

Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker 2015-16

Oxpens Revised Delivery Strategy – 12 January Scrutiny Committee			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That a VEAT notice should be issued by the Council in regards to the proposed collaboration with Nuffield College.	Y		Cllrs Price, Turner & Hollingsworth
2. That the Council should make every effort within its negotiating power to deliver its 50% affordable housing policy at Oxpens.	Y		
3. That the City Executive Board resolves to authorise the disposal of the City Council's land holdings at Oxpens to the new joint venture company on the terms set out in the report, and delegate authority to the Executive Director, Regeneration and Housing to agree the detailed arrangements of this disposal.	Y		
4. That Council Officers should be instructed to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny of any likely key executive decisions delegated to officers that relate to the Oxpens development, including by notifying the Committee in good time before any such decisions are taken.	Y		
Choice Based Lettings – 10 December Housing Panel			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That the Choice Based Lettings cycle should be changed from a fortnightly (13 days) to a weekly cycle.	Y		Cllr Rowley & Stephen Clarke
2. That advice should be sought from relevant council officers and local disability groups on making the Choice Based Lettings bidding process more accessible to individuals with disabilities.	Y		
3. That Council Officers should explore positive ways of reducing the number of offers of housing that are refused.	Y		

Rents performance – 10 December Housing Panel			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That the Council should look at ways of incentivising Council tenants to pay rent by Direct Debit, including the option of holding a prize draw.	Y		Cllr Rowley & Stephen Clarke
2. That the proportion of eligible Council tenants paying rent by Direct Debit should be a performance indicator in future years.	Y		
Report of the Guest Houses Review Group – 9 December Scrutiny Committee			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That the City Council should maintain an accurate list of guest houses operating in the Oxford area that is updated at least annually (The Human Exploitation Co-ordinator has produced a basic list which could be developed into an accurate list).	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
2. That the City Council should, in consultation and collaboration with other relevant statutory, commercial and voluntary agencies, lead on the introduction of a voluntary code of good practice for owners of guest houses in the Oxford area to sign up to. This code should be jointly branded and linked to existing initiatives such as the Say Something if you See Something campaign.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
3. That, subject to further consultation, the voluntary code of good practice should commit owners of guest houses operating in Oxford to the following practices which would help to protect guest house owners and their businesses as well as guests and the wider community. These practices should extend to subcontractors working in guest houses where relevant: a) Signing up to a basic safeguarding policy statement; b) Providing details of an identified 'single point of contact' who has oversight of the running of the guest house and is	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price

<p>responsible for ensuring compliance with the code of good practice;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Having an identified responsible person on duty at the guest house at all times during its hours of operation; d) Providing Basic Disclosure certificates for the single point of contact and responsible person(s) and if possible, obtaining certificates for all staff who permanently or regularly work in the guest house; e) Having a free crime prevention check every 3 years and implementing recommendations made by the Crime Prevention and Reduction Advisor; f) Cooperating with the police, including by providing available CCTV footage upon request and allowing the police to freely enter the premises where illegal behaviour is suspected to be taking place; g) Registering with Thames Valley Alert and participating in the hotel partnership to strengthen two-way information sharing between guest houses and the authorities; h) Retaining records of the single point of contact and responsible person(s) completing the ECPAT 'Every Child, Everywhere' e-learning course, and providing all staff working in the guest house with the Thames Valley Police Staff Guide for the hotel trade; i) Having a 'no cash without ID' policy, recording vehicle registration numbers where relevant and requiring visitors to register with reception; j) Holding and restricting access to master keys for all rooms and ensuring that guest rooms are checked daily; k) Having suitable and proportionate arrangements in place for monitoring comings and goings at the premises, including during the night, and where relevant, retaining CCTV footage for a minimum of 28 days. 			
<p>4. That the owners of guest houses in the Oxford area should be asked to self-certify that they comply with the voluntary</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Response expected in February 2016</p>	<p>Cllr Price</p>

code of good practice on an annual basis. This process could be prompted by a letter signed by the Local Policing Area Commander, as well as through the hotel partnership and any other relevant channels.			
5. That guest house owners signed up to the code should be signposted to sources of advice and guidance.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
6. That the City Council asks Thames Valley Police to give prompt attention to requests for assistance at local guest houses.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
7. That relevant agencies including City Council functions such as Environmental Health and Community Safety, and those provided by partner organisations such as the Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards, should be asked to report to the code administrator if they have reason to believe that, having been signed up to the voluntary code of good practice, the management of a guest house is non-compliant with it. The single point of contact should then be asked to demonstrate that they have addressed the concerns raised or risk being suspended from the code.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
8. That the administration of the voluntary code of good practice should be adequately resourced. Consideration should be given to where in the organisation this responsibility should sit but the Human Exploitation Manager should have oversight of this administrative function.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
9. That a suitable logo should be created for the voluntary code of good practice that could be displayed on guest house websites.	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price
10. That a list of guest houses covered by the voluntary code of good practice should be displayed on the City Council's website together with details of what the owners of these guest houses have signed up to. The introduction of the code should also be promoted to targeted institutions, such as language schools, as well as more widely, including through a City	TBC	<i>Response expected in February 2016</i>	Cllr Price

