

Questions submitted by Mr Nigel Gibson – answers supplied in writing shown *in blue italics*.

I would like the following questions answered at the Oxford City Council City Executive Board meeting on Thursday 11th June 2015.

Agenda Item 7, PSPO.

From the accompanying report:

1. Para 10: who are the “designated council officers” who would enforce the PSPO?*Community Response Team Officers.*
2. Para 10: what are the “delegated organisations” whose employees would enforce the PSPO?*The City Centre Ambassadors.*
3. Para 10: how will the council pay the delegated organisations for enforcement?*They are currently contracted to provide services in the city centre.*
4. Para 14: what were the names of the members of the Member Reference Group?*All Ward councillors within the PSPO area, the Board Member for Crime and Community Safety.*
5. Para 18: the map website reference is incorrect – can you please provide the correct one, that shows the precise map being shown in the document, including the marked boundary?*This is contained in the CEB report.*
6. Para 18: Alternatively, can you provide it as a downloadable document as part of the minutes of this meeting?
Yes
7. Para 20: What are you trying to imply by drawing out the difference in comments received up to and after an online petition gained publicity?
26 March 2015 was the Member Reference Group meeting where the results were presented, the 31 March 2015 was the closing date for consultation.
8. Para 20 and Appendix Two: Only 2% of the overall respondents to the eConsult survey were from outside Oxford, despite the widespread national publicity. Why have you not referenced the topography specifically in your report, preferring instead to highlight the timing of responses?
This is explained in the report.
9. Para 20: Can you please summarise which recommendations for inclusion in the PSPO were reversed as a result of consultation up to 26th March, and which were reversed as a result of the responses up to 31st March?
As explained in the report, Members came to the view during the period of the consultation up to March 26th that there were more effective ways of dealing with the pigeon problem; discussions on the application of the proposed Order in respect of the group of people who continue to sleep on the street despite having appropriate accommodation continued for a long time after the end of the consultation period.
10. Para 40: What do you anticipate the cost of each element of the order (1 a-l, Draft PSPO) to be by financial year, assuming the PSPO is approved at this CEB and enforced for 3 years?*Signage – less than £1k; cost of enforcement will be small due to an expected high compliance rate.*
11. Appendix One, Para 1 d: Can you please correct the typo in this paragraph?
Yes, the full Order will remove the second “shall”.
12. Appendix Six: What was the response rate to each of the Consultation methods?
The consultation was the on-line survey, with the communication methods listed used to increase responses. Some letters, emails and twitter responses were submitted.

13. Appendix Six: What was the cost of each of the Consultation methods?
Approx. £1k.
14. Appendix Six: What were your measures of success for each of the Consultation Methods?*As detailed in the report.*

Agenda Item 8, Covered Market Leasing Strategy

15. Para 2: how were The Retail Group appointed?
The Retail Group were appointed in January 2013, following a tender process for the work which was in accordance with the procurement procedures at that time.
16. What is the total value of fees paid to The Retail Group?
Total to date £118,117.

Agenda Item 9, Blue Bin Premier League

17. There is an implicit assumption that increasing recycling is a key performance indicator. Surely the KPIs should be
 - a. increase in recycling AND corresponding reduction in household waste?
 - b. decrease in total waste per household?*Oxford City Council report to national indicator NI191. The amount of residual waste per household and NI192 the percentage of household waste that is sent for reuse, recycling or composting.*
18. How is the Council supporting and incentivising overall waste reduction, rather than simply increasing recycling?
This is part of on-going campaigns such as Love Food Hate Waste.
19. What are the areas covered by the Scheme?
The scheme covers all domestic properties across the city.
20. How do you measure recycling rates?
Weight data is gathered from all residual and recycling collection rounds. From this data we are able to determine recycling rates using a nationally recognised formula.
21. How will you reward households that rarely if ever put out general household waste?
Residents in each winning area are required to 'opt in' to the scheme and, will be rewarded if their name is drawn. We are unable to identify specific properties that have little general household waste.
22. How will you award the individual prizes?
There will be a monthly community prize of £400 to be awarded to the charity/scheme that has the most nominations. Prizes of £30 in vouchers for local businesses will be awarded to two residents who have 'opted in' and whose names have been drawn. We will publicise winners each month.
23. Will all the promotional items be easily recyclable, and if not, why not?
Promotional items will be printed upon 100% recycled paper that also is FSC approved and can be recycled. We will also make use of internet and other electronic media.
24. Will the Council lead by example and publish the recycling rates of each of its offices/departments?
This was not part of the original bid. The scheme is aimed at domestic properties.
25. Will the CEB lead by example and publish the recycling rates of CEB members?
The Council does not collect data about recycling from individual properties.
26. Will the Council lead by example and encourage councillors to publish their own recycling rates?
The Council does not collect data about recycling from individual properties.

