

# Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 21 November 2017

www.oxford.gov.uk



## Committee members:

Councillor Price (Chair)

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Smith

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Brown

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Sinclair

Councillor Tanner

## Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive

Anita J Bradley, Monitoring Officer

Lindsay Cane, Legal Services Manager

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits

Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer

Simon Howick, Service Transformation Manager

Peter McQuitty, Corporate Lead - Culture & the Arts

Helen Vaughan-Evans, Project Manager

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

## Also present:

Councillor Andrew Gant, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Liberal Democrat shadow member for Corporate Strategy & Economic Development, Customer and Corporate Services, Liberal Democrat Group Leader

None

None

## Apologies:

Councillor Turner sent apologies.

No apologies were received

## 95. Declarations of Interest

None received.

## **96. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public**

Sue Tanner spoke to her previously provided question in relation to the item on the Community Grants Programme, submitted on behalf of the Agnes Smith Advice Centre; Barton Advice Centre; Citizens Advice Oxford; and the Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre which will be distributed as a supplement to these minutes.

Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services, said that while she appreciated that the proposals would result in a reduction of core funding for advice centres, she could not agree with the description of the proposals overall as a cut given that the new resource available for this purpose would increase by £20k. She was not minded to change the recommendations as given but was keen that there should be close working with the advice centres to ensure that the money available via the new arrangements was distributed as effectively as possible.

Kathy Shaw, Chief Executive of the OCVA, had previously submitted a number of questions, also in relation to the item on the Community Grants Programme. Those questions and the written responses to them will be distributed as a supplement to these minutes. Addressing the meeting briefly she asked the Board to reflect on the fact that the OCVA is one service that supports some 5,000 groups and organisations at a time of cuts for many of them.

Councillor Sinclair, Board Member for Culture and Communities responded by saying that it was not the intention to remove resources but rather to reconfigure them so as to provide services that tie in more effectively with the Council's objectives.

## **97. Councillors Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda**

None.

## **98. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None.

## **99. Items raised by Board Members**

None.

## **100. Scrutiny Committee Reports**

Councillor Gant, speaking as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee and to its consideration of the report on the Community Grants Programme, thanked the Board Members for their positive response to the Committee's recommendations. He said that the Committee's consideration of the report had been both well informed and robust. He drew attention to three key strands of that discussion.

First, the Committee was concerned at the extent to which grants reached under-represented members of the BAME community.

Secondly, in relation to the 5% cut proposed in relation to advice centres base funding, officers had argued that this was not a cut given the overall increase in funding; the Committee had accepted the logic of this position.

Thirdly, there was a strong view that the right balance needed to be struck in distributing the available resource to advice centres. In this context it was considered that the CAB in the City centre received a disproportionate amount, contributed to in part by the high rent cost of its premises.

The Board agreed with the report's recommendations while noting, in relation to recommendation 4 (which relates to the possibility of providing social grants funding directly to social enterprise organisations) that social investment might, in some circumstances, be preferable to investment in social enterprises.

## **101. Review of Community Grants Programme**

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report which to update the City Executive Board on the review of the grants and commissioning programme and to propose how it can be further improved.

Councillor Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services repeated the key point that the overall resource available for advice centres would increase under the proposals as given. Councillor Sinclair, Board Member for Culture and Communities said the activities funded by the grants were invaluable and that the Council was committed to seeing that the money available was spent in the best possible way and in line with the Council's objectives. It was essential that the Council and voluntary sector worked closely together to achieve that.

The Acting Communities Manager, drew attention to the proposal to move to a three year funding programme for both the commissioning and open bidding grants programme which would help with sustainability and long term security for community and voluntary organisations.

The Programme Manager for Revenue & Benefits, speaking about the proposed development fund for Advice and Money Management, said that the intention was to enable easy access to it. Officers would work closely with advice centres with the intention of giving them ownership of the fund. Importantly the fund would facilitate implementation of the recommendations from Advice UK.

Councillor Rowley, Board Member for Housing, remarked on the strength and value of the City's advice centres, based as they are in areas of deprivation. Looking to the future, the best outcome would be for them to work collaboratively, to provide good quality advice across the city and, in doing so, derive some economies of scale. Conversely, the worst outcome would be if one centre bid successfully for the majority of the pot.

Councillor Tanner, Board Member for a Clean & Green Oxford, said that the advice centres should be given sufficient time to adapt to the new regime; the anticipated start of which in April did not give a great deal of time to address some practical issues.

The Board agreed with the recommendations subject to the addition of an additional one to require that there should be early discussion of the process of allocating the development fund referred to above.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the commissioning funding themes and enter into three year funding agreements with community and voluntary organisations through the commissioning programme from April 2018 (subject to a three year budget being approved by Council);
2. **Agree** that the Community and Voluntary Sector Infrastructure and Inclusive Arts and Culture commissioning themes are put out to open bidding from April 2018 and April 2019 respectively as outlined in paragraphs 20 – 29;
3. **Agree** that the Advice and Money Management commissioning theme retains a similar approach to strategic grant funding as now, but with the creation of a service development fund of £44,918 per annum as set out paragraph 35;
4. **Approve** a three year funding programme for the open bidding grants programme from April 2018 (subject to a three year budget being approved by Council);
5. **Approve** the proposals listed in the report at paragraph 46; and
6. **Agree** that officers should arrange early discussions with advice centres about the new arrangements for their funding.

