

# Minutes of a meeting of the Companies Scrutiny Panel on Monday 22 June 2020

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## Committee members present:

Councillor Fry (Chair)  
Councillor Munkonge

Councillor Landell Mills  
Councillor Simmons

## Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services  
Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services / Director Housing Companies, in role as Director, Housing Group and Barton Oxford LLP  
Jane Winfield, Regeneration and Major Projects - Team Manager / Director Housing Companies, in role as Director, Housing Group and Barton Oxford LLP  
Mike Day, Housing Company Managing Director  
David Watt, Finance Business Partner, Housing Companies, Housing Group  
Tim Sadler, Transition Director / Chairman Direct Services Companies, in role as Director of Oxford Direct Services  
Simon Howick, Managing Director, Direct Services Companies, Director of Oxford Direct Services  
Gregor Budde, ODS Interim FD  
Tom Bridgman, Executive Director (Development), in role as Director of OXWED  
Stephen Hing, OXWED Development Director, OXWED Development Director  
Kevin Minns, OXWED Executive Director  
Andrew Brown, Committee Services Manager  
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

## Also present

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member with responsibility for ODS

### 1. Apologies

None.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

None

### 3. Items to be considered in private

The Panel resolved to move into private session on the grounds that the presence of the public would likely involve the disclosure of exempt information in accordance with paragraph 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

#### 4. Minutes of the previous meeting

Subject to minor textual amendments it was **AGREED** that the record of the meeting of 12 March 2020 were an accurate record.

#### 5. Responses to previous recommendations

The Panel was reminded that due to the cancellation of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group meeting in March 2020, the reports made from the Panel's meeting in March 2020 had not been considered. This information was **NOTED**.

#### 6. Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports

Minutes of the consideration of the relevant Shareholder and Joint Venture Group reports are detailed below.

#### 7. ODS Minutes

Simon Howick, ODS Managing Director and Tim Sadler, Chair of ODS presented the ODS end of year report to the Panel.

Progress had been made on both senior staffing fronts and wider governance. Gregor Budde, the new Finance Director, had been appointed, was introduced to the Panel and welcomed. The ODS Board had been holding multiple additional meetings with the non-executive directors to manage the disruption caused by Covid. Responding to Covid locally was an area where ODS had received excellent feedback from customers on their work, where they had played a key role in street cleansing and supporting the hubs. An audit committee had been established and had met.

The Panel also raised questions in relation to the ongoing impact of the Council's decision to pause certain capital projects. The Council as both shareholder and contractor, and ODS had worked together early on in deciding how to approach the situation.

Discussion was held by the Panel regarding the impact of shareholder spending through ODS, and the circular economy aspect of spending by the Council and the benefits of capital spending for residents. It was felt that these were valid considerations and should form part of the Council's decision-making as to when paused projects might be recommenced. Whilst it was recognised that the overwhelming majority of projects (specifically housing projects) from the Council to ODS were continuing, it was **AGREED** to make the following recommendation to the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group:

**That the Council, when determining whether to recommence paused capital projects, gives weighting to the social value effects of capital projects as criteria. In particular, the impact of reflationary spending, the benefits to the community of the capital project, and the impact on returns to the Council.**

The Panel also **THANKED** formally ODS for the work of their staff in the difficult circumstances faced by all.

Councillor Nigel Chapman, Simon Howick, Tim Sadler and Gregor Budde all left the meeting at this point.

## **8. OxWED Minutes**

Tom Bridgman, Stephen Hing, Kevin Minns and Jane Winfield joined the meeting at the commencement of this item.

Tom Bridgman, OXWED Company Director, introduced the OXWED June 2020 update.

The Panel **NOTED** the report with support for the approach being taken.

Tom Bridgman, Stephen Hing and Kevin Minns left the meeting at this point.

## **9. Barton Minutes**

Jane Winfield and Stephen Clarke, City Council representatives on the Barton LLP presented an update report on the progress at Barton Park.

The opening of the school at the site was confirmed for 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The bus link was running, though with Covid there was extremely little take-up of the service. A continuation by the County Council of the temporary arrangement was deemed likely, given the lack of capacity within the bus companies to develop business plans at present. The planned numberplate recognition cameras to prevent rat running had been put into place and a traffic audit was upcoming. The Pavillion had made progress, though significant numbers of snagging items remained to be completed.

The Panel **NOTED** the report.

## **10. Housing Company Minutes**

Mike Day joined the meeting at this point. The Panel were introduced to him as the newly appointed Managing Director, and he was welcomed.

Stephen Clarke introduced a report detailing the end of year financial outturn and changes in budget spend in-year.

David Watt, Finance Business Partner joined the meeting at this point.

Councillors Craig Simmons and Tom Landell Mills left the meeting at this point.

The Panel requested that greater focus be given in future reports of wider value considerations of delivery of different housing sites, not simply focus on timescale-related KPIs. It also welcomed the news of reworking the business plan to get a more realistic assessment of timescales and the means by which OCHL could support the Council's MTFP.

The Panel **NOTED** the appointment of a new Managing Director for OCHL and expressed thanks to the outgoing Managing Director for offering to remain as a non-executive director and Chair of the Board to ensure continuity of handover.

## **11. Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was **NOTED**.

**The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at 8.10 pm**

**Chair .....**  
**2020**

**Date: Monday 14 September**