Agenda Item 10, ICT Strategy

27. You state that the internet will be the primary channel for publishing information to citizens; how will you ensure equivalent information distribution to the significant number of people, particularly over 50, who do not or infrequently use the internet?

The Council will continue to utilise all of the same channels as a currently to convey information to residents.

28. You have previously refused to make public a list of Freedom of Information requests on the basis that the cost of storage would be “too high”; what provision are you making in this strategy to ensure this serious public access shortcoming is addressed?

The Council will utilise the website to publish as much information about the Council’s business as practical.

29. Which council offices now offer continuous access to free public wifi, and how do you make the public is aware of the facility in each area?

A full list of free wifi hotspots is provided on the council website -

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decB/WirelessHotspots.htm>

30. Para 6.1 Staffing: can you please provide a proper Organisation Chart, identifying senior management (starting with the Chief Executive), and showing individual roles at the lower levels?

The council structure is already published in the council website at -

http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decCD/Management_Structure_occw.htm

31. Para 6.1 Staffing: how many Business Partners are there (and for which areas), and who are their individual points of contact within the ICT organisation?

There are 5 Business Partners who are aligned with up to three service areas each dependant on the size and complexity of the area. Their main point of contact is the Head of Service.

32. Para 6.1.1 Vision: how many staff currently have ITIL certification?

Four

33. Para 6.1.1 Vision: can you please define an “incremental” change?

A small change to an existing system typical requiring less than 3 days of resource.

34. Why are you no longer partnering with the County Council?

The current partnership agreement has come to its natural end after 7 years.

35. You make no mention of joining a Shared Service as part of the strategy – there are many local authorities developing and operating highly successful Shared ICT Services, even where they are not geographically contiguous – have you looked at this as an option – if so, why is this not being considered as an option, and if not, why not?

Shared services are referenced in section 4.4 of the Strategy.

Agenda Item 11, HMO Licensing Scheme

36. Para 24: what HMO licensing schemes have you looked at in other Local Authorities as input to this scheme’s revision?

The Council has looked at similar schemes in the London Borough of Newham, Nottingham, Bath, and Cambridge.

37. Para 24: what aspects of the HMO licensing scheme do you consider to be “world class”, and what are you using as your benchmark city for such as an aspiration?

The context of “world class” relates to the aspiration for Oxford City as a whole and not the HMO Licensing Scheme solely. The Council’s aspiration is for Oxford to be a world class City for everyone and as such it has developed a range of priorities, of which meeting housing needs in a fully satisfactory way is a key element.

38. Is the intention (or simply consequence) of this scheme to increase income for the Council?*No. The Scheme is self financing and is cost neutral, so it does not create any additional income for the Council. The costs associated with scheme are covered by income which means that there is no financial burden placed upon the Council's budgets.*
39. Is the intention of this scheme to increase or decrease HMOs in Oxford?
Neither. HMO Licensing impacts on the quality not the quantity of HMOs. The Scheme is intended to improve living conditions and drive up standards of management to ensure that conditions within HMOs meet minimum statutory standards and are maintained.
40. How will introducing this scheme address the housing shortage?
The purpose of the scheme is not to increase housing provision but to ensure that accommodation used as HMOs complies with the statutory requirements.
41. How many HMOs are there in Oxford?
In 2005 there were estimated to be approximately 5,000 HMOs in Oxford. Census information for 2011 suggests that this is now around 6,900.
42. How many households in total are in HMOs in Oxford?
The number of households in HMOs varies considerably because of the transient nature of some of the occupants living in this type of accommodation. A household can also consist of an individual, or couples and couples with children or other relatives. It is therefore extremely difficult to predict. There is the potential for there to be between 20,000 to 30,000 households living in HMOs in Oxford.

Agenda Item 12, Housing Asset Management Strategy

43. Para 2.3: you summarise the housing need, including the number on the housing register by month for 2013/14. Can you please provide a breakdown of the housing register total by band, bearing in mind that the council has been forced to admit previously that those in the lowest band will never be automatically offered housing?
As at 1/6/15 Band 1 43, band 2 244, band 3 799 band 4 164 band 5 1913.
44. Para 2.4: what is your forecast increase in uptake of the Right to Buy given the new provisions being put in place by the Government?
If the question is referring to the previous coalition Government's Re-Invigorating RTB and One for One Replacement initiative for local authority landlords, introduced on 2 April 2012, then the authority has estimated 40 RTB disposals each year for the first 10 years of the HRA Business Plan, starting in 2012/13, as a result of these changes.
45. Para 2.4: do you guarantee to build replacement housing stock before each sale under the Right to Buy scheme?
The One for One replacement scheme that the Council has signed up to participate in requires local authority landlords to replace "additional" RTB disposals to that stated in Oxford City Council's self-financing valuation calculation, within 3 years of disposal. The Council as such is committed to complying with these rules and fully intends to replace the lost RTB "additional" stock within the timeframe allowed.
46. There are various places throughout the document where blank space appears to be in place of what seems to be significant words (including at least para 5.2 first sentence, para 1.3 whole section, page i top bullet at bottom of page) – can you please provide the missing text/graphics?
There is no missing text or graphics.

