

Agenda

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City Executive Board

Date: **Thursday 7 March 2019**

Time: **5.30 pm**

Place: **St Aldate's Room - Oxford Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

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Details of how City Councillors and members of the public may engage with this meeting may be found on page 6 of this agenda.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the Committee Services Officer know how you wish to do this before the start of the meeting.

City Executive Board

Membership

Chair/ Leader	Councillor Susan Brown	Leader of the Council, Economic Development and Partnership
Vice Chair/ Deputy Leader and Members	Councillor Linda Smith	Deputy Leader (Statutory), Leisure and Housing
	Councillor Ed Turner	Deputy Leader, Finance and Asset Management
	Councillor Nigel Chapman	Customer Focused Services
	Councillor Mary Clarkson	Culture and City Centre
	Councillor Tom Hayes	Safer, Greener, Environment
	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth	Planning and Transport
	Councillor Mike Rowley	Housing
	Councillor Marie Tidball (from 4 March 2019) Councillor Louise Upton	Supporting Local Communities Healthy Oxford

The quorum for this meeting is three, substitutes are not allowed.

Future items to be discussed by the City Executive Board can be found on the Forward Plan which is available on the Council's [website](#)

Copies of this agenda

Reference copies are available to consult in the Town Hall Reception. Agendas are published 6 working days before the meeting and the draft minutes a few days after.

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AGENDA

Pages

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 3 ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
- 4 COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA
- 5 COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES
- 6 ITEMS RAISED BY BOARD MEMBERS
- 7 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS
- 8 APPROVAL OF NEW TWIN CITIES, THE BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR TWINNING PROJECTS AND CRITERIA FOR SELECTING FUTURE TWIN CITIES

7 - 18

Lead Member: Culture and City Centre (Councillor Mary Clarkson)

The Head of Community Services has submitted a report to approve the signing of full Twin City agreements with Wroclaw, Ramallah and Padova and agree the criteria for the formation of additional international links.

Recommendation: That the City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Oxford-Wroclaw Twin City agreement signed in Wroclaw in October 2018;
2. **Endorse** the Oxford Polish Association as the formal volunteer community Link for the Wroclaw twinning relationship;
3. **Approve** the signing of full Twin City agreements with Ramallah and Padova;
4. **Delegate authority** to approve the final wording of the full Twin city agreements to the Head of Community services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Culture and City Centre and the Head of Law and Governance;
5. **Approve** how we use the £23,000 budget allocation for twinning projects; and
6. **Approve** the criteria and process for selecting future international links as set out in paragraph 26 of this report.

9 MINUTES

19 - 24

Recommendation: The City Executive Board resolves to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2019 as a true and accurate record.

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 13 March
- 10 April
- 22 May
- 12 June
- 10 July
- 07 August
- 11 September
- 09 October
- 13 November
- 11 December

All meetings start at 6pm.

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licences for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Member's Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

HOW OXFORD CITY COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN ENGAGE AT THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Addresses and questions by members of the public, (15 minutes in total)

Members of the public can submit questions in writing about any item for decision at the meeting. Questions, stating the relevant agenda item, must be received by the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am two clear working day before the meeting (eg for a Tuesday meeting, the deadline would be 9.30am on the Friday before). Questions can be submitted either by letter or by email (executiveboard@oxford.gov.uk).

Answers to the questions will be provided in writing at the meeting; supplementary questions will not be allowed. If it is not possible to provide an answer at the meeting it will be included in the minutes that are published on the Council's website within 2 working days of the meeting.

The Chair has discretion in exceptional circumstances to agree that a submitted question or related statement (dealing with matters that appear on the agenda) can be asked verbally at the meeting. In these cases, the question and/or address is limited to 3 minutes, and will be answered verbally by the Chair or another Board member or an officer of the Council. The text of any proposed address must be submitted within the same timescale as questions.

For this agenda item the Chair's decision is final.

