

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday 21 March 2013

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

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lois Stock (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer) and Lindsay Cane (Law and Governance)

97. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Val Smith, Dee Sinclair and Mark Lygo. Councillor Scott Seamons sent apologies for his anticipated late arrival.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

99. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Full written questions with answers were distributed at the start of the meeting. These are attached to the minutes as appendix one.

100. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

None submitted.

101. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK - PERIODIC REPORT

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning customer feedback received by the organisation. Peter Sloman presented the report to the Board and explained its background.

Councillor Jean Fooks addressed the Board.

Resolved to agree to the following enhancements to how the Council deals with its customer feedback:-

- (i) Ensure all service areas review their web content and literature by 30th September 2013, and where possible involve customers in sense checking how well we are explaining our services.
- (ii) Develop our policy to always explore the immediate actions required for the customer concerned and those actions needed to improve the process and stop a reoccurrence for other customers.

- (iii) Clarify what constitutes a complaint within our policy in order to provide more capacity and focus for genuine complaints and service improvement potential. This should be underpinned in our procedure, and staff supported to deliver this through training and on line guidance. Particular areas to be covered include:
 - a) Service requests should not constitute a complaint;
 - b) Complaints about policies should be recorded and used to inform future policy direction;
 - c) Letters from Members of Parliament requesting advice and information should not be logged as complaints.
- (iv) Amend our policy and procedure to ensure all service areas always make contact with the customer before closing any complaint on the system, use email whenever possible to allow this to be done electronically, and advise where appropriate of the corrective and preventive action taken as a result of any investigations.
- (v) Include the ability to report customer feedback within the marketing strategy for the City Council's web site.
- (vi) Capture the best practice that exists within the organisation for handling feedback reports in an efficient manner, and ensure this is rolled out to all service areas.
- (vii) Develop our processes and analysis tools to enable further insight into key themes; this could be within a service area or corporately.

102. FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS 2012/13

The Head of Finance and the Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) updating the Board on Finance, Risk and Performance at the end of Quarter 3, 31st December 2012. Councillor Ed Turner presented the report to the Board and explained the background. He pointed out that this was a monitoring report and not the final outturn.

Councillor Jean Fooks addressed the Board.

Resolved to note the report.

103. EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY

The Head of Housing submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) that sought approval for the refreshed Empty Property Strategy 2013-2018 for Oxford City. Councillor Scott Seamons presented the report to the Board and explained the background.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the good area of work and confirm the Council's commitment to ensuring empty property is brought back into use;
- (2) Endorse the refreshed Empty Property Strategy

104. WRITE OFFS

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the write off of uncollectible debts. Councillor Ed Turner presented the report to the Board.

Nigel Kennedy agreed to send information regarding Rovacroft to Board Members.

Resolved that the amounts shown in the body of the report be written off subject to the proviso that if new information or payments are received, the debts written off will be resurrected and credits applied.

105. TOWER BLOCKS - APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGER

The Head of Corporate Property submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended). Councillor Scott Seamons presented the report to the Board and explained the background.

Resolved to approve the award to E.C.Harris of a contract to project manage (including full consultation of all stakeholders and multi disciplinary design services) this key refurbishment project for the Council's tower blocks.

106. FUTURE ITEMS

Nothing was raised under this item.

107. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2013.

108. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

None

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 5.50 pm

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APPENDIX 1

CEB – 21st March

Agenda item 3: Public Questions

The following questions have been asked by Mr Gibson, and responses provided:-

(Q1) Agenda Item 6. On page 10 of Appendix G (para 49) the Integrated Report 3rd Quarter you report a £60k slippage relating to the proposed new swimming pool at Blackbird Leys. Can you please explain how this slippage has occurred, and provide a breakdown of the £60k?

Response: As stated in the Budget Monitoring Report the start of construction for the new Competition Pool has been delayed due to a second Judicial Review challenge.

The original approved budget for the new Competition Pool 2012-13 was £7,582,254, but construction has been delayed pending the outcome of on-going legal issues. £7,500,000 was slipped to 2013-14 at the end of Quarter 2, leaving a budget of £82,254. At the end of quarter 3 the remaining unspent budget of £60k was also slipped to 2013-14 as further expenditure was considered unlikely in the 2012-13 financial year.

(Q2) Agenda Item 6. In a recent edition of the Oxford Journal (Mar 6-12) an Oxford City Council 'spokesman' is quoted as saying: "The Council has recognised the need for replacement gym facilities in the East Oxford area and has been looking for a solution for some time. The Council has now included, in its budget, funding to explore providing such a facility at the Spires Academy..." Can you please tell me how much funding the Council has included in its budget for this purpose, and where I can find this funding listed in this report?

Response: £200,000 has been included in the 2013-14 Capital Programme as recommended by CEB on 13 February 2013 and approved by Council on 18 February 2013

(Q3) Agenda Item 6. In the Integrated Report 3rd Quarter, Appendix G, Appendix 2 the Capital Outturn Report table shows an entry "A4810 New Build Completion (sic) Pool", revealing a capital spend of £21,337. Can you please tell me what comprises this £21,337 spend on capital?

Response: The sum represents fees paid to the appointed Project Managers in 2012-13.

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