

Agenda Item 10

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 12 March 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Leader), Turner (Deputy Leader), Brown, Cook, Curran, Kennedy, Lygo, Rowley, Seamons and Tanner.

145. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None given

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received

147. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

148. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA

Councillors Fooks, Goddard and Simmons asked to address the Board.

It was agreed that they would be heard when the appropriate item on the agenda was reached.

149. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following Scrutiny Reports were submitted:-

- Finance, Performance and Risk – Q3 progress;
- Local Enterprise Partnership – Strategic Economic Plan

It was agreed that they would be considered when the appropriate item on the agenda was reached.

150. FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS 2013/14

The Head of Finance and the Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning Finance, Performance and Risk – Quarter 3 progress.

Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance, Efficiency and Strategic Asset Management, presented the report to the Board and provided some background and context.

Councillor Craig Simmons, on behalf of the Scrutiny Finance Panel, addressed the Board concerning the Panel's recommendation to explore the use of Framework Agreements to provide project management and delivery of Capital Programme schemes.

Councillor Jean Fooks addressed the Board concerning the provision of Dial-A-Ride services in Oxford and her views on the Budget underspend. In response, Councillor Turner indicated that discussions with Oxfordshire County Council about Dial-A-Ride services were ongoing, and that it was anticipated that the underspend would be used within the coming year. Councillor Price, added that Council services had in fact increased despite that fact that an underspend had been achieved.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the financial position and performance of the Council for the third quarter of 2013/14, and also the position of risks outstanding as at 31st December 2013;
- (2) Approve in principle the earmarking of any year-end General Fund savings specifically to fund the Council's Capital programme;
- (3) Note the response from the Director and Board Member to the Scrutiny recommendation concerning Framework Agreements.

151. GRANT ALLOCATION - PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

The Head of Housing and Property submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the proposed allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds, with the purpose of meeting the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy. Councillor Seamons, Board Member for Housing, presented the report to the Board and provided some background and context. He added that Oxfordshire County Council planned to cut 38% from their budget for this type of work in 2015/16 and 2016/17, and it was hard, at this stage, to say with certainty how this would impact on the quality and quantity of services for the homeless within Oxford.

Councillor Jean Fooks addressed the Board, observing that she found many good things within the report, particularly on the allocation of the budget, and she spoke also about maximising the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

In response, Councillors Turner and Brown indicated that there was no predictability about year on year DHP funding from the Government. There was an issue too that people may not apply for DHP funding as soon as they needed it, and it was, in any case, supposed to be a temporary measure.

It was also observed that many private landlords were unwilling to accept as tenants people in receipt of benefits, and that many of them were unable to compete in the private rented sector as a result.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Allocate the Homelessness Budget for 2014-2015 referred to in paragraph 21 of the report;
- (2) Delegate to the Head of Housing and Property in consultation with the Board member the authority to allocate the balance of the Preventing Homelessness Funds.

152. FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Council's proposed strategy for financial inclusion. Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Benefits and Customer Services presented the report to the Board and gave some explanation of it. It was important for many reasons to develop a financial inclusion strategy, but especially so in the light of a rise in debt and the use of food banks within the City. It was intended that the report would go out for consultation, and then return to the Board in July, along with an Action Plan for its implementation.

It was noted, with concern, that Oxfordshire County Council probably would not continue its system of crisis loans beyond next year. It was further noted that the consultation had been informed by discussion with advice centres in Oxford, and that delivery of the strategy would be in partnership with others.

Resolved to approve the Financial Inclusion Strategy for consultation.

153. CUSTOMER CONTACT STRATEGY

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Council's Customer Contact strategy. Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Benefits and Customer Services, presented the report to the Board and highlighted its key points. She thanked staff working at the Customer Contact Centre for their hard work, noting that responses about the service had been positive.

Councillor Brown informed the Board, in response to questions, that quite a high percentage of people would be happy to make and accept contact by telephone and email, however there was a view that the website could be much more user friendly. Internet contact was significantly cheaper than other methods. People were happy too with face-to-face contact, but there was no appetite at all for video conferencing (as previously suggested by the Scrutiny Committee), and therefore this option would not be pursued.

Resolved to approve the Customer Contact Strategy.

154. LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

The Executive Director, City Regeneration and Housing, submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) that provided an update on the progress

of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan. Councillor Bob Price, Board Member for Corporate Governance, Strategic Partnerships and Economic Development, and Leader of the Council, introduced the report and explained the background to it.

