

Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 18 September 2018

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Committee members:

Councillor Brown (Chair)

Councillor Turner

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Simm

Councillor Linda Smith (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Upton

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive

Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Sarah Grubb, Senior Regeneration Officer

Tina Mould, Capital Programme Project Manager

Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner

Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager

Jan Heath, Business Improvement & Performance Manager

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Andrew Gant, Chair of Scrutiny Committee.

Apologies:

No apologies were received

56. Declarations of Interest

None.

57. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

58. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda

None.

59. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

60. Items raised by Board Members

None.

61. Scrutiny Committee Reports

Cllr Gant spoke to the recommendation from Scrutiny Committee in relation to Fusion Lifestyle. The Committee took a close interest in Fusion Lifestyle and was very aware of the challenges it faced from local competition. The Committee did, however, remain concerned at Fusion Lifestyle's performance and the measures in place to address it. In particular there was concern at the quality and availability of relevant data and the absence of officers to explain the data there was. He was grateful for the response from the Board Member but disappointed that there was no specific reference in it to agreement to the audit requested by the Committee.

Cllr Linda Smith gave an assurance that there would be an audit to cover the matters identified by the Scrutiny Committee. She also said that she would see what could be done to provide the data sought by the Committee, while noting that some of it might be commercially sensitive.

62. Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to seek approval for proposals for consultation on changes to the Council's Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20.

Cllr Simm introduced the report, drawing particular attention to the proposed consultation's focus on the impact of the income band scheme for residents on Universal Credit and the minimum income floor for self-employed people. She noted that the City Council was one of the few authorities to commit so wholeheartedly to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Chair welcomed the consultation and remind the Board that its cost to the Council was over £1.5m per annum, and represented a major contribution to the Council's commitment to inclusion.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Agree** that the proposals for the 2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Scheme outlined in the report be subject to public consultation for an 8 week period from 24 September 2018; and
2. **Instruct** the Head of Finance to bring a further report to the City Executive Board in January 2019 to outline the outcome of the consultation process and make proposals for the 2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

63. Consultation on the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services had submitted a report to endorse the consultation on the Draft Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan as required by Regulations.

Cllr Hollingsworth introduced the report which was an early part of a process which would, ultimately, lead to the production of Wolvercote's Neighbourhood plan. All that was sought at this stage however was confirmation that all necessary steps had been taken to allow the process to proceed to the next stage. That assurance could be given. The Council's opportunity to comment on the plan would come once the consultation was underway.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Agree** that the legal tests have been met and to proceed with the consultation stage;
2. **Endorse** for public consultation the Draft Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan; and
3. **Proceed** with the neighbourhood plan process by submitting the consultation responses and the draft plan for independent examination.

64. Joint Statutory Spatial Plan

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services had submitted a report to seek approval of draft project and programme documents for the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) the preparation of which is a requirement of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. These documents comprise:
a, Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2018;
b, Local Development Scheme; and
c, JSSP Scoping Document

Cllr Hollingsworth explained that the suite of documents before the Board were a necessary condition of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. They set out, in broad overarching terms, a plan for the whole county and would be agreed by Oxfordshire's other District Councils and the County Council.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the JSSP presented at Appendix 1;
2. **Approve** the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2018 (Appendix 2) for the JSSP for a six week period of formal public consultation;
3. **Approve** the JSSP Scoping Document presented at Appendix 3;
4. **Authorise** the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, to make any necessary minor and presentational changes to the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2018 before formal consultation commences; and
5. **Authorise** the Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport,

to make any necessary minor and presentational changes to the Local Development Scheme 2018 and JSSP Scoping Document before publication.

65. Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (Amended Land Disposal)

The Executive Director – Sustainable City had submitted a report to present for approval the updated proposed land disposals and discounts in relation to the Council's commitment of up to £1,000,000 in-kind contributions from land disposal and compensation foregone to facilitate the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Cllr Hollingsworth reminded the Board that it had received a number of reports in relation to this project to reduce the extent and likelihood of flooding in the City; this was the next necessary step in the process. The Chair remarked on the importance of this project for the City.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the amended disposal of land (as identified in Appendix 1) to the Environment Agency for the purposes of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme. Such disposal to be below market value but subject to receipt of appropriate consents and the inclusion of appropriate restrictive covenants; with the Council also foregoing any land compensation in relation to the severance to the retained land. The values of the land identified in Appendix 1, being set out in Appendix 2;
2. **Approve** the increase in net in-kind contribution to be made by the Council to the EA from £450,500 to £663,500 (and up to £696,675, if required);
3. **Approve** the use of the Council's powers under the Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent 2003 - disposal of land for less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained - to dispose of the land identified in Appendix 1 below market value; and
4. **Grant** delegated authority to the Executive Director - Sustainable City, in consultation with the Heads of Finance and Law and Governance, to enter into appropriate legal agreements with the Environment Agency to give effect to the above matters.

66. Blackbird Leys Development

The Regeneration and Economy Programme Director had submitted a report to approve the selection of a preferred development partner.

