

MINUTES OF THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday 15 September 2016



COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Price (Chair), Turner (Deputy Leader), Brown, Hollingsworth, Kennedy, Rowley, Simm, Sinclair and Smith.

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Andrew Gant (Chair, Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor Jean Fooks

OFFICERS PRESENT: Caroline Green (Assistant Chief Executive), Lindsay Cane (Acting Head of Law and Governance), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Financial Services), Dave Scholes (Housing Strategy & Needs Manager), Ossi Mosley (Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer) and Sarah Claridge (Committee Services Officer)

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Tanner.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

50. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

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

Cllr Fooks spoke on the following items during the discussion of each item.

Item 9: OxLEP Strategic Economic Plan Refresh (minute 56)

Item 14: Community Centre Strategy 2016- 2020 (minute 61)

Item 16: Quarterly Integrated Performance 2016/17 - Q1 (minute 63)

52. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON NEIGHBOURHOOD ISSUES

None

53. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following Scrutiny Committee reports were submitted to this meeting:-

(a) OxLEP Strategic Economic Plan Refresh

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report. All three recommendations were agreed by the Board.

(b) Equality and Diversity Review - Recommendation 15

Cllr Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report. He confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the new material and decided not to change the recommendation.

Cllr Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services accepted the scrutiny recommendation. The money saved would be used to promote equality in the workforce. She would discuss with officers how best to use the money.

(c) Oxfordshire Credit Union

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report on behalf of the Finance Panel. He outlined the following points in the report:

- Regret of the failed merger between Oxfordshire and Blackbird Leys credit unions due to the different operating models.
- Oxfordshire credit union would like funding for a part time development manager and they have been informed of the Council's grant funding process.

The Panel recommended to the Board that the Council promotes Oxfordshire credit union to Council employees.

Cllr Brown said she would be happy to promote Oxfordshire credit union to Council employees at the point that they are paying a dividend. Promotions could involve the credit union having a 'stall of offer' at Council and emails and leaflets advertising its services. All promotions of the credit union would have to be put in the context of other services offered to staff.

54. ITEMS RAISED BY BOARD MEMBERS

None

55. EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF) INNOVATION PROJECTS - MATCH FUNDING

The Executive Director, Regeneration and Housing submitted a report which requested approval to commit match funding towards the Oxford City Council led element of the European Regional Development Fund Innovation allocation for Oxfordshire, if funds are successfully awarded.

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

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Recommend Council** to approve the required match funding to deliver the capital (£33,939) and revenue (£45,000) elements of the projects detailed in this report.
2. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director, Regeneration and Housing to enter into any necessary agreements to secure European Regional Development Fund funding

56. OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (OXLEP) STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN REFRESH

Cllr Rowley arrived

The Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration submitted a report to update Members on the consultation draft of the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and to agree feedback on it, prior to formal endorsement of the document.

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

Cllr Fooks said she approved of the sustainability issues which were highlighted by the Scrutiny Committee. She felt the SEP did not put enough emphasis on the gap in key skills and jobs and the need for more affordable housing in Oxford. Cllr Price acknowledged that there were not enough training opportunities available, the Government refusing to release the adult training budget to local councils was not helping.

Cllr Fooks asked for a break-down of costs for the £452M invested in the Northern Gateway project. Cllr Price agreed to pass this information on.

Cllr Fooks asked whether OxLEP had discussed how they were to fund the projects without EU funds. Cllr Price said it was an area for discussion and would depend on the Brexit discussions and whether the Government will release money that would have gone to the EU.

Cllr Turner said that OxLEP needs to remind the government that the scientific and educational communities and tourism are extremely vulnerable to Brexit.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Agree** to formally endorse the draft Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan, subject to the feedback in the report and any additional member comments being relayed to the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Board for consideration.

57. CHANGES TO CHARGING FOR BUILDING CONTROL APPLICATION FEES

The Head of Planning and Regulatory Service submitted a report which set new Building Control application fees and introduced one new charge.

Cllr Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Regulatory Services presented the report. He said the amendments will bring fees in line with costs.

That the City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Approve** the proposed Building Control application fees and charges to take effect from 30 September 2016 and that a strategic review of the service will be undertaken by December 2016.

58. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR FLY-TIPPING

The Head of Community Services submitted a report to adopt the powers to issue fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping in Oxford and set the fine levels.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Adopt** the power to issue fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping offences under the Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016 and section 33ZA of The Environmental Protection Act 1990;
2. **Delegate** the power to authorise officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the Head of Community Services.
3. **Agree** to set the amount of the Fixed Penalty Notice for fly-tipping at £400 and the lesser amount of £200 if paid within 10 working days and include these items in the Council's Fees and Charges.

59. HOME CHOICE PILOT & RENT GUARANTEE SCHEME

The Executive Director of Regeneration & Housing submitted a report which requested approval to adopt a Rent Guarantee Scheme to enable the delivery of a Home Choice pilot, providing support to tenants to help them become financially independent.

