

Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 20 March 2018

www.oxford.gov.uk



Committee members:

Councillor Brown (Chair)	Councillor Hayes (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Price
Councillor Rowley	Councillor Sinclair
Councillor Smith (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Tanner
Councillor Tidball	Councillor Turner

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive
Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive
Tim Sadler, Executive Director Sustainable City
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer
Dave Scholes, Housing Strategy & Needs Manager
Frances Evans, Strategy & Service Development Manager
Rachel Lawrence, Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager
Tom Morris, Principal Planner
Martin John, Electoral Services Manager
Shaun Hatton, Highways and Engineering Manager
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Andrew Gant, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Mark Ladbrooke

Apologies:

None

165. Declarations of Interest

None.

166. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

167. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda

Cllr Gant, speaking as a local Member and in respect of the decisions to be made in respect of the Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan later on the agenda (item 10) wanted to take the opportunity to record thanks for the work of community leaders, and volunteers who, over a long period of time, had brought the project to this point. The project had commanded wide local support and fitted well with the Council's emerging Local Plan. He noted in particular the contributions of the two Chairs of the Neighbourhood Forum, Martin Roberts and Sam Clarke, and Tom Morris, Principal Planner.

The Chair added her thanks, on behalf of the Board, to all those involved in this important project for the City.

168. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

169. Items raised by Board Members

None.

170. Scrutiny Committee Reports

Report of the Oxford Living Wage Review Group

Cllr Ladbrooke, Chair of the Review Group, introduced the report with a reference to the campaign group 'Jubilee 2000' which sought to end third world debt and the then Chancellor, Gordon Brown's decision to provide debt relief to some of the world's poorest nations. This had, in turn, led to development of both the notion and importance of a "living wage", something which had won "hearts and minds" and for which there was now widespread acceptance. If employers are required to ensure the national minimum living wage, then why not encourage them to go one step further and adopt a living wage, something which would not only assist their employees but was likely, also, to benefit their standing in the community?

The group's report was necessarily focussed on the matter of the living wage and did not explore a number of other factors such as the evident impact of ill health, gender, disability, and ethnicity, on low pay.

The introduction of an Oxford Living Wage (OLW) would not provide a "silver bullet" for the challenges faced by those on low pay but it had the potential to make a significant contribution.

He saw the Council as having a critical role in demonstrating leadership in the promotion of the OLW, seeking to both embed it and celebrate success wherever it may be found. A lot of good work in relation to the OLW happened "under the radar"

and was not well documented. It was important to do everything possible to record and celebrate progress.

Summing up he said that the work of the group had been a hugely positive experience, the introduction of a living wage was an idea whose time had come and was, evidently, of great benefit to the poorer members of the community.

The Chair thanked Cllr Ladbrooke for his eloquent introduction and confirmed that he should be the Council's champion for the OLW, until the Council elections in May, when, regrettably, he would be standing down. After the elections there would be an opportunity to consider how best to continue the work set in train by the group.

In relation to the group's recommendation 8 which had been agreed in part (re maintaining a list of local employers paying the OLW) she noted the difficulties of ensuring an up-to-date and accurate list but agreed that more thought should be given to how this might be achieved.

Cllr Smith added that such a list (in parallel with logos for employers adopting the OLW) was important to enable consumers to make informed choices about those companies/ organisations they wished to support.

Cllr Price noted that the Oxford Economic Growth Steering Group had identified this matter as a key priority for 2018/19 and one which would be taken forward by a task and finish group.

Cllr Hayes thanked all those who had contributed to it for an excellent report and was particularly supportive of recommendation 15 and the response to it (identification of a portfolio holder to lead on the OLW). He was keen that the work going forward should provide the opportunity for the low paid themselves to have a voice.

The Chair concluded by thanking all those who had contributed to this valuable report.

171. Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds 2018/19

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report seeking the City Executive Board's approval to the allocation of homelessness prevention funds with the purpose of helping meet the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.