Councillors speaking at meetings

Oxford City councillors may, when the chair agrees, address the Board on an item for decision on the agenda (other than on the minutes). The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one clear working day before the meeting, stating the relevant agenda items. An address may last for no more than three minutes. If an address is made, the Board member who has political responsibility for the item for decision may respond or the Board will have regard to the points raised in reaching its decision.

Councillors speaking on Neighbourhood issues (10 minutes in total)

Any City Councillor can raise local issues on behalf of communities directly with the Board. The member seeking to make an address must notify the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30am at least one clear working day before the meeting, giving outline details of the issue. Priority will be given to those members who have not already addressed the Board within the year and in the order received. Issues can only be raised once unless otherwise agreed by the Board. The Board's responsibility will be to hear the issue and respond at the meeting, if possible, or arrange a written response within 10 working days.

Items raised by Board members

Such items must be submitted within the same timescale as questions and will be for discussion only and not for a Board decision. Any item which requires a decision of the Board will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Board

To: City Executive Board
Date: 7 March 2019
Report of: Head of Community Services
Title of Report: Approval of new twin cities, the budget allocation for twinning projects and criteria for selecting future twin cities

Summary and recommendations

Purpose of report: To approve the signing of full Twin City agreements with Wroclaw, Ramallah and Padova and agree the criteria for the formation of additional international links.

Key decision: No

Executive Board Member: Councillor Mary Clarkson, Culture and City Centre Portfolio

Corporate Priority: Strong and Active Communities

Policy Framework: Culture Strategy

Recommendation(s): That the City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Approve** the Oxford-Wroclaw Twin City agreement signed in Wroclaw in October 2018;
2. **Endorse** the Oxford Polish Association as the formal volunteer community Link for the Wroclaw twinning relationship;
3. **Approve** the signing of full Twin City agreements with Ramallah and Padova;
4. **Delegate** authority to approve the final wording of the full Twin city agreements to the Head of Community services in consultation with the portfolio holder for Culture and City Centre and the Head of Law and Governance;
5. **Approve** how we use the £23,000 budget allocation for twinning projects; and
6. **Approve** the criteria and process for selecting future international links as set out in paragraph 26 of this report.

Appendices

1. Risk Register
2. Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction and background

1. European twinning programmes developed primarily as a result of the devastation caused by the world wars. They aimed to build trust and understanding across cities, countries and cultures in the hope that they could help prevent similar catastrophes in future. Building relationships between individuals and communities – citizens and civic leaders – was at the heart of this aspiration.
2. In contemporary life, international links promote tourism, cohesion and economic development. They create opportunities for groups, schools, individuals, families and businesses in different countries to get together in person and digitally to exchange and learn from each other. They help to expand horizons, build new friendships and establish useful commercial links as well as to practise languages and other skills and sample each other's countries' cultures.
3. Oxford has been twinned with Bonn since 1947 and was one of the first cities to establish a formal Anglo-German link after the war. The Oxford/Bonn link draws on strong musical, school and university contacts; art, sport, youth theatre and business contacts have also been made.
4. The Oxford-Leiden Link was established immediately after the Second World War and has adapted and evolved over the years to reflect changing lifestyles. Our link with Leiden has a strong civic basis, and has also been one of the most active sporting links.
5. The Oxford-Grenoble Association was founded in 1989, and has since had many exchanges based on links between musical, artistic, scientific and school groups.
6. The Oxford-Perm link began to grow in the late 1980s, as the city was developing and barriers to communication were gradually eased. Oxford provided support to Perm to set up democratic structures after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the link was formalised in 1995. This link was based on strong university ties and maintains an academic focus, although many other activities take place including sports, arts and schools exchanges.
7. Oxford's link with Leon in Nicaragua was formalised in 1986, and focuses on fundraising for improvement projects in Leon. With the new possibilities afforded by developing technology, it is hoped that this link will be able to expand into more community exchange activities.
8. Each twin city link has a volunteer run Link Association/Committee in Oxford which organises activities and cultural exchanges between people from Oxford and their corresponding international link. Oxford City Council International Links part-time Coordinator provides co-ordination support to assist each of the volunteer links in Oxford filling skills and capacity gaps, where required, to ensure the success of twinning projects.
9. Oxford International Links (OIL) is a volunteer run committee which works closely with Oxford City Council and the individual Oxford Link Associations to support the development of activities that celebrate the historic friendship the city has with our twin cities. The Oxford City Council International Links Coordinator provides co-ordination assistance to OIL and also monitors the Oxford City Council grant

funding allocated to OIL on a Service Level Agreement basis. OIL administers grants to individual Links/Associations and also runs some twinning activities directly.

