

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 17 December 2014

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Chair), Turner (Deputy Leader), Sinclair, Simm, Brown, Kennedy, Lygo, Rowley, Seamons and Tanner

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Sam Hollick (Head of Scrutiny Housing Panel)

INVITEES AND OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:

OFFICERS PRESENT: Jackie Yates (Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services), David Edwards (Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing), Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Finance), Ian Brooke (Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities), Stephen Clarke (Head of Housing and Property), Jane Lubbock (Head of Business Improvement and Technology), Lindsay Cane (Law and Governance), Emily Green (Environmental Sustainability Officer), Neil Lawrence (Performance Improvement Manager), Pat Jones (Committee and Member Services Manager), Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer) and Sarah Claridge (Committee Services Officer)

90. SIGNING THE TIME TO CHANGE PLEDGE

The Time to Change pledge is a public statement that an organisation wants to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in their workplace, communities, or both.

Cllr Turner signed the Time to Change pledge on behalf of the City Council.

91. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Peter Sloman.

92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received

93. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions from the public were received.

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

No Councillor addresses were made.

95. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Oxford Standard

The Committee Services Manager and two co-opted tenants, Linda Hill and Celia Mathews (joint chair with former Cllr Smith) presented the Scrutiny Panel's report on the Oxford Standard. They outlined the Scrutiny recommendations made to the Board. These covered what the standard of Council housing should be and how it is delivered.

Overall they had received a positive response from the Board Member with the only disagreement being around how frequently bathroom/kitchens should be replaced. The Panel understood why the Board member could not deliver on the bathroom/kitchen recommendation but wants it to be considered in the future.

Cllr Turner welcomed more feedback from tenants on the frequency of bathroom and kitchen replacements during the budget consultation.

The Board accepted and endorsed all of the Panel's recommendations except for two elements of recommendation 3 around bathroom and kitchen specifications.

Clean Streets

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Scrutiny report on Clean Streets. He explained the Committee had reviewed the performance of Council's Street cleaning, waste management and graffiti. They had 3 recommendations for the Board to consider.

Cllr Tanner, Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport commented on the recommendations. He explained that in times of emergency staff will be taken off cleaning duties to help, and that street cleaning standards would be circulated to all councillors.

In terms of recommendation 3 which sought clarification on the legal powers the City Council has to ensure the removal of graffiti from privately owned properties. Cllr Tanner asked the legal representative for more information on council's powers to remove graffiti and in what circumstances. The Legal representative said he would provide a briefing note on the issue and would circulate it to all members.

Cllr Turner explained that there was a budget provision to do more to remove graffiti from private buildings.

The Board accepted the recommendations and noted that the budget had an element to tackle private property graffiti.

Older Person's Housing Review

Cllr Hollick, Chair of the Housing Panel presented the report on the Older Person's Housing Review. The Housing Panel supported the review to free up

older person's housing stock for others. They had 6 recommendations for the Board Member to consider in the future.

The Head of Housing and Property explained that in general terms, the Board Member and he agreed the recommendations but give that the scrutiny was very recent they needed time to consider the detail and the cost implications. He welcomed the Housing Panel continuing to review the work.

96. DISCRETIONARY RATES RELIEF FOR BUSINESSES POLICY

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed an updated National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief policy.

Cllr Susan Brown, Board member for Customer Services and Social Inclusion presented the report.

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Scrutiny Committee's report. They had 1 recommendation about making sure non-profit organisations were aware of the discretionary rate relief scheme.

The Executive Director of Organisational Development and Corporate Services said that every business/ charitable organisation will be advised of the discretionary rate relief scheme when they receive their business rates bill. We should capture the charitable organisations through this process.

The City Executive Board resolved to approve the updated National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief policy to apply until a review is undertaken in 2018.

97. BUDGET 2015/16

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which proposes a Medium Term Financial Strategy and a 2015/16 Budget for consultation.