Cllr Rowley, Board Member for Housing, introduced the report, noting the intention of ensuring that the probable savings from the 2018/19 are carried forward for use in support of homelessness services and so continuing to meet the challenges faced by those who are homeless or rough sleepers. He was pleased to be able to highlight an increase of £300k for supported accommodation and that the City's, current, assessed need is for 150 beds and that in 2018/19 and 2019/20 there will be provision for 170 and 167 respectively.

The Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager drew attention to the £150k made available to facilitate work the ongoing City Conversation on Rough Sleeping and flowing from the inauguration event on 28 November. This had initiated a programme of

work involving collaboration between a wide range of organisations and individuals who have a role to play in helping to address the issues of homelessness and rough sleeping. An interim steering group has been set up to take this programme of work forward which has met twice. The group will be chaired by Jane Cranston, currently High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, and convened and coordinated by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation.

Details about how this additional resource would be used were still being worked up but some funds had already been committed to employing an additional member of staff. This role will focus on communication; ensuring effective co-ordination between the many parts of the Council which provide services which touch upon the lives of those who are homeless or rough sleeping; and assembling and making available high quality data about the issue and related matters (it was hoped that the first quarter of 2018/19 would see the first batch of these data). The impact of the work being done by the Council, commissioned services and other local homelessness organisations was not always visible, with some 300 successful interventions having been made by the Oxford SPOT, the Council's commissioned outreach team, over the last year and an effective Severe Weather Emergency Programme which had provided nearly 800 nights of accommodation to vulnerable people and given shelter to around 130 people so far over the winter.

She went on to note that rough sleeping had been all but eradicated nationally in 2008 and there is every reason why, with the support of partners, we should hope to achieve this eradicated again. At the same time, it was recognised by all present that the underlying causes of homelessness were, for the most part, a consequence of recent government policies over which the Council had no control and which had a particularly profound effect on the most vulnerable members of the community.

The Housing Strategy and Needs Manager spoke briefly about the Council's Trailblazer project, as one of just 20 authorities which had received such funding in recognition of the City's good track record in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

It was agreed that the City's reputation as a good provider of services for those who are homeless and rough sleeping was well deserved. Assembling meaningful comparative data was however difficult. Establishing links with other cities which experienced similar levels of homelessness would be beneficial as well as assembling the data referred to above so as to have a better understanding of the reasons for people presenting as homeless in the Oxford. The attraction of Oxford, given the quality of its provision, as compared with neighbouring authorities was noted. At the same time it was noted that some of those who were homeless or rough sleepers and in the City were reluctant to engage with the provision available.

Cllr Rowley concluded the discussion by noting the significant number of successful interventions every year and the support offered which had a positive impact via, for example the Welfare Reform Team and Advice Centres. There were three principal ways in which the Council could address this complex issue: through direct provision of services provided by the Council; the facilitation of provision by others (via the City Conversation); and lobbying central government. A sustainable solution would only be achievable with the cessation of those policies which drove people onto the street.

The Chair thanked all those involved who worked to support this important area of work, including Council officers, commissioned service providers, local homelessness organisations and volunteers.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the allocation of Homelessness Prevention funds to commission homelessness services in 2018/19 as outlined in paragraph 41 and Appendix C of the report;
2. **Recommend** to City Executive Board and the Chief Finance Officer that any savings from 2017/18 budget allocations for Homelessness Prevention activities are considered to be carried forward at the end of the financial year in order to fund necessary services in 2018/19 and 2019/20 as outlined at paragraphs 28-30 of the report; and
3. **Delegate** to the Head of Housing in consultation with the portfolio holder the discretion to revise the intended programme if required.

172. Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-2023

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report to request that the City Executive Board approves the Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-2023 (and associated appendices) as draft documents to be published for a period of public consultation.

