Should Councillors be involved?

The Chief Executive explained that individuals that sit on the Board need to represent the new company. If the agreed terms of reference included Council's priorities eg green development, sustainable communities etc then officers sitting on the joint board could make sure these are reflected in proposals. He felt that if Councillors sat on the joint board, they would potentially feel a greater conflict of interest.

Councillors should scrutinise the proposed contracts and terms of reference carefully and should get involved in the early stage of agreeing the governance arrangements so that their needs are addressed.

Cllr Price explained that Councillors would have the opportunity to discuss the development in more detail as the master-plan and planning permission(s) are sought. Members' briefings sessions are a mechanism in place for Councillors to review the work of the joint board.

Cllr Sinclair asked what 'deadlock' meant in paragraph 41 of the report?

The Legal Representative explained that the agreement was for the Council and the Partner to have a 50-50 share in the joint board to reach a consensus on decisions. If Council had a 51% share then the joint board would be considered a public body.

Cllr Price offered his appreciation for the huge amount of work officers had done – most notably the Director for City Regeneration and Housing, the Partnerships & Regeneration Manager and the Legal Representative.

The Chief Executive noted that this project was one of the practical rewards the city had got out of the City Deal, which had enabled the City Council to put other matters on the Government's agenda to improve the economic development and regeneration of the city.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Establish an investment vehicle with a private sector partner to include an agreement with the Department for Transport/Cabinet Office for the acquisition of the railway lands.
3. Approve the principle of direct sale of relevant Council Land to the investment vehicle, subject to formal valuation.
4. Delegate to the Executive Director for City Regeneration and Housing the authority to publish a VEAT notice, enter into an appropriate Heads of Terms document, and subsequently the Members Agreement for a Limited Liability Partnership commercial vehicle, based on the principles set out in this report.
5. Grant project approval for the Oxpens Delivery project as set out in this report.

175. CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE OXFORDSHIRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Executive Director for City Regeneration and Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which advised the City Executive Board of the response of the City Council to the County Council's draft Oxford Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4.

Cllr Tanner, Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport presented the report. He explained the City had common ground with

the County to reduce traffic congestion in the City however the City disagreed on several of the suggestions made, especially the Rapid Transport buses down Cowley and London roads and the County ruling out trams in Oxford. There is also the immediate needs affecting the roads in the city, eg parked cars blocking cycle lanes and gridlocked roads

The City's submission promotes the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the strategy and the continual need for an on-going dialogue with the County Council.

Cllr Lygo explained that on-going discussions with schools and the hospitals in north east Oxford needed to take place to enable more cycling provisions.

Cllr Fooks said that the County and City Councils' stances appeared to be more confrontational rather than conversational. She outlined the following Liberal Democrat Group's comments to the submission:

- Cycling needs to be a priority in the strategy and should include improving the roads surface of cycling lanes.
- The City's submission relies on urban extensions taking place which haven't been agreed yet.
- Queried the capacity of the streets to cope with more buses
- Would like to see a Rail Park n Ride from the new Oxford Parkway railway station.
- Important to work with the business community.
- Getting in and out of Oxford fast – does it have to be via car?
- Northern Gateway, transport proposals are not adequate to allow for through traffic to move quickly.

Cllr Sinclair said the need for controlled parking zones (CPZs) was increasing across the city and the cost of public transport was too high, making driving into the city more affordable and convenient for most.

The Director for City Regeneration and Housing explained that the City's submission reflected the needs of a growing city. The two universities understood the need to grow to continue to attract worldwide research. The analysis and evidence based figures in the submission outlined who is travelling into Oxford. People living further away from their place of employment need frequent and viable alternatives to car transportation to encourage them to change their commuting habits. A dialogue with the city's bus companies is needed to prioritise road space and encourage less car traffic.