10. In addition to supporting the volunteer links and OIL, Oxford City Council also coordinates international partnerships and collaboration projects which include but are not exclusively with Oxford's twin cities. The main focus for these projects is collaboration between young people e.g. Ethno music project and twin city involvement in Cowley Road Carnival, Oxford Christmas Lights Festival and Pegasus Theatre project, which are designed specifically to deliver on Council core objectives. The International Links Coordinator also responds to initiatives and requests from the Council's international twin city offices and introduces people from our twin Cities to Oxford's diverse community groups.

11. At the Oxford City Council Meeting on 23 July 2018, the following motion was passed by Members:

“Extending twinning links - Oxford City Council reaffirms its commitment to do all it can to ensure that Oxford remains an international and European city open to all. Whatever the results of Britain's negotiations with the rest of the European Union, we are determined to strengthen and deepen Oxford's links with other cities inside and outside Europe. To this end we call on the City Executive Board to: a) continue support for Oxford's existing twinning links with Leiden (Netherlands), Bonn (Germany), Grenoble (France), Perm (Russia) and Leon (Nicaragua); b) continue to support the Oxford European Association and promote the interests of non-British European citizens living in Oxford; c) initiate new twinning links with both Wroclaw (Poland) and Padua (Italy); d) initiate a twinning link based on the long-standing friendship between Oxford and Ramallah (Palestine).”

Ratification of Oxford-Wroclaw twinning agreement

12. Following visits to Oxford on 14 and 15 June 2018 by Wroclaw's Mayor to discuss the nature of the twinning relationship between the two cities, a full Twin City agreement between Oxford and Wroclaw was signed in Wroclaw on 3 October 2018 by Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Sajjad-Hussain Malik. The signing of the agreement was fast-tracked owing to the political situation in Poland and their forthcoming Mayoral elections and therefore was not approved by the City Executive Board in advance. The City Executive Board is requested to ratify the signed agreement to ensure due process.

Endorse Oxford Polish Association as the formal Link for the Oxford/Wroclaw twinning relationship

13. Each twin city has a corresponding volunteer Link which drives twinning activity in the Community and endorses funding applications made to Oxford International Links (OIL) for twinning activity with the twin city. The Oxford Polish Association has proposed that they become the formal voluntary group for the Wroclaw twinning arrangement. Officers recommend this group as being the most appropriate one in Oxford to undertake this role.

Approving full Twin City status of Oxford and Ramallah

14. Whilst everyday life is very different, Ramallah and Oxford have similarities in terms of population diversity, universities, schools and hospitals, and many civil society

groups as well as commerce, trade unions and cultural ventures. Additionally, a group of Oxford medics teach at Bir Zeit University, Ramallah, for a few weeks every year.

15. The project of forming friendship links between Oxford and Ramallah originated in 2002. Volunteer observers from Oxford, who were in Ramallah at that time, formed the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association (ORFA) – a charity building grassroots links between civil society groups and individuals in Oxford in the UK and Ramallah in Palestine.
16. The Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association approached Oxford City Council in 2003 and requested that Oxford become officially twinned with Ramallah. Members agreed that there should be initial visits over a number of years within which the actual activities between the two cities could be monitored and an assessment made of how successful a formal twinning relationship was likely to be.
17. Over the last 16 years, the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association has sent a number of delegations from Oxford to Ramallah to meet people with whom they have something in common, such as working in the same industry.
18. In 2018, more than 600 people signed a petition on Change.org for Oxford to officially twin with Ramallah. Following a motion agreed by Council a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Ramallah on 17 December 2018.