Councillor Price indicated that timescales were tight, as bids for the Local Growth Deal had to be submitted by the end of March. Thanks were due to Mr Nigel Tipple, the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership, for his work; and also to the University of Oxford which was now working much more closely with the City Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Formally support the overarching focus of the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan;
- (2) Delegate to the Executive Director, City Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Council Leader, authority to make any necessary editorial changes, and to endorse the final Strategic Economic Plan prior to its submission to Government;
- (3) Delegate to the Executive Director, City Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Council Leader, authority to lead on negotiations with partners and Government on any invitation to enter into a Local Growth Deal;
- (4) Thank Councillor Price and David Edwards (Executive Director, City Regeneration) for all their hard work on this issue;
- (5) Agree the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee as follows:-
 - (a) For all members to see the finalised Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan as submitted to Government and kept in touch with the outcomes from this bid;
 - (b) To provide a “governance structure” below the Board Member representative on the Local Strategic Partnership that can deliver on the aim of keeping all members of Council informed and engaged in the detail of progress against selected projects and the likely outcomes for the City and its residents;
 - (c) The Board Member and Officers to do all they can to reflect the City’s ambition of reducing inequality in strategic planning for all themes;
 - (d) The Board member and Officers to do all they can within the Innovative Place theme to produce excellent links to schools at a very early stage to support good quality advice on educational choices and career planning;

155. OXFORDSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT 2014

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market assessment for 2014. Councillor Colin Cook, Board Member for Housing, presented the report to the Board and gave some background and context.

Councillor Cook observed that the housing need of the City is beyond the City's physical and environmental ability to accommodate it; and that the case for outward expansion becomes ever more compelling. While the local authorities in Oxfordshire have a legal duty to co-operate, they do not necessarily have to agree, and that has the potential to create problems.

Adrian Roche (Team Leader, Planning Policy) confirmed that the Council would obtain an independent consultant's verification of the Oxford Land Supply figure, and an indication of the constraints upon the City. Councillor Price agreed it was important that the City Council obtained an independent view of unmet housing need.

Councillor John Goddard addressed the Board on this issue. He stressed that Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the other District councils needed to work together on this matter to ensure housing needs county-wide were met. Oxfordshire was a very rural county, and just 1% of the Oxford Green Belt could accommodate 13,000 houses.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note that the City Council will continue to apply the housing requirement figure from Policy CS22 of the Core Strategy for the purpose of calculating Oxford's five-year housing land supply;
- (2) Endorse the general approach to accommodating Oxford's unmet housing need set out in the report;
- (3) Note that a further report will be presented to council setting out the forecast level of Oxford's unmet housing need that will need to be met by the other Oxfordshire districts.

156. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2014-2017

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Children and Young People's Plan for 2014-17. Councillor Curran, Board member for Youth and Communities presented the report to the Board and provided background information to it.

Councillor Curran explained that it was important to ensure that the voice of young people was heard in the City. Oxfordshire County Council had cut its expenditure on services for the young, but Oxford City Council wanted to make this a world-class city for young people. However he was aware that the City Council needed to work with partners to broaden the scope of activities for young people. Councillor Curran was especially pleased to report that a number of activities aimed at young women were going very well. He praised City Council staff for stepping in, often at the last moment, when County Council staff were

unable to attend events for the young. Councillor Curran asked that the Board approve his signing off a forward to the report written by some young people, as he felt that their input into the report was very important.

Councillor Jean Fooks addressed the Board. She was in favour of the five priorities outlined in the report but asked that Cutteslowe be included more often when any activities were planned.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Approve the Oxford City Council Children and Young People's Plan 2014-17;
- (2) Thank Val Johnson and City Council staff for their hard work with this report, and for the young generally;
- (3) Agree that Councillor Curran can sign off an introduction to the Children and Young People's Plan that is written by young people.

157. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Council's involvement in safeguarding against child sexual exploitation. Councillor Pat Kennedy, Board Member for Education, Crime and Community Safety presented the report to the Board and explained the background to it.

Councillor Kennedy explained that the prevention of child sexual exploitation was priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board. Oxford City Council had been one of the first to produce a plan concerning this topic, now other Councils were doing so too. Oxfordshire County Council had produced a report to its Cabinet on this issue.

Councillor Susan Brown observed that the play "Chelsey's Choice" had been seen by many young people during the last year, and had been useful in that it had raised awareness of the issue and had brought forward some young people who felt they were at risk. She asked what was being done this year. Tim Sadler, Executive Director, Community Services, explained that colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council were considering a continuation of this work, and as it was important to get into schools early, would be looking at a wider package of measures. The Board felt that it was important to keep up to date on this issue.

Resolved to note the report.

158. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL'S SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN - SECTION 11 SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the independent review of the outcome of the Council's self-assessment of its Safeguarding Children arrangements. Councillor Pat Kennedy, Board Member for Education, Crime and Community

Safety, presented the report to the Board and provided some background and context.

Councillor Kennedy commented that, overall, the outcome of the independent review is good news for the City Council. An action plan has now been drafted and is shown in the report.

Councillor Curran observed that the sexual exploitation of minors, and their safeguarding, was not just a City issue – it was one for the District Councils as well.

Val Johnson, Policy and Partnerships Manager, suggested that the City Council should now carry out a review of safeguarding for vulnerable adults, for which the Board expressed support.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Note the findings of the Independent Review of Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Children Section 11 self-assessment;
- (2) Agree the proposed action plan as set out in Annex;
- (3) Congratulate Councillor Kennedy and Council Officers for their achievements in this important area.

159. FUTURE ITEMS

Nothing was raised under this item.

160. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2014.

161. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

None.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.45 pm

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