Agenda Item 13, Tower Blocks Refurbishment

47. Who are the external consultants?
EC Harris with support from Architects BM3 and Civil and Service Engineers Roultons.
48. At what point during the extensive procurement process did it become clear that the project was underfunded?
Initially upon opening the tenders and then later as the tenders were clarified with the contractors as part of the evaluation process.
49. Can you please provide more information about who exactly identified that the project was under budget?
The Council Officers leading the procurement process i.e. Procurement team lead and internal project manager together with the Councils external project managers.
50. Who carried out the initial estimate of £18.358m, which seems very precise for a competitive fixed price bid?
EC Harris .
51. Can you confirm what is not explicit in your report, that 5 firms were issued with the ITT, no further down-select was undertaken, resulting directly in a preferred supplier?
All five shortlisted contractors were invited to tender to give confidence to the tender process in the event contractors did not submit a proposal.
52. Why were you unable to select 3 firms at sift stage? All five contractors were competent to deliver the works at that stage of assessment.
53. You reference “Appendix A” as withheld from publication, but give no more information about it – what was it concerning?
Appendix 1 is an internal Council report which contains commercially sensitive information, namely tender analysis and costs which cannot be released until a contractor has been appointed; release of this information would jeopardise the tender process.
54. Appendix 2 – why is a “Technical Report” considered so commercially sensitive that you are unable to publish any part of it?
See answer to question 53
55. If Appendix 2 is so commercially sensitive that you are unable to publish any part of it, why have you referenced some detail from it in para 15 of your report (specifically p17, item 3.1.8)?
To facilitate members in their consideration of this matter.
56. Why are you unable to issue Appendix 1 in any form, even if it contained redacted items?
See answer to question 53.

Agenda Item 14, Blackbird Leys District Centre Regeneration

57. Can you confirm that as part of the Princes Foundation engagement, there was consideration given to additional housing on what is still part of the Blackbird Leys green space north of the new swimming pool?
The Princes Foundation gave consideration to a single line of houses backing onto the college site, on the eastern edge of the green space. That is not part of the proposals in this report.
58. Why are you proposing the use of an “OJEU negotiated route” rather than the use of an appropriate framework for appointing your development partner?
To ensure value for money through full market exposure and flexibility to suit the uniqueness of the scheme.
59. Can you confirm that the complete OJEU procurement covers June 2015-March 2016, not June-September 2015 as indicated in your table in para 42?
Dates in the report are indicative only. Work on the OJEU process will take place June-September. The full procurement exercise is estimated to run to March 2016.

60. What do you estimate the cost of programme delivery for this project to be (how much of the HCP of £200kpa will you need)?
The exact amount depends on the outcome of tender exercises for consultancy support and recruitment to backfill a post to release a Project Manager.
61. Where is the £300k for this procurement coming from (the £10.6m or the HCP budget, or separate)?
The HRA Capital programme.
62. How much are you expecting your new development partner to be investing?
That will depend on the final commercial structure following the OJEU exercise.
63. How will the development partner gain a return from their investment?
By way of development profit margins and /or revenue income.
64. What is the expected return on the Council's £10.6m investment?
This is a capital project. The return is in the form of assets, some of which may be income producing. Refer to the CEB report Para.28.
65. Para 32 references a "long term stewardship plan" to be drawn up and implemented by the Development Partner – how will this be funded, and who will be responsible for it?
This question cannot be answered until the plan is actually drawn up.
66. Why is Blackbird Leys being prioritised for this scheme over other areas of the city?
The Council is investing widely, in many areas right across the city –please see the Corporate Plan for details (available on the City Council website). Blackbird Leys is the largest of the regeneration areas with a population of c. 13,000 and therefore the scheme will have benefits for a large number of residents making efficient use of resources.
67. Blackbird Leys is clearly an area of deprivation, as are other areas of Oxford; how far up the deprivation scale do you aspire to move this area through this scheme, and which areas will be seen as more deprived than Blackbird Leys after the project is complete?
The position on scale of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation depends on what happens in all areas across the Country so the question cannot be answered definitively. The district centre scheme will provide significant benefits to the community at Blackbird Leys. It not considered that there will be any disbenefits to other areas.
68. Given the housing shortage, why are you only considering 190 dwellings as part of this scheme?
The scheme is mixed use. When community facilities are factored in, spatial analysis shows that the available Council land can accommodate 190 units or more in 5-6 storey buildings which is considered appropriate for the district centre. More housing can be accommodated on other landowners sites as these come forward.
69. What will the housing density be of the area once all building is complete?
This will depend on the outcome of the masterplan that it going to be drawn up.