Cllr Turner, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health presented the report. Nationally the Council is expecting more local government cuts, however the Council has been able to safe guard support services. The assumption is that by 2018/19 we will no longer receive a revenue support grant.

The budget will:

Continue with efficiencies savings

Continue to pay Oxford Wage

Safeguard grants and apprenticeships funding

£101M will be spent over 4 years to build new homes and renovate the estates.

Invest in regeneration projects in Blackbird Leys

Improve Barton community facilities,

Undertake an energy efficiencies audit of the housing stock

Increase Council housing rents by xx%

No Government announcement has been made on the level of the government grant for the 2015/16 year and the referendum threshold has not been made, but it could be less than 1%.

Thank you to Nigel Kennedy and the Finance team for all their hard work.

The Head of Finance explained recommendation 2. He outlined the implications of being in and outside a Business Rate pool in terms of the amount of levy given to the Government.

Cllr Seamons stated that a lot of the HRA budget was being spent on the energy efficiency programme to improve the insulation of the council housing stock.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. Approve the 2015-16 budget for consultation, including the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan as per the attached Appendices 1-10 noting the following key assumptions:

a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £23.133 million for 2015/16 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.50% or £4.10 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £277.63 per annum

b) the continuance of the Councils Council Tax Support scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit) as referred to in paragraph 31

c) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2015/16 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 6 and an increase in average dwelling rent of 3.49% for April 2015 representing £3.59 per week an annual average rent of £105.77 as set out in Appendix 7

2. Delegate to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance and Assets to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Pool referred to in paragraphs 21-23 or a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 24-26

98. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY- COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK

The Head of Housing and Property Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the Asset Management Strategy and associated action plan for Oxford City Council's housing stock.

Cllr Seamons, Board Member for Housing and Estate Regeneration presented the report. A stock condition survey had been done to determine the priorities of the strategy. Consultation with tenants and other key stakeholders had already taken place and their ideas have been incorporated into the strategy. The strategy will go out for full public consultation as part of the budget consultation process.

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Housing Panel's report. He outlined the panel's 4 recommendations. Cllr Seamons was happy to accept all of the recommendations. The Head of Housing and Property explained that information

on the national house swap scheme was already available to tenants and that he would implement all 4 recommendations.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. Agree the draft strategy and associated action plan for consultation.
2. Include the Housing Asset Management Strategy as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

99. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014

The Head of Finance has submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the Council's Risk Management Strategy and the Risk Management Operating Framework

Cllr Ed Turner, Board member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health presented the report. He outlined the changes to the strategy due to feedback from Pricewaterhousecooper. There has been an improvement to the scoring mechanism on pages 261 and 262 to make the individual scales easier for managers to understand them.

Cllr Price asked how much risk management is understood by officers and how is the strategy embedded within the Council? The Head of Finance said that regular refresher courses are run on the risk management strategy and an e-learning tool is soon to be release which will help embed the process.

The City Executive Board resolved to approve the Risk Management Strategy and note the adoption of the Risk Management Operating Framework attached at Appendix 1.

100. LEISURE & WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Head of Leisure, Parks & Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the draft Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy for public consultation.

Cllr Mike Rowley, Board member for Leisure Contract and Community Partnership Grants presented the report. He explained it wasn't easy to continue to improve the leisure services in the current economic climate. However the aim was to make the service financially viable which was likely by 2017.

Nearly a fifth of Oxford residents are clinically overweight and the strategy focuses on tackling these health inequalities.

Cllr Lygo thanked Ian Brooke and the leisure officers and volunteers for their hard work.

The Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities outlined the improvements in the City's leisure facilities since the last strategy in 2009. These include spending £30M in improving leisure facilities and increasing participation from 20 to 29 % since 2009.

Cllr Price asked about the makeup of the members on the City's Leisure Partnership Board and whether it included representatives from minority groups. The Executive Director of Community Services said that the Leisure Partnership Board had been rejuvenated 3 times to make it more interactive and encourage a mix of people onto it; it included a young person representative but did not yet have anyone from the BME community.

