

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 13 February 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Leader), Turner (Deputy Leader), Cook, Coulter, Curran, Lygo, Seamons, Sinclair and Tanner.

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Smith.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received

84. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One written question was submitted by the Chair of the Trap Grounds Allotment Association. That question and the answer to it was distributed at the start of the meeting. The details are attached to the signed copy of the minutes as an appendix.

85. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Two Scrutiny reports were submitted. These are referred to in minutes 86 (BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY) and 92 (GREEN SPACES STRATEGY – CONSULTATION OUTCOME).

86. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended), which presented the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2013/14 to 2016/17 and the Council's 2013/14 Budget. The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel also submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved:-

(1) to RECOMMEND Council to:-

- (a) Approve the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £25,027,000 for 2013/14 and in doing so to approve an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.23 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £268.19 per annum;
- (b) Approve the Council's General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2013-14 to 2016-17 and indicative budgets as set out in Appendices 1-5 of the report;

- (c) Approve the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix 5 to the report and in doing so to approve an increase in average dwelling rent of 4.62% (£4.27 per week) resulting in an annual average rent of £96.83;
 - (d)
 - (i) Approve the Capital Programme for 2013/14 -2016-17 as set out in Appendix 6 to the report;
 - (ii) To vire £65,000 from underspends in the current year's Capital Programme for the purpose of providing and improving floodlights, seating and dugouts at the Oxford City Football Club's stadium at Court Place Farm;
 - (e) Approve the Fees and Charges schedule as set out in Appendix 7 to the report;
 - (f) Approve the level of exemptions and discounts on empty homes and unoccupied properties as outlined in paragraphs 18-19 of the report;
- (2) On the Scrutiny recommendations, to agree the recommendations in the following terms:-
- (a) That the Business Rate Retention Scheme should become the focus of more robust modelling and detailed forecasting within the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
 - (b) That the trading strategy should continue to have a high level of contingency held against it, noting that it was subject to periodic review and that as experience in winning and successfully delivering traded work became embedded, the risk profile associated with the income stream would reduce;
 - (c) That the opportunity to pool contingencies in the light of experience would be considered as part of next year's Medium Term Financial Plan refresh;
 - (d) That there should be a clear recognition of structural and operational needs to deliver on increased income and trading targets and that those Service Areas most affected should continue to be reviewed to ensure best practice;
 - (e) To record that equality impact assessments were required for all budget changes and that they should be available at the earliest opportunity;
 - (f) To ask that a briefing note be provided to all councillors as soon as possible outlining the use of the various pots of money within the Green Deal;
- (3) To record the Board's thanks for all the work that Directors, Service Heads and Finance staff had put in to the formulation and presentation of the Budget.

87. CORPORATE PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which informed the Board of the consultation on the Corporate Plan 2013-2017.

Resolved to:-

- (1) RECOMMEND Council to agree the Corporate Plan 2013-2017;
- (2) To note that the Plan contained new text and targets in the light of consultation;
- (3) Delegate authority to the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to make minor textual amendments where necessary in preparation for formal publication of the Corporate Plan.

88. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/14

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which presented the Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14 with the Prudential Indicators for 2013/14 – 2016/17.

Resolved to RECOMMEND Council to:-

- (1) Adopt and approve the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2013/14 to 2016/17 as set out in paragraphs 62 to 86 of the report;
- (2) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision statement at paragraphs 25-27 of the report which sets out the Council's policy on the repayment of debt;
- (3) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2013/14 and the treasury prudential indicators at paragraphs 17-39 of the report;
- (4) Approve the Investment Strategy for 2013/14 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy and the detailed investment criteria as set out in paragraphs 40-60 of and Appendix 1 to the report.

89. COMMUNITY GRANT ALLOCATIONS FOR 2013/2014

The Executive Director, Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning grant allocations for 2013/14.

Resolved, subject to Council subsequently agreeing the grants budget for 2013/14 as set out in Table 1 to the report, to:-

- (1) Approve the extension of the Commissioning Programme for a further year, in accordance with and as amended by the provisions of Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) Approve the recommendations for the rest of the grants commissioning programme as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;

- (3) Approve the recommendations for the applications received to the grants 2013/14 open bidding programme as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;
- (4) In relation to grant aid to advice centres, to ask the Executive Director, Community Services to report back to members later in the year on how the work of the advice centres had changed in the light of changes to the welfare benefits system.

90. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME - CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Head of Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval for consultation on a new draft Housing Allocations Scheme.

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the proposed changes to the existing Housing Allocations Scheme;
- (2) To approve for consultation the draft new Housing Allocations Scheme.

91. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - REVIEW OUTCOME

The Head of Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which set out a revised Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan for 2013-18 following consultation, and which asked the Board to review policy following the commencement of additional powers related to the Council fulfilling its duties by securing a private sector tenancy for statutory homeless households.

Resolved to:-

- (1) RECOMMEND Council to adopt the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2013-18 comprised in the report;
- (2) To note the commencement of additional powers introduced by virtue of the Localism Act 2011 related to Council fulfilling its duties by securing a private sector tenancy for statutory homeless households (paragraphs 8-11 of the report refers) and:-
 - (a) To approve the policy as outlined in Appendix D to the report as Council policy;
 - (b) To delegate authority to the Head of Housing to implement the policy together with any minor changes that may come forward due to any subsequent revisions or clarifications to Government guidance and any ensuing case law.

92. GREEN SPACES STRATEGY - CONSULTATION OUTCOME

The Head of Leisure and Parks submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought approval for a Green Spaces Strategy for Oxford that had been updated to reflect responses from public consultation. The Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee also submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved;-

- (1) To approve the Green Spaces Strategy for Oxford that forms Appendix 4 to the report;
- (2) In relation to the Scrutiny recommendation, to note that the Head of Leisure and Parks would be undertaking work to understand the usage and usage needs of Oxford's green spaces by all the City's sectors and groups with a view to enabling the beneficial outcomes from green spaces to be enjoyed by all.

93. CITY DEAL

The Executive Director, City Regeneration submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which provided a briefing on the City Deal Expression of Interest submitted to Government on 15th January 2013.

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the report;
- (2) To formally support the submission;
- (3) In the event of the submission being successful, to delegate authority to the Executive Director, City Regeneration to lead on developing the bid and negotiations with partners and Government.

94. ARISTOTLE LANE FOOTPATH OVER RAILWAY - CLOSURE

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which explained that Network Rail was proposing to make substantial investment in Oxford Station and the main line network between Southampton and the Midlands and that to support this investment, Network Rail was seeking agreement from the City Council to close the footpath crossing the railway at Aristotle Lane.

With the agreement of the Board, Tony Hollander (Chair, Trap Grounds Allotment Association), Corinna Redman (Chair of Governors, SS Philip and James Primary School) and a representative of Network Rail addressed the meeting.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Surrender such rights the City Council had in respect of the footpath crossing the railway between Aristotle Lane and the Trap Ground allotments by a Deed of Release subject to the City Executive Board being satisfied that Network Rail had provided, in consultation with local stakeholders, the promised improvements to the Aristotle Lane footbridge, the provision of a new car park on Council land at Aristotle Lane, the provision of a permissive footpath over its land to the Trap Grounds (Town Green) and had made satisfactory progress on the Oxford Station development including the completion of a Master Plan;
- (2) Instruct the Head of Corporate Assets to complete negotiations with the County Council to transfer part of the City Council's land to the Saint Philip and Saint James Primary School.

95. FUTURE ITEMS

Nothing was raised under this item.

96. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 5th and 19th December 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.15 pm