Cllr Rowley, Board Member for Housing presented the report. The pilot is to try and make the home choice scheme (which provides private rental accommodation for people at risk of homelessness) more effective.

The pilot's aim is to support at least 80 people. A Home Choice caseworker will work closely with tenants to assist them with budgeting so they can become financially independent. This two year pilot will follow the same process used by the Welfare Reform Team in administering Discretionary Housing Payment, to ensure a consistent approach in dealing with both groups of customers.

The Housing Strategy & Needs Manager said the pilot would mainly target families.

A report on the pilot will be presented to CEB in 12 months.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Adopt** the proposed Rent Guarantee Scheme outlined in the report

60. LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which sought project approval to improve tennis provision at Florence Park and the car parking to the sports facilities at Court Place Farm.

Cllr Smith, Board Member for Leisure, Parks and Sports presented the report. £130,000 will be match funded by the tennis association to install flood lights at Florence Park and £117,000 in addition (to the £70,000 already agreed) will be spent on resurfacing the car park. We also want to start charging for the use of the car park.

Cllr Turner said it was good to invest in tennis but further consideration was needed in regards to charging for car parking as the car park at Oxford United Football Club is free across the road.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Grant project approval** for the improvements to:

- Tennis provision at Florence Park
- The car park at Court Place Farm

as outlined in this report

2. **Delegate authority to** the Executive Director for Community Services, in consultation with the Board Members for Leisure, Sport and Parks; and Finance, Corporate Asset Management and Public Health, the Head of Financial Services and Acting Head of Law and Governance to enter into any necessary agreements or contracts to complete the works.

61. COMMUNITY CENTRE STRATEGY 2016- 2020

The Head of Community Services submitted a report which requested the approval of the Community Centres Strategy which had been updated following consultation.

Cllr Simm, Board Member for Communities and Culture presented the report. She highlighted the high levels of responses to the consultation (Appendix 4) and thanked all the consultees.

The strategy focuses on facilities, in particular, making sure Rose Hill is used extensively and supporting Blackbird Leys and Barton. The Council has also carried out a feasibility study for the East Oxford site - the consultation will begin soon.

The strategy also draws up a 5 year maintenance plan, as several community centres were built after WW2.

New leases for all community associations and recruitment and support of volunteers, especially on-going training is also a priority.

Cllr Fooks endorsed the consultation done. Having two community associations in her ward, she would prefer new leases to be available before November 2017. Cllr Simm said that the Council has trialled a lease with one community association to get the model right and once this is finalised, the rolling out to the other associations won't take long.

Cllr Price said that the Communities Officer was always willing to meet with associations, so if associations are willing, they could have a new lease by early 2017.

Cllr Price said the strategy's title "Building Communities together: Skills Health and Life" suggests that the role of community centres is to provide a wide range of activities and to work with partner organisations. There is the potential for community associations to link with health services and the police to deliver services.

Cllr Simm said that the Stronger Communities Partnership is constantly looking at ways we can use community centres to deliver social services. Trustees have shown an appetite to do this, but we need to work on how we can best co-ordinate these services.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Adopt** the Community Centre Strategy

62. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report which set out the Council's treasury management activity and performance for the financial year 2015/2016. The report also identifies some reductions in interest rates in 2016/17 and recommends a change to the Treasury Strategy for 2016/17.

Cllr Turner, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health presented the report. He said that the Council had done well on the property funds but as a result of Brexit, capital values had reduced but were still significantly above the Council's purchase price. He was cautious about over-exposing the Council to risk in the property market.

The Head of Financial Services said that a 0.10% base rate was expected. In terms of internally borrowing, it was better for council to borrow internally as you only forfeit the interest from saving the money in the bank (which is very low at the moment) rather than paying a higher interest rate through external borrowing.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Note** the report
2. **Recommend that Council** approve the amendment to the Specified Investments list attached at Appendix 1 (paragraphs 35 – 37 below)

63. QUARTERLY INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE 2016/17 - Q1

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report which updated Members on the Council's Financial Risk and Performance as at 30 June 2016.

Cllr Turner, Finance, Asset Management and Public Health presented the report. He highlighted two concerns:

- The base budget around planning/ regulatory is more than expected.
- Leisure usage was down on target for the year.

Cllr Fooks commented on the difficulties the Council has had in recruiting and retaining staff in the planning department. She recommended offering higher salaries.

Cllr Hollingsworth said that a number of planning posts had had their salaries increased to encouraged recruitment. There were 4 planning apprentices starting next week

Cllr Smith said that the leisure usage figures for August showed improvement on the June figures (published in the report).

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Note** the projected financial outturn, the current position on risk and performance as at the 30 June 2016;
2. **Recommend to Council** that additional budget of £0.118 million and £0.399 million is approved for Super Connected Cities and Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure to be financed from external grant funding in accordance with paragraph 12.