Cllr Price said the Council needed to get more BME people involved and embed this need in the strategy.

The Leisure Strategy will be consulted on for 8 weeks and will return to the Board for adoption in July 2015.

The City Executive Board resolved to approve the draft Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy for public consultation.

101. CORPORATE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the Corporate Biodiversity Strategy 2015 -2020.

Cllr John Tanner, Board member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford, Climate Change and Transport presented the report. He explained it was a cross cutting policy affecting everything we do. Council can promote biodiversity through parks, planning and grants. There is no extra money available for this work so it is important to do what we can within current budgets but there is a strong volunteer network devoted to encouraging biodiversity within the city.

The Environmental Sustainability Officer explained that the strategy sets out what the Council is currently doing and what it could do to improve biodiversity in the city. It includes sharing knowledge about what we can do and creating biodiversity champions (which is a revamp of the carbon champions to include biodiversity). Work has already been done with the Parks team to encourage bees in the parks.

Cllr Price asked that protecting habitats objectives be included in the strategy as it is useful to think up new ways we can improve them. The volunteer community could achieve habitat objectives with little money.

The City Executive Board resolved to approve the Corporate Biodiversity Strategy for public consultation.

102. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the Council's Performance Improvement Framework 2014-2018

Cllr Bob Price Board member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning presented the report.

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology outlined how the performance framework had been embedded into the organisation to change officers' behaviours. Actions included:

- full team involvement in service planning,
- all staff having appraisals and targets linked to their service plan and corporate objectives,
- fundamental service reviews looked at option for service design to improve the service efficiency and design the service to meet customer need.
- a staff innovation scheme which encourages staff to suggest ways that the Council could become more efficient or innovative

Cllr Brown said she was pleased to see customer services feedback included as it was important to consider both positive and negative feedback to make service improvements.

The City Executive Board resolved to approve the Performance Improvement Framework 2014-2018 as attached at Appendix 1

103. DATA PROTECTION POLICY REFRESH

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which proposed minor changes to the current Data Protection Policy to keep it in line with best practice and new guidance issued by the Information Commissioner.

Cllr Bob Price, Board member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning presented the report.

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology explained that the Data Protection Officer was running bite size sessions and this training was also being given to temporary, agency staff and contractors. The e-learning module is being rolled out and in the last month almost 400 staff have done this module. She outlined a change to page 382 in the policy - a subject access request will be acknowledged within 24 hours not the 3 days stated.

The Executive Director of Community Services stated it was important people don't make mistakes but also important for staff have the confidence to share data.

The City Executive Board resolved to endorse the amendments to the Data Protection Policy. The changes will be communicated to all staff with training provided as required. The information will also be updated on our intranet and website, online forms and all other relevant documents.

104. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2014/15

The Heads of Finance and Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed the Council's finances, risk and performance as at the end of Quarter 2, 30th September 2014.

Cllr Bob Price, Board Member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning presented the report.

The Performance Improvement Manager explained why the Environmental Enforcement Corporate Performance Indicator needed to be amended so that high levels of performance are good instead of poor performance. The Board agreed with the change.

Cllr Brown asked if there were underlying reasons for why rough sleeping count was going up.

The Executive Director of City Regeneration and Housing explained that things were not getting any easier for homeless people. There were a number of people staying in temporary accommodation long term. It is a systemic issue; hostels are full and demand is outstripping supply.

Cllr Brown said it would be helpful for trends to be plotted over time and shared with councillors. Cllr Seamons said he received this information and will forward it to CEB.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. Note the projected outturn for finance and performance as well as the associated risk position as at September 2014;
2. Restore the Environmental Enforcement Corporate Performance Indicator to its former (pre 2014/15) format, as detailed in Appendix A.
3. Restore the Environmental Enforcement Corporate Performance Indicator original target for 2014/15 to that in Corporate Plan 2013/14, as detailed in Appendix A.

105. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Board noted the next meeting would be held on 23 December.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.40 pm