Cllr Rowley introduced the report, and was pleased to note that, through the use of an appropriate methodology, a developer had been identified which would be responsive to the needs and aspirations of both the community in Blackbird Leys and the Council.

It was agreed that thorough and meaningful consultation with the local community would be critical to the success of the project. The recommended developer recognised the importance of this. It would also be important to be clear about what would be done with the information collected as a result of consultation as would the importance of being explicit about the constraints which would inevitably surround the

project. Communication with other landowners was also critical and should start sooner rather than later. While not so easy to achieve, thought might also be given to engaging with those residents not currently living in Blackbird Leys who might live there in the future.

Overall it was agreed that this was an exciting and transformative project.

Following a discussion in confidential session the City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the selection of the preferred Development Partner;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Regeneration and Economy Programme Director and the Head of Law and Governance, to finalise and enter into a Development Agreement with the preferred Development Partner; and
3. **Delegate** authority to the Regeneration and Economy Programme Director and the Head of Law and Governance, to agree external grant funding arrangements to support this project; including the current Housing and Infrastructure Fund opportunity with Homes England.

67. Re-commissioning of Housing Advisory Contract

The Head of Housing had submitted a report to seek the City Executive Board's agreement to the re-commissioning of an independent housing advisory service.

The Housing Strategy and Needs Manager introduced the report. The current contract was with Shelter at the moment but up for renewal. The specification was being refined to reflect, among other things, the introduction of the Homelessness Introduction Act. It was envisaged that the contract provider would deal with more complex cases on a referral basis from an advice agency. Significantly it is proposed that advice should in future be available not just from the City Council Offices but also from advice agencies elsewhere in the City; these should be capable of offering more comprehensive housing and homelessness advice. The next step would be to tender the contract via the usual procurement process.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Re-commission** the contract to provide an independent housing advisory contract; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Housing to award the contract in the best interests of the Council.

68. Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q1

The Head of Financial Services and the Head of Business Improvement had submitted a report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 30th June 2018.

The Head of Financial Services introduced the report. He drew attention to the outturn forecast of an adverse variance in the General Fund of £0.094 million (against net budget of £22.098 million). The key variances contributing to that were an adverse

variance of £0.494 million from a decline in car parking income and a favourable variance of £0.400 million from higher levels of business rates from the Westgate Centre than anticipated. There was a favourable variance in relation to the Capital Programme of £2.35m, this was partly attributable to some slippage in completions at Barton Park. It was noted that this slippage was due to a shortage of skilled labour rather than poor project management and was affecting the delivery of all tenures.

Cllr Turner was pleased to note that the overall picture for General Fund was positive and was hopeful that it would be on target by the year end. In relation to parking, he noted that officers were looking at the issue of parking revenue. The consequences of a project on the scale of the Westgate centre would always be difficult to predict.

In relation to performance, 40% of indicators were on target and 25% below but within acceptable tolerance limits.

The Business Improvement and Performance Manager explained that the potential benefits of the replacement Housing Computer System (for which funding was sought) had not all been quantified but it was clear that they (not all of which could be measured in financial terms) were likely to be considerable. This would include access to real-time data about customers' accounts and early estimates suggested that a 30% increase in productivity was possible in some areas.

The indicators relating to the number of new homes granted permission in the City and the amount of employment floor space for development were not without merit but might, in future, more usefully, be reported over a longer period than quarterly and on a rolling basis.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the projected financial outturn, the current position on risk and performance as at the 30th June 2018;
2. **Recommend** to council to approve the increase of the HRA capital budget for Social Rented Housing Acquisitions by £0.444 million to a total of £1.479 million. This will be fully funded by Retained Right to Buy capital receipts. More details are included in paragraph 10; and
3. **Recommend** to Council to approve the additional capital budget for the Replacement of the Housing Computer System of £0.450 million as per the details in paragraphs 11-12.

Councillor Turner joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

69. Treasury Management Performance: Annual Report and Performance 2017/18

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report which set out the Council's Treasury Management activity and performance for the financial year 2017/2018.

The Head of Financial Service introduced the report. Despite low interest rates the Council's investments had succeeded in generating more return than had been targeted. The £0.17 million outstanding with failed Icelandic banks would probably have to be written off (but without prejudice to subsequent efforts to have the funds returned). If the Council's investments had all been risk free its financial position would be worse than it was now. The focus of the Council's non-specified investments was on property investments, with a bias towards retail; this emphasis was currently being reviewed. Most direct investments were, deliberately, in Oxford. The two property funds the Council invested in were performing well. All Council investments were subject to an ethical code, it was agreed, for the sake of clarity, that this should be referred to in subsequent reports.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Note the report.

70. Minutes

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2018 as a true and accurate record.

71. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

16 October 2018
14 November 2018
18 December 2018

All meetings start at 5pm.

72. Matters Exempt from Publication

Under the terms of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the Board moved into confidential session.

73. Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme - Confidential Appendices

There was no discussion of this item in confidential session

74. Blackbird Leys Development - Confidential Appendix

There was discussion of this appendix in confidential session.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.40 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 16 October 2018