Approving full twin city status of Oxford and Padova

19. In 2017, a delegation of Oxford academics from across the University of Oxford academic divisions visited Padova to discuss ways in which Oxford and Padova could collaborate on research projects. Discussions were held between University officials and Oxford City Council Members as to the benefits of a parallel twinning arrangement between the cities of Oxford and Padova as well as University of Oxford and the University of Padova.
20. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Lord Mayor with Padova on 9 May 2018 and the Motion passed by Members as noted at paragraph 11.
21. The University of Oxford's Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) Directorate, headed by Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Anne Trefethen is hosting a delegation of academics from the University of Padova, on 14 and 15 March 2019 in Oxford. The event will celebrate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GLAM and their equivalent University of Padova division, CAM.
22. Whilst there are benefits of a parallel twinning arrangement, it is expected that the wording of the full twinning agreement with Padova will reflect the University-led nature of this proposition and limit the resources expended by Oxford City Council accordingly.
23. As a commitment has been given Officers are now proposing that an agreement is negotiated and signed on this basis.

Budget allocation

24. An additional £23,000 has been included in the baseline budget for 2019-20, reducing to £17,000 in the budget for future years. Officers propose to spend the additional ongoing funding on a contribution towards a full time twinning officer post to effectively resource the additional international links. It is proposed that the remainder of the additional budget would be managed by the twinning officer and spent on larger twinning events or those of strategic significance for Oxford City Council including launch events, anniversaries and inter-twin city activities. The additional amount for 2019-20 is needed to pay for extending the signage to incorporate the new twin city names.

The process and criteria for selecting future Twin Cities

25. London has ten twin cities and Cambridge has two. Given that Oxford is likely to have eight imminently, it is recognised that the portfolio is significant and it is not advisable to add any further twin cities in the near future, at least until the new arrangements have bedded in.

26. Nevertheless, Officers recommend that any additional international requests are considered on the following basis:

- The proposed twin city has a University of international renown that already has links with Oxford
- The proposed twin city is committed to immutable principles of individual liberty, democracy, respect for Human Rights and equality under the law
- A suitable voluntary link group is available to drive ongoing activity with the twin city
- There should be an agreed period during which a Friendship Agreement would be entered into to monitor the link's ability to deliver sustainable activity in the longer term prior to signing a full twinning agreement
- The decision will need to be reviewed alongside the resource implication and only signed once a budget is in place and the City Executive Board has taken the decision.

Legal issues

27. As there are no express statutory provisions or regulations underpinning and governing the process of international town or city twinning, it is usual for the many such twinning agreements in existence to be primarily aspirational in tone, rather than creating firm obligations on either party. Under the proposed draft, either party would be able to terminate the arrangement by giving 12 months' notice.

28. In entering into its twinning agreements the Council relies on the general power of competence set out in S1(1) of the Localism Act 2011 whereby a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally may do and power to do it for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.

Financial Implications

29. In signing up to international links there is an expectation that events and reciprocal events will take place. Continental European cities tend to have larger budget commitments to such links than the City Council. The City Council reduces costs to

modest levels by expecting individuals not on official business to fund their own travel and subsistence. Nevertheless, there are costs associated with international links that have to be met and it important that these are fully reflected in decisions to form new links.

Level of risk

30. There is a risk when twinning with another city that the political values of that city may change over time and not fit with the values of Oxford City Council. Legal agreements for new twin cities will include wording to mitigate this risk.
31. Unequal resourcing of the twin city link between the two twin cities carries a reputational risk which will be mitigated by managing expectations early and clearly.
32. Adding three new twin cities during a short space of time runs a risk of creating competition for attention and funds between these links which will all have the same anniversary dates; this will be mitigated by providing sufficient staffing capacity, allocating funding according to set criteria and involving all the links in plans for launch and anniversary activity.