Council press release.			
11. That Experience Oxfordshire should be informed which guest houses are covered by the voluntary code of good practice and asked to display the logo next to participating guest houses on their website.	TBC	Response expected in February 2016	Cllr Price
12. That the City Council should encourage the larger tour operators and hotels operating in Oxford to sign up to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.	TBC	Response expected in February 2016	Cllr Price
13. That the City Council should ask organisations such as Experience Oxfordshire and the local Chamber of Commerce to do more to promote the Say Something if you See Something campaign, including through existing relationships.	TBC	Response expected in February 2016	Cllr Price
14. That the City Council should look for opportunities to join with partners, perhaps through the National Working Group, in pressing government to: a) Grant additional powers to local authorities to require the embedding of good practices in guest houses, b) Do more to involve the hotel accreditation agencies and major travel website companies, as well as guest houses, in efforts to promote good safeguarding practices in the hospitality sector; c) Introduce a public awareness campaign that empowers people to come forward with safeguarding concerns.	TBC	Response expected in February 2016	Cllr Price
Asset Management Plan – 9 December Scrutiny Committee			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. The City Council should take a structured approach to evaluating social value throughout the Plan using the Social Value Act 2012, which provides a framework for quantifying social value.	Y	We are not sure how valid or appropriate this is in practice. The act is primarily one about procuring for best value and particularly those matters falling within European Procurement rules ie large scale	Cllr Turner / Diane Phillips

		<p>high value projects.</p> <p>Probably it is the templates and other guidance that sit behind the act that are useful but for the majority of our activity they would be extremely cumbersome potentially bureaucratic, resource hungry and probably inappropriate although some elements may have some potential.</p> <p>Would suggest we perhaps add the following</p> <p><i>Page 3 of AMP after 'education' in paragraph 6 of Asset Management the Oxford Way the words 'social, environmental' and to the end of the paragraph the words ' and will use the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and supporting guidance as a framework for quantifying Social Value where appropriate.</i></p>	
<p>2. The City Council should, as a matter of course, consider the case for negotiating 'green lease' arrangements when existing leases are due for renewal;</p>	Y	<p>The recommendation is effectively already captured within the existing AMP objective 4 which reflected our aspiration to investigate how we could move in this direction but reflected a reality around our existing portfolio of relatively long term legacy tenants and restrictions and limitations on changing terms</p>	Cllr Turner / Diane Phillips

		<p>through 1954 Landlord and Tenant Act.</p> <p>We are happy to strengthen the wording to further acknowledge Scrutiny's point and would suggest:</p> <p>Change Supplementary Indicators on page 13 of the AMP to 'Consider green lease arrangements on renewals and new lettings where appropriate and possible' and also change Actions on page 28 of AMP to Consider utilising green lease arrangements on renewals and new lettings where appropriate and possible'</p>	
<p>3. When agricultural leases are due for renewal, the Council should explore all options including revenue opportunities, for example managing the land to generate forestry revenue;</p>	Y	<p>Whilst we understand the Scrutiny view and their drive to potentially expand employment opportunities and drive further social benefit, open up access to opportunities in this sector the blanket approach to all agricultural land is likely to be overly onerous. Say where we are letting a small 'pony paddock' and other minor elements for instance.</p> <p>Also most of our larger pieces of agricultural estate are locked into Agricultural Holding Act Tenancies and in most cases will not revert to us for perhaps a generation, so opportunities here will be very</p>	Cllr Turner / Diane Phillips

		<p>limited.</p> <p>Suggest in order to acknowledge Scrutiny's view we could add some further words as follows:</p> <p><i>Action Point to 5.1.2 Agriculture 'On lease renewal or lettings of agricultural land consider appropriateness of exploring wider options for use including revenue generating opportunities or added social value.'</i></p>	
<p>4. Add action under the Commercial Property heading (section 5.1.1 on p. 16 of the Plan) to aim to engage with the wider market and ask the landlords of vacant commercial properties to make temporary use of these premises, for example as pop-up shops.</p>	Y	<p>We understand Scrutiny's point here but our concern is one of resourcing and there is a question as to whether we can achieve any results when all action is in the hands of third parties.</p> <p>We could though perhaps add after paragraph 6 in 5.1.1 Commercial Property the following:</p> <p><i>'The Council will also where possible attempt to influence landlords and property owners of vacant commercial property in the city centre to bring these back into use and to consider temporary uses such as 'pop up shops' etc so as to assist in maintaining the vitality of the centre notwithstanding the relatively low level of vacancies in Oxford City Council.'</i></p>	Cllr Turner / Diane Phillips