64. POOLED BUDGET ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COMMISSIONING OF ADULT HOMELESS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION IN OXFORDSHIRE

The Head of Housing and Property submitted a report which sought agreement to enter into a pooled budget arrangement with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Oxfordshire District Councils; and to agree Oxford City Council's initial 3 year contribution to the pooled budget from existing base budget provision.

Cllr Rowley, Board Member for Housing presented the report. He explained it was the outcome of long negotiations and thanked officers and the Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health for the work done.

The pooled fund will pay for vital homeless support services in Oxfordshire. He said the proposal was a success in some respects as it meant that all surrounding councils will contribute towards providing homeless services roughly in proportion to the homelessness need of their areas.

However it's not overall good news for city homeless services as their will be less money available from the County Council. In three years, time the County will be cutting funding completely for Housing related support.

This agreement provides stability for services to continue and brings in money we wouldn't have got from clinical service providers. With less money available for homelessness, services must be co-ordinated if they are to have a future. This is a large amount of work to do with homelessness providers to co-ordinate services.

Cllr Turner explained that he had been involved in the negotiations as the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing partnership which has been the mechanism for agreeing the work. He thanked officers and explained that rough sleeping in Oxfordshire was increasing whilst funding was being cut. The Government has just announced they were planning to further cut housing benefit which will put more pressure on the homelessness budget.

The Council needs to review how our money is being spent. The quality of services is important and needs to be properly resources. There's no point in providing housing without adequate support.

Officers explained that the first year is better resourced as it provides transitional money. However there was concern that the pooled budget wouldn't meet the single homelessness need in the city.

Cllr Price asked if the City Council could fund additional accommodation independently? Cllr Rowley said that would mean taking money from the homelessness budget which is ear-marked for preventative measures. Taking money from homelessness prevention to pay for reduction measures doesn't make sense.

Cllr Rowley said that a report on allocations is expected to come to the Board before April 2017.

The Housing Strategy & Needs Manager said the decision today was important to inform the County of what our intentions are, before the budget process begins.

Cllr Brown asked what the Council was doing in terms of lobbying against the housing benefit cuts. Is the Council doing everything it could so that our MPs knew what will happen with the proposed housing cuts. The Assistant Chief Executive said the City's MPs had been informed of the increased homelessness need but more work will be done.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Agree** the commitment by Oxford City Council to enter into a pooled budget arrangement in order to fund adult homeless supported accommodation in Oxfordshire.
2. **Agree** Oxford City Council's annual contribution of £161,700 towards the pooled budget from Housing and Property's existing Homelessness Prevention funds base budget provision that is included in the current approved Medium Term Financial Plan
3. **Delegate to** the Head of Housing and Property Services, in consultation with the Board Members for Housing; and Finance, Asset Management and Public Health, the discretion to increase/reduce the Council's contribution in years 4 (2020/21) and 5 (2021/22) from within existing approved homelessness prevention funds budgetary provision, if it is agreed by all parties to extend the current 3 year proposal.
4. **Delegate authority** to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing to enter into a governance agreement for the pooled budget before April 2017

65. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER-SPENCER CRESCENT, ROSE HILL

The Head of Head of Housing & Property submitted a report which obtained approval to initiate compulsory purchase proceedings in relation to a long term empty property.

Cllr Rowley, Board Member for Housing presented the report. The Board noted the confidential appendices.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Housing and Property, in consultation with the Acting Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Financial Services, to initiate compulsory purchase proceedings to acquire all interests in the property situated in Spencer Crescent, Oxford (full address provided in Appendix A)
2. **Delegate authority** to the Acting Head of Law and Governance to take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order, including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any public inquiry;
3. **Delegate authority** to the Regeneration & Major Projects Service Manager to take all necessary action to acquire and obtain possession of the property either compulsorily or by agreement and to negotiate and agree all matters relating to compensation payments;
4. **Delegate authority to** the Regeneration & Major Projects Service Manager to dispose of the property in accordance with the Disposal Options set out in this report.

66. RENT SETTING FOR A HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTY LEASED TO A PARTNER AGENCY AS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

The Head of Housing and Property submitted a report which set out the basis for the charging of rent for an externally leased HRA property to a partner organisation as supported housing

Cllr Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing presented the report. He explained that a report came to CEB earlier this year for rent setting and that one property had been left off the list. This report was to tidy things up.

The Board noted the confidential appendix.

The City Executive Board resolves to:

1. **Agree** rent setting on the basis set out in paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of this report.

67. MINUTES

The Board resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2016 as a true and accurate record.

68. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

If the Board wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Board to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Board may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

69. CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES_ COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER- SPENCER CRESCENT, ROSE HILL

Noted

70. CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX_RENT SETTING FOR A HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTY LEASED TO PARTNER AGENCY AS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Noted

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.10 pm

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