

Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 15 August 2017

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members:

Councillor Tanner (Chair)

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Rowley

Councillor Tidball

Councillor Sinclair

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive

Jackie Yates, Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services

Lindsay Cane, Acting Head of Law and Governance

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Rebekah Knight, Planner

Tanya Bandekar, Service Manager Revenue & Benefits

Sarah Claridge, Committee and Member Services Officer

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Tom Landell Mills, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition

Apologies:

Councillors Price, Turner, Brown, Hollingsworth and Smith sent apologies.

45. Declarations of Interest

None.

46. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None received.

47. Councillors Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda

Cllr Landell-Mills spoke on the Item 8: Re-cladding of Evenlode and Windrush tower blocks (minute 51) and raised a number of points.

- Concern around completion dates for the proposed work not being met due to previous delays;
- Contingency plans would be desirable to deal with the possibilities of cost overruns and that the additional costs cannot be funded from the balance of the High Value Levy as proposed in the report;
- Clarification of the 'potential changes' to other blocks as a consequence of further DCLG testing would be helpful;
- Feedback from the consultation that had taken place with residents would be welcome; and
- Submitting the proposals via the normal planning process would be more transparent.

48. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

49. Items raised by Board Members

None received

50. Scrutiny Committee Reports

None.

51. Re-cladding of Evenlode and Windrush tower blocks

The Head of Housing Services submitted a report which requested additional budget approval in order to replace the rain screen cladding to Windrush and Evenlode towers.

Councillor Rowley, Board Member for Housing, spoke to the report. He said that Oxford was fortunate compared with some other authorities in only having to replace part of the cladding. The Oxfordshire Fire Service (OFS) had inspected all of the City's tower blocks and confirmed that residents were safe in their homes, not least because of the total package of fire protection already in place (eg sprinklers, encasement of internal cabling etc). This robust approach was a consequence of having already implemented recommendations from coroners' reports and elsewhere in the aftermath of previous tower block fires in the UK. Despite this assurance it was prudent to replace the

cladding as set out in the report. As well as the self-evident desirability of doing what was the best for residents, there was an ambition to give the tower blocks another 30 years of life and this work would help future proof them against possible future changes in government requirements.

Turning to the points raised by Councillor Landell-Mills, he was optimistic that the £1m sought would be sufficient for the purpose. In speaking to residents, one issue to emerge was the desirability of proceeding with this work as swiftly as possible; hence recommendation 2. In relation to timescale it was not possible, at this point, to be specific given the number of other councils commissioning similar work. Having said that Oxford was in a better position than some as we still have contractors on site.

The Head of Housing and Property confirmed that while the government had announced a review of the relevant regulations, the likelihood of a requirement for further changes was considered, at the moment, to be low.

The Acting Head of Law and Governance noted, for the avoidance of doubt, that recommendation 2 did not seek to waive the planning application process but merely that it be dealt with as a delegated matter.

Councillor Tanner reminded the meeting of the Government's initial commitment to fund the costs of such work. The Government had, however, since made it clear that local authorities were expected to cover their own costs. He therefore proposed an additional recommendation:

“The Council should continue to seek full reimbursement of the costs associated with the re-cladding of buildings from Government, as had originally been promised.”

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Ask Council** for additional budget provision of £1m for the replacement of rain screen cladding to Windrush and Evenlode towers;
2. **Recommend to Council** to waive (but only to the extent described below) the relevant provisions in para 5.3 of the Constitution which require large applications, Council applications and significant amendments to a grant of planning permission to be determined by an area planning committee and instead delegate to the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services the authority to determine any applications made as a result of changes required by new building regulations and/or government guidance relating to tower block design or build;

3. **Recommend to Council** that it should continue to seek full reimbursement of the costs associated with the re-cladding of buildings from Government, as had originally been promised; and
4. **Delegate** to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer (Head of Financial Services) the decision to accept a firm price as a variation to the current contract.

52. Discretionary Business Rates Support Scheme-

The Head of Financial Services submitted a report which advised Members of additional rate relief schemes arising from the Government's spring budget and recommended responses to them.

The Revenues and Benefits Service Manager introduced the report. She explained that the support scheme was in response to the significant rise in business rates due to the recent revaluation. The scheme creates a transition period to ease the rate rise for businesses over the next 3 -4 years. The costs of running the scheme are fully funded but unfortunately unspent relief allocated to a particular year cannot be carried forward.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Financial Services the authority to administer
 - a) the Public Houses Relief Scheme and
 - b) the Supporting Small Business Relief Scheme
2. **Approve** the Revaluation Discretionary Relief Scheme for businesses for 2017-18 at Appendix 1
3. **Delegate authority** to the Head of Financial Services to administer and award the reliefs in the Revaluation Discretionary Relief Scheme at Appendix 1 including revising the scheme for the subsequent 3 years.

53. Littlemore Neighbourhood Plan Area Application

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services submitted a report which sought to designate the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of delivering a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Planning Officer spoke briefly to the report. She said that the application had been made by the Parish Council and the City Council had a duty to designate it as the proposal coincided with the Parish Council boundary

The City Executive Board resolved to **designate** the Littlemore Neighbourhood Area

54. Appointment to new Outside Body 2017/2018

The Acting Head of Law and Governance submitted a report to include the National Association of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Councillors (UK) on to the list of Oxford City Council Outside Bodies and to appoint a representative for the 2017/18 Council Year.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

- 1. **Agree** to include the National Association of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Councillors (UK) on the list of Oxford City Council Outside Bodies; and
- 2. **Appoint** Councillor Jamila Azad as the Oxford City Council representative to the National Association of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Councillors (UK) for the 2017/18 Council Year.

55. Minutes

The Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2017 as a true and accurate record.

56. Dates of Future Meetings

The Board noted that the next meeting was to be held on 19 September.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 5.45 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 19 September 2017

This page is intentionally left blank