Equalities impact

33. See the attached Equalities Impact Assessment Screening form.

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Job title	Cultural Development Manager
Service area or department	Community Services
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Appendix 1: Risk Register

Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
							I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Reputational risk - resources	Continental European cities tend to have larger budget commitments to international links than the city Council. This may lead them to expect Oxford City Council to provide more funding for International Links projects than is available in the budget.	Threat	Expectation that budgets available from Councils in new Twin Cities will be matched by Oxford City Council.	Reputational damage	22.2.19	Paula Redway	1	2	1	2	1	1	The risk will be mitigated by managing expectations early and clearly.	Ensure that expectations about the available budget are made clear and in writing prior to signing any new agreements.	8.3.19	G	40%	Paula Redway
Reputational risk - political changes 13	There is a risk when twinning with another city that the political values of that city may change over time and not fit with the values of Oxford City Council.	Threat	Political change	Reputational damage	22.2.19	Paula Redway	2	3	2	3	2	3	The risk will be mitigated by including wording in the legal agreements stating that <i>All dialogue and activities undertaken between Oxford and the twin city shall be based on the immutable principles of individual liberty, democracy, respect for Human Rights and equality under the law. The agreement will also contain a cancellation clause.</i>	Ensure that the legal agreements contain the wording in the previous column and a cancellation clause.	8.3.19	G	80%	Paula Redway
Financial	Adding three new twin cities during a short space of time runs a risk of creating competition for attention and funds between twin city links which will all have the same anniversary dates	Threat	Lack of strategic planning	Reputational damage	22.2.19	Paula Redway	1	3	1	3	1	2	The risk will be mitigated by providing sufficient staffing capacity, allocating funding according to set criteria and involving all the links in plans for launch and anniversary activity.	Recruit full time International Links Officer; ensure all are aware of the funding criteria; involve all the links in plans for launch and anniversary activity	8.3.19	G	40%	Paula Redway

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Initial Equalities Impact Assessment screening form

Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:

The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the 9 protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership**

The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:

- (a) To seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;
- (b) To identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.

The Council will also ask that officers specifically consider whether:

- (A) The policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- (B) The proposed policy / service is likely to have any significant impact on mental wellbeing / community resilience (staff or residents)

If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:

1. **The decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.
2. **The duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.
3. The decision maker must be **aware of the needs of the duty.**
4. The **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.
5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).
6. What does 'due regard' entail?
 - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;**
 - b. **Ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;**
 - c. **Proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.**

7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).
 8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"), to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider <http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>
1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The CEB report proposes the addition of three new twin cities to Oxford's portfolio. Existing twin cities are Bonn, Lieden, Grenoble, Perm and Léon. Adding new twin cities will stretch resources and therefore could potentially disadvantage the people who have already been involved in twin city activity.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

In order to minimise these impacts, additional budget has been allocated and a recommendation for its allocation for staffing and projects is included in this CEB report.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

A consultation meeting was held with representatives of all of the existing and proposed new twin cities on 5 February 2019. It was agreed at the meeting that the current part time International Links Co-ordinator role would need to be increased to a full time Officer role in order to support the increased demand with an increased budget being available to pay for launch events, signage, anniversaries and larger projects involving more than one twin city.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

Yes as the additional budget requirement has been included in forthcoming budgets.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

We will meet at least annually with representatives of international links and all of Oxford's twin cities to monitor this.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA:

Role:

Date:

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Consultation
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the "unknown")
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments or Oxfordshire data observatory information where relevant)

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Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 12 February 2019

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Committee members:

Councillor Brown (Chair)

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Upton

Councillor Linda Smith (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Simm

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive

Tim Sadler, Executive Director Sustainable City

Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive

Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Adrian Arnold, Acting Head of Planning Services

Julia Castle, Senior Lettings & Disposal Surveyor

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Andrew Gant

Councillor James Fry

Apologies:

Councillors Turner and Rowley sent apologies.

133. Declarations of Interest

None.

134. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

136. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

137. Items raised by Board Members

None.