## **102. Direct Services Trading Company - progress report**

The Executive Director, Sustainable City, had submitted a report which reported back on the establishment of the Local Authority Trading Companies.

The Chief Executive introduced the report which had been trailed in the last report on this subject to the Board in July. The report set out the measures in place and proposed to enable both companies to move from their embryonic state to start trading in April 2018.

In discussion the following points emerged. It was anticipated that the Shareholder would meet twice a year (the first meeting would be in December 2017). The two companies' meetings, would be held consecutively on the same day. Lease arrangements between the Council and the companies would echo those in place for Fusion.

It was recognised that formation of the companies would mean the transfer of a very significant proportion of Council colleagues to the companies. Members were pleased to note that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) made it clear that: "...their [the companies] primary reason for existence is to serve the requirements of the Council." Members were also pleased to note that the MOU noted the companies': "Continuing adoption and promoting of the vision and values and behaviours imported from our shareholder."

The Chief Executive, with reference to the other Council companies, said he envisaged them as a family of organisations with shared objectives.

In relation to pension arrangements, the report made clear that the LGPS would be available to staff for the time being. The Managing Director for Oxford Direct Services said that he would want to discuss subsequent arrangements with the unions in due course, looking to make arrangements that were best overall for the business. He said that he saw himself as the chief custodian of the Council's values, recognising that, over time, company employees would identify less and less with the Council.

Support services from the Council for the companies will be important. Initially they will be based on current cost allocations alongside a recognition that the arrangements will have, ultimately, to be on a commercial footing. In the event of disagreement over recharges, the final arbiter will be the Chief Executive.

The City Executive Board resolved to :

- 1) **Agree** the “Transfer Date” of 1 April 2018 – that being the date on which all service delivery currently carried out by the Council’s Direct Services will be transferred to the two new LATCo companies;
- 2) **Approve** the terms of the updated Memorandum of Understanding (as attached to this report as Appendix 1) which sets out the basis of the “Service” and “Support” contracts between the Council and LATCo companies; and delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council’s s151 and Monitoring Officers and the Leader of the Council to finalise the terms of and to enter into both the Service Contract and the Support Contract on behalf of the Council;
- 3) **Delegate** authority to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council’s s151 and Monitoring Officers, to approve the terms under which the Council will enter into leases and/or licences covering the LATCo companies’ occupation of relevant Council premises and use of Council resources;
- 4) **Agree** the transfer to Oxford Direct Services Limited on the Transfer Date of all Direct Services staff engaged in service delivery immediately prior to the Transfer Date on the terms set out in this report;
- 5) **Approve** the arrangements ensuring that all transferring staff will continue to have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme and delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Council’s s151 and Monitoring Officers and the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Council, to enter into an appropriate tri-partite agreement with the Scheme Administrator and Oxford Direct Services Limited which sets out the basis of contributions into the LGPS;
- 6) **Authorise** the transfer to Oxford Direct Services Trading Limited of all customer contracts with third parties in existence on the Transfer Date, and authorise the transfer of all supplier contracts to the two LATCo companies (as appropriate) in existence on the Transfer Date;
- 7) **Note** the provisions of the initial Business Plan for the Companies (the executive summary of which is at appendix 2); and
- 8) **Note** and approve the “client side” arrangements as set out in this report in regard to the Council’s management of the Service Contract with Oxford Direct Services Limited.

### 103. Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Project

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report to update the City Executive Board on the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project and to request approval to the revised project budget.

Councillor Sinclair, Board Member for Culture & Communities said she was very pleased to bring the next stage of this exciting and important project to the Board. With the Board's support the next step would be the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Corporate Lead for Culture and the Arts said there was a clear customer demand for an improved and expanded museum with a focus on the story of the City. Staff would work with the community to develop a rolling programme of community themed exhibitions alongside permanent ones.

Councillor Tidball, Board Member for Young People, Schools and Public Health, agreed that this was an exciting project and was keen that there should be strong intersect with education and the school curriculum. She also noted the importance of linking with Youth Ambition.

Councillor Hayes, Board Member for Community Safety, congratulated officers on the work to date. He was pleased that the museum would continue to be based in the Town Hall, not least because the building had witnessed some significant events in the City's history.

In discussion it was agreed that the proposed organisation and themes would work equally well for both of the principal audiences, members of the local community and tourists. In relation to the latter it would provide an important (and the only) opportunity to provide a view of the City distinct from the archetypes often associated with it.

It was noted that the design would allow up to two classes of primary pupils to make use of the museum, simultaneously, in separate spaces. These spaces would all be suitable to let for social functions. There was clear potential for income generation.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the progress made on the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Redevelopment Project;
2. **Recommend** to Council the increasing of the projects overall capital budget by £611,754 to £2,842,804 and the Councils capital contribution from £315,000 to

£1,340,106 to be financed by prudential borrowing in accordance with paragraph 22 and 25; and

3. **Note** the increase in the Council's revenue budget in respect of the additional cost of operating the new museum of £30k per annum with effect from 2020/21 which will be raised during the forthcoming budget setting process (paragraph 28).

## **104. Minutes**

The Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October as a true and accurate record.

## **105. Dates of Future Meetings**

- 27 November (2.30pm)
- 19 December
- 23 January
- 13 February
- 20 March
- 17 April

## **107. Confidential Appendix relating to item 10 on the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Project**

The decisions in relation to the Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories Project item were made without a need for this appendix to be discussed at the meeting.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.30 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Monday 27 November 2017**