Cllr Price made the following summary:

1. This is our first opportunity to discuss options, more on-going dialogue with the County Council is needed.
2. Commuting is Oxford's biggest transport problem.
3. More housing closer to the city needs to be made available – to enable people to travel by bicycle, bus or walk to work
4. Rail is not adequately addressed in the strategy, commuting patterns could significantly change in the future
5. Creating safer, segregated cycle path will increase cycling rates in the city.

The legal representative mentioned that contrary to paragraph 7 in the report, this issue is an executive decision and does not need to go to Council; however the Board agreed they wished for the item to be debated in Council in July.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

NOTE the response of the City Council to the County Council's draft Oxford Transport Strategy and Local Transport Plan 4.

Continue to discuss with Oxfordshire County Council the future needs and traffic priorities of the City's transport infrastructure.

176. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The Board excluded the press and the public from the meeting to consider the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda.

The Board resolved in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Board may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

177. NOT FOR PUBLICATION_ TENDER FOR WASTE COLLECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

The Board discussed the total value of the commercial waste business being tendered.

178. NOT FOR PUBLICATION_ OXPENS DELIVERY STRATEGY

The Board noted the details of the legal process.

The meeting started at 9.00 am and ended at 9.45 am

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Connecting Oxfordshire, LTP4 and OTS comments from the City Council Liberal Democrat group

The overriding problem in Oxford is the growing congestion, causing delays and poor air quality. We are glad to see that this is recognised, especially as the estimates of future in-commuting growth of another 23,000 journeys on top of the present 46,000 is clearly unsustainable. We support proposals to address this, in particular

- Tackling unnecessary driving by any vehicles into the city centre
- Removing as far as possible all through journeys, vehicles with no business in the city itself
- Requiring deliveries to be made outside peak hours
- Measures to achieve a step-change in the number of people cycling or walking instead of driving
- Working with the bus companies to improve connectivity across the city eg from the north to south, east and west
- Firm air quality targets should be set in accordance with the City's Air Quality Action Plan

Cyclists need safe routes, segregated from other traffic, which lead from one part of the city to another without gaps in provision. The surfaces need to be smooth, without abrupt level changes or rutted surfaces. Dropped kerbs should not have a 'step' but be smooth for cyclists, buggies and wheelchairs.

Many light-controlled junctions could have a cycle filter to allow cyclists to ride without stopping when there is no traffic coming from the left. All advance cycle boxes should have a sufficiently wide segregated cycle track leading into them.

Wide cycle lanes should connect the new Oxford Parkway station with both Oxford and Kidlington to make it safe and convenient to cycle there rather than to drive.

George Street should not be pedestrianised as it is an essential link from the north to the west and the station for buses and from the east for cyclists.

To reduce congestion round the hospitals, a link from the A40 direct into the JR should be considered.

Bus services must be provided from the Park and Rides and the Parkway station to the business park in Cowley.

The plan suggests enlarging Gloucester Green bus station. This is physically impossible. A much better idea would be to relocate the local buses, and perhaps some or all of the long-distance ones too, to a new bus/rail interchange at Oxpens. This would be convenient for people wanting to change from train to bus and vice-versa.

While on Park and Ride, this needs to be made as attractive as possible to encourage people to use it. Parking charges should be reduced to be as low as possible, preferably zero.

The Northern Gateway development threatens to engulf North Oxford in traffic. It is already suggested that the A40 speed limit be reduced to 30mph for most of the route through north Oxford, removing main road status from that part of the route would make it possible to integrate the development with the city as proposed but which is not possible as long as it is cut off by a busy main road. The A40 should be rerouted along the new strategic link road from the A40 west of the A34 to the Loop Farm roundabout. The A40 should then continue along the A34 to Junction 9 on the M40, or even to a new motorway junction, so that eastbound traffic then uses the M40 to London. This would remove the through traffic which has no business in North Oxford or Headington from the present route, improving the functioning of the Wolvercote, Cutteslowe and Green Road roundabouts very significantly as well as much improving the connectivity across the A40 along the route, helping Barton West as well as the Northern Gateway.

Jean Fooks
2nd April 2015