138. Scrutiny Committee Reports

On 05 February the Scrutiny Committee had considered the report on the Oxford Rent Guarantee Scheme (RGS) (item 10 of the agenda). Councillor Gant, in his capacity as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, spoke to that report and the Board's response as given in the agenda supplement. He thanked the Board for its response to the Committee's recommendations. The Committee, while pleased to note the success of the scheme, had been concerned that it didn't address the needs of single people or couples. The bid for Government funding to run a pilot scheme for that group of people was welcome. The Committee would be pleased to hear the outcome of that bid and what contingency plans would be out in place to deal with the possibility that it wasn't successful.

The Board Member for Leisure and Housing, Councillor Linda Smith, said that if someone in need of help was not eligible for the RGS they would always be directed to such other support or a scheme for which they were.

The Scrutiny Committee had endorsed its Budget Review Group's report on the 2019/20 budget (item 8 of the agenda) before submitting to the City Executive Board for its consideration. Councillor Fry, in his capacity as Chair of the Budget Review Group, spoke to the report and the Board's response as given in the agenda supplement. Given the overarching financial climate, the Board Member for Finance and Asset Management and Head of Financial Services were to be congratulated on the quality of the balanced budget achieved. He drew attention to a few matters in particular: the fact that the Council could only keep a mere 8% of the Business Rates income after tariffs and levies have been taken into account; that 11-12% of the Council's budget was devoted to dealing with homelessness matters; and that the Council was one of the few councils to have a Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme; and a risk that the Council's continued commitment to funding the CTR would trigger a further loss to the Council as a result of the so called "Fair Funding Review". Slippage in the Capital Programme remained a cause for concern and so the introduction of a new Programme Management Office was welcome. The anticipated drawdown on Homelessness reserves was worrying and thought should be given to contingency plans to ensure continuation of this important provision. It was noteworthy that only 2 of the 58 respondents to the Budget consultation were Council tenants.

The Chair thanked all those who had contributed to the development of the Budget before the Board. She too was very concerned about the possible consequences of the Fair Funding Review. It was right that the Council made homelessness provision a priority and anything which threatened it was a concern. Reliance on piecemeal and temporary funding streams to support it was difficult; the Council would continue to lobby for sustainable funding.

139. Budget 2019/20

The Head of Financial Services introduced a report on the outcome of the budget consultation and to agree the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2020-21 to 2022-23 and 2019-20 Budget for recommendation to Council. It was a positive budget,

despite a number of external pressures and one which, among other things, supported the Oxford Living Wage; prioritised homelessness services; and tackled poverty in a variety of ways.

The Budget proposals were a statement of the position at a point in time, but which would be reviewed and redesigned over the coming months. Some elements would come back to the Board for more detailed consideration in due course.

There was concern about the apparently limited reach of the budget consultation and thought should be given to finding a means of engaging with the public more effectively (and with particular reference to those with the greatest needs and who may be hard to reach).

Proposals for the Capital Programme were significant and welcome as was development of the Project Management Office. Capital investment in the Council's wholly-owned company, Oxford Direct Services, for example, would, in turn, increase the dividend payable to the Council.

The Chair moved the recommendations given in the report, together with those given in the supplement. The tabled and amended version of Appendix 6 is attached to these minutes.

The City Executive Board agreed the amendments to the Consultation Budget and **resolved to recommend that Council resolves to:**

1. **Approve** the 2019-20 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendices 1-10, noting:
 - a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £24.167 million for 2019/20 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £8.94 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £307.80 per annum
 - b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2019/20 of £42.466 million and a reduction of 1% (£1.03/wk) in social dwelling rents from April 2019 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £102.26 as set out in Appendix 4
 - c) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6, with the change referenced in 7 below.
2. **Agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7
3. **Delegate** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance and Asset Management the decision to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 12-14 of the report.

4. **Ratify** their decision to implement the Premium Council Tax of 100% for properties that have been empty for more than 2 years and approve the escalated rate of premium council tax when permitted to do so (paragraphs 17-19)
5. **Agree** the transfer of property from the General Fund to the HRA as referred to in paragraph 35.
6. **Formally adopt** the Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme and **apply** the scheme in accordance with the guidance issued; and
7. **Agree** that the Capital Budget for the Seacourt Park and Ride Extension scheme is increased by £945k in 2019-20, to be funded from Community Infrastructure Levy where available funds permit, with any balance to come from the Council capital financing reserve with a commensurate amendment to appendix 6.

