

# MINUTES OF THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday 13 October 2016

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**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Turner (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Brown, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Simm, Smith and Tanner.

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Andrew Gant (Chair, Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor Craig Simmons (Chair, Scrutiny Finance Panel)

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Peter Sloman (Chief Executive), Jackie Yates (Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services), Lindsay Cane (Acting Head of Law and Governance), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Financial Services), Helen Bishop (Head of Business Improvement), Stuart Fitzsimmons (Parks and Open Spaces Manager) and Sarah Claridge (Committee Services Officer)

## 71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Price and Cllr Sinclair.

## 72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 73. ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (15 MINUTES TOTAL)

None.

## 74. COUNCILLORS ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA

None.

## 75. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES (10 MINUTES IN TOTAL)

Cllr Gant, (ward member for Summertown) spoke on the recent Oxford half-marathon and planning for the event in future years.

He said the event was a major inconvenience to a large number of residents who were unable to access services because of the road closures. He criticised the

timing of the consultation with ward councillors over the route as it didn't happen early enough.

He felt that charity runners should be prioritised over running clubs and queried the profit making of the company who runs the event.

Cllr Simm, Board member for Culture and Communities said the "Oxford half" is effectively a county event as it is the highways authority who has the power to close roads. She was well aware of the inconveniences to affected residents and had held two meetings with ward Councillors, County Councillors and officers to agree a suitable route. The first meeting had been very good and resulted in a number of changes to the route. She agreed the second meeting was held later than expected.

In terms of the finances, she could not comment on the contractual arrangements of the event organiser.

She said that events like this were a hard balance as it was a great opportunity to raise money despite the inconvenience to local residents.

She is meeting with organisers to review feedback and to mitigate issues as much as possible - this could involve looking at alternative routes. She will look at things more promptly next year but despite the advertising of the 2017 event no arrangements are confirmed. Hopefully next year more can be done to raise awareness and promote the event to local residents.

The Chief Executive said that it was a common misconception that the City Council regulates everything in the city, when in fact the County Council is responsible for street closures. He urged caution against encouraging the city council to become too involved in facilitating events as taking responsibility for them costs the council money.

## **76. ITEMS RAISED BY BOARD MEMBERS**

None received

## **77. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **(a) Review of Tree Management Policy**

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report and noted the Board's agreement to the recommendations.

### **Education Attainment**

Cllr Gant said that the Scrutiny Committee had also reviewed the education attainment report and supported the actions in the report and would support a budgetary bid for further education work.

## **(b) The Implications of Brexit for Local Government**

Cllr Simmons, Chair of the Finance Panel presented the report. He mentioned the concern around the Low Carbon Hub not meeting its targets because the threshold has increased due to the drop of the Pound against the Euro. If the target is not met then money will have to be returned to the EU.

The Head of Financial Services said he would be happy to continue to update Councillors on the effect of Brexit on Council finances.

He said that despite the increased target the annual report for the Oxfutures programme (which is run by the Low Carbon Hub) is better than expected and with the Sandford hydro scheme in development he is confident the programme would hit the EU target.

Cllr Tanner said that a meeting of Europeans living in Oxford was to be held in the town hall. It was for people who had expressed concerns about the Brexit vote and the implications the vote might have on European nationals in Oxford.

The Board approved the recommendations set out in the Scrutiny report (page 7 of the supplementary agenda).

## **78. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Director of Organisational Development and Corporate Services submitted a report which made recommendations for the operation of the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2017/18

Cllr Brown, Board member for Customer and Corporate Services presented the report. She said it was best to retain the current scheme as evidence suggested that councils that had set a minimum charge had often seen a drop in council tax collection rates.

Cllr Simmons said that the Finance Panel had reviewed the scheme and agreed with the recommendations.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme for the financial year 2017/18.

## **79. TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Head of Direct Services submitted a report which detailed an updated Tree Management Policy.

Cllr Smith, Board member for Leisure, Sport and Parks presented the report. She explained the main changes to the policy were writing it in a friendlier manner, and outlining people's common law rights and the arbitration review process. She thanked the Park and Open Spaces Manager and the Tree team for all the work they had done.

The Chair thanked Cllr Smith for the work she had done.

Cllr Hollingsworth spoke on the Scrutiny Committee's recommendation on planting fruit trees in parks and the concern about wasps. Cllr Smith said that fruit trees would be planted away from footpaths and roads so they wouldn't be a hazard. Notices in parks would state that people could pick the fruit.

Cllr Hollingsworth said that the list of trees should say which trees should be pollarded and why eg for safety and environmental reasons.

Cllr Tanner asked if the total number of trees in the city had grown significantly. The Park and Open Spaces Manager said he was fairly certain the number of city owned trees had stayed the same over last 10 years. Cllr Tanner asked if the Planning officers could provide the number of trees in the city to CEB members.

Cllr Simmons said that every tree would be replaced in the policy. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed by the different tree species could also be recorded on the tree list.

**Recommendation:** That the City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the draft Tree Management Policy

## **80. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

The Head of Business Improvement submitted a report detailing the corporate Customer Service Excellence (CSE) standard accreditation and explains how the Council plan to embed the standard further. To report the first quarter's performance against the corporate comments and complaints scheme.

Cllr Brown, Board member for Customer and Corporate Services updated the Board on the success of staff in achieving the CSE. Comments and Complaints and Compliments (CCCs) record council's performance and will be presented to the Board as part of the quarterly integrated report.

She encouraged Board members to look at their own areas of CCCs and to pursue any areas of concern.

The Head of Financial Services said that the Finance department regularly reviews all their CCCs and make changes as necessary.

Cllr Hollingsworth said that CCCs are a useful tool for executive oversight. In terms of the format of report he found qualitative analysis more helpful than just statistics.

The Chair asked how people's feedback was recorded and the figures complied especially if they are just comments.

The Director for Organisational Change and Corporate Services said table one picks up comments as well. The Council does try and categorise them correctly. Cllr Brown said that good organisations learn from CCCs - all are important. The Head of Business Improvement said that feedback is actively asked for by the contact service centre after each call. The Chair asked that the method of collecting the feedback (both actively and unsolicited) should be added as a footnote to table one in future reports.

Cllr Simmons said that how the information is used is most important.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

**Note** this report, and congratulates the City Council staff in achieving the Customer Service Excellence standard across the whole Council.

## **81. MINUTES**

The following amendments were made to the minutes:

Item 60: Leisure Investment Options

Paragraph 3: Change "Oxford United Football Club" to "Oxford **City** Football Club" and the car park to be **nearby** not across the road.

Item 61 Community Centre Strategy 2016-2020

Paragraph 9: change "deliver social services" to "deliver **community** services"

Item 64 Pooled Budget Arrangements

Paragraph 12: change "in terms of lobbying" to "in terms of **lobbying**"

The Board resolved to APPROVE the amended minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 as a true and accurate record.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 5.55 pm**