Resettling Syrian Refugees in Oxford – 9 December Scrutiny Committee			
Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That the City Council should continue to work with partners to co-ordinate and strengthen local arrangements for accommodating and supporting Syrian refugees, including educational support and language services.	Y		Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
2. That the City Council should assist the County Council in promoting campaigns aimed at recruiting new foster carers and adopters.	Y	We will ask the County how we can help.	Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
3. That the City Council should also maintain a focus on the types and impacts of support available to the refugees and asylum seekers in Oxford that are not part of the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS).	Y	A paper will come to CEB.	Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
4. That the City Council should update local MPs on what the Council is doing to support refugees in Oxford, and engage with them about the challenges and needs that are more specific to Oxford.	Y		Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
5. That the City Council should look for opportunities to engage constructively with government about the city's needs and how these can be met.	Y		Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
6. That progress and developments should be monitored and periodic updates should be provided to City Councillors at public meetings.	Y		Cllr Price / Caroline Wood
Community Centre Strategy 2015-20 – 9 December Scrutiny Committee			

Recommendation	Agreed Y/N	Executive response	Lead Member & Officer
1. That officers are asked to incorporate the clarifying amendments tabled by Councillor Wolff (see appendix 1) before the Strategy goes for wider consultation.	In part	We can add a sentence that says The Council will continue to undertake its maintenance responsibilities	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke
2. That greater clarity should be provided that the 15 minute walk time used to model community centre catchment areas is not binding.	Y	Section six of the strategy states - The catchment is based on a judgement of how far Oxford residents can reasonably be expected to travel to access community centre provision. This has been overlain with ward boundaries, and the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ratings of each lower super output area (LSOA). I don't think this implies that this is in anyway binding. We could add in that "for various reasons such as the type of session many people will travel further to attend activities."	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke
3. That clarity should be provided as to how three specific gaps in community facilities have been identified from Figure 4 in the Strategy, given that this map also shows gaps in other areas of the city.	Y	Section six of the Strategy states –“ It also shows gaps in community facilities in parts of Blackbird Leys, Marston and Churchill. This does not mean that the Council should try to build new facilities as the City is very well provided for as a whole.” We can add in “these gaps are determined by a combination of walk time, facility distribution and population density.”	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke
4. That a new priority theme should be added to the Strategy, in the Sustainable Management action area (p. 2), around making the best use and most effective use of facilities at community centres.	Y	This fits under priority five Sustainable, effective management. We will add an action to the action plan ensure a diverse programme of activities with quarterly reviews.	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke
5. That the Strategy should articulate what the Council's approach will be to ensuring there is an inclusive, a high	In part	This is captured within priorities four and five: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a prioritised maintenance plan for all	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke

<p>quality community hub serving the Leys area in the event that the proposed replacement of Blackbird Leys Community Centre is compromised, for example by a lack of developer funding.</p>		<p>centres with a five year time horizon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ways in which those centres that are currently managed by the City Council can be effectively managed in future on a long term and stable basis with strong community involvement. 	
<p>6. That the Strategy should better recognise and articulate the importance of volunteers to the city's community centres.</p>	N	<p>The Strategy states "...these Associations are essential...and their work is greatly valued by the Council."</p> <p>Following the work in the steering group two of the eight priorities are focused on trustees and volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Associations in developing management skills and expertise and in recruiting volunteers to run the centres' activities. Support Associations to recruit and retain trustees and manage their buildings 	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke
<p>7. That the scope of the consultation set out in the report should be widened to include:</p> <p>a) Residents associations and tenants groups as key stakeholders, b) That other stakeholder focus groups are considered including, as a priority, a disability focus group, c) Engagement with representatives of all the remaining strands recognised under the Equalities Act, d) Continued outreach to potential users and individuals.</p>	In part	<p>The list of consultees in the report includes "Any interested parties"</p> <p>In relation to targeting groups we always think through how their needs differ which is why we are proposing the following focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older people (over 60s) Health bodies Schools and parents Young people Minority community representatives <p>We will also add in a disability focus group.</p>	Cllr Simm / Ian Brooke

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