140. Capital Strategy

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to present the Capital Strategy for approval.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Recommend that Council approves the Capital Strategy attached at Appendix A of the report.

141. Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to present the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2019/20 to 2022/23.

The City Executive Board resolved to :

Recommend that Council approves:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 as set out in paragraphs 15 to 60 and the Prudential Indicators for 2019/20 – 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 2;
2. The Borrowing Strategy at paragraphs 23 to 35;
3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement at paragraphs 36 to 37 which sets out the Council's policy on charging borrowing to the revenue account; and
4. The Investment Strategy for 2019/20 and investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 38 to 59 and Appendix 1.

142. Oxford Rent Guarantee Scheme Pilot Review

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report to review the Oxford Rent Guarantee pilot and recommend adopting this approach as the default model for placing households who are at risk of homelessness, into private rented accommodation.

The Board Member for Leisure and Housing said other valuable Council schemes to help those who were homeless sometimes overshadowed the importance of preventing homelessness in the first place. This pilot scheme had been a significant success, helping 73 families. The report sought to embed the practices of the scheme as “business as usual.” She placed on record her thanks to the officers for their work in developing the scheme over the previous two years.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Agree** in principle for the Oxford Rent Guarantee to be adopted as “business as usual” by the Private Sector team from April 2019, as outlined in the report. This is subject to adequate budget provision being made on an ongoing basis from uncommitted Housing Needs reserves in future years; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Head of Housing Services to make any administrative changes to the scheme in order to improve the customer offer and to operate the scheme effectively

143. Sale and Leaseback of Flats at St Paul's House, Jericho to enable redevelopment of the wider site

The Interim Regeneration and Economy Programme Director had submitted a report to approve the sale of the freehold interest in St Paul’s House, Jericho to Lucy Group Ltd and leaseback of five flats on long leases to enable the whole site to be redeveloped.

The Surveyor (Regeneration and Major Projects) said the report sought to unlock the difficulties associated with the joint ownership of the St Paul’s House and allow for its timely and sympathetic redevelopment.

Key to the proposal was the protection which would be provided to existing Council tenants who would be guaranteed a home of equal size, either in the new development or elsewhere as they wished. It was agreed that these guarantees should be made clear on the signage associated with the project.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the disposal of the freehold interest in St Paul’s House and leaseback of the 5 tenanted flats on the terms set out in the not for publication Appendix 3; and
2. **Delegate** authority to the Interim Regeneration and Economy Programme Director or his successor, to vary those terms on condition that the revised terms continue to represent the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

144. Administration Fee for invalid planning applications that are returned

The Acting Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to seek agreement for the implementation of an administration fee for those invalid applications returned to the applicant.

The Board Member for Planning and Transport said that nearly half of planning applications submitted for the first time were incomplete and therefore invalid. The proposal was intended to discourage submission of incomplete plans (notably from

planning agents and architects) and to recover the costs of processing invalid applications. The Council would hope not to have to apply the fee and its introduction should lessen the number of invalid applications.

The Acting Head of Planning Services said the measure was part of a larger and ongoing programme of performance improvement for the Planning Service. This included, among other things, improving communication with users of the service, through, for example, an enhanced web presence.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

- 1. **Approve** the implementation of an administration fee for processing invalid applications that are returned to the applicant; and
- 2. **Delegate** to the Acting Head of Planning Services the authority to set the level of administration charge and time limit by which the charge should be sought for the respective invalid applications.

145. Minutes

The Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January as a true and accurate record.

146. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 13 March
- 10 April
- 22 May
- 12 June
- 10 July
- 07 August

All meetings start at 6pm.

147. Matters Exempt from Publication

No exempt matters were discussed.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.55 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 13 March 2019