Cllr Rowley, Board Member for Housing, introduced the report by reminding those present that the current versions of the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy were due for renewal in 2018. He explained that in the absence of Government guidance on mandatory use of Flexible Fixed term Tenancies, the new drafts before the Board set out a continued commitment for the Council to offer only lifetime (secure) tenancies unless there is a legislative change or grant funding requirement to offer an alternative tenancy term. Should there be a need to update the Tenancy Strategy/Policy in relation to implementation of mandatory Flexible Fixed Term Tenancies, a further report and revised Tenancy Strategy and Policy will be presented to the City Executive Board.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Approve the Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-23 (and associated appendices) as draft documents to be published for a period of public and stakeholder consultation.

173. Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services had submitted a report seeking the City Executive Board's endorsement of the consultation draft Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan as required by Regulations.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning, Sustainability & Regulatory Services, introduced the report and added his thanks to those previously noted for all those who had contributed so much to this valuable project.

Cllr Price noted that what was proposed aligned well with the vision set out for the City in "Oxford 2050".

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Agree** that the legal tests have been met and to proceed with the consultation stage;
2. **Endorse** the Draft Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan for consultation; and
3. **Proceed** with the neighbourhood plan process by submitting the consultation responses and the draft plan for independent examination.

174. Ward Boundaries

The Electoral Registration Officer had submitted a report to brief the City Executive Board on the ward boundary review and ask it to recommend a ward scheme to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Cllr Tanner asked for thanks to be recorded for the work of Officers and Members in preparing the report.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Propose a new scheme of wards based on a council size of 48 councillors to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

175. Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 3

The Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement had submitted a report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at 31st December 2017.

Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance & Asset Management, introduced the report. He was pleased to report the headline position that the budget was on track. Issues in relation to losses associated with errors in payment of Housing Benefit were

being successfully addressed. There was some minor slippage in the Capital Programme. The target for the number of people using leisure centres had not been met (but the City's performance was strong on the basis of national comparators) and steps were being taken to improve the position.

The introduction of Universal Credit had had significant knock on consequences for the processing of information relating to entitlement of benefits such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments. Representations had been made to Government by the Leader and local MP but no response had been received. It was agreed that this should be pursued.

The target for the amount of employment floor space for development had not been met. This indicator had, however, been subject to a previous discussion during which its appropriateness had been questioned and its deletion recommended; to be revisited.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Note the projected financial outturn and current position on risk and performance as at the 31st December 2017.

176. Highways Maintenance

The Executive Director Sustainable City had submitted a report to seek authority to enter into an Agency Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to provide highway maintenance services on the classified road network in the City, in addition to the works already undertaken on minor roads under section 42 of The Highways Act 1980.

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning, Sustainability & Regulatory Services, introduced the report. The proposal that the City Council should take over responsibility for highway maintenance on the classified road network in the City would result in better value for money than hitherto, and be good for road users and tax payers. The Council was particularly well placed to undertake this responsibility having its own depot in the City. It was important to note that, while very beneficial, the new arrangements did not represent a panacea for the poor condition of the City's road as the money available for road improvement/repair was still finite.

The particular importance of ensuring safe road surfaces for cyclists was noted.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1) **Authorise** the Executive Director Sustainable City, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 officer, to negotiate and enter into an agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council under which Oxford City Council would be appointed to carry out certain highway maintenance on the classified road network in the City as the agent of Oxfordshire County Council, in accordance with the provisions of s101 Local Government Act 1972 and other enabling legislation;

2) **Authorise** the proposed Service Contract with Oxford Direct Services Ltd be extended to cover the provision of these works as the sub-contractor of Oxford City Council;

3) **Note** that in entering into the proposed contract with Oxfordshire County Council, up to three members of Oxfordshire County Council staff may be subject to the TUPE regulations, and thus would transfer their employment to Oxford Direct Services Ltd; and

4) **Recommend** to Council the inclusion of a gross expenditure and gross income budget of £1.56 million for the year 2018-19 i.e. nil cost to the Council

177. Minutes

The Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February as a true and accurate record.

178. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 17 April
- 22 May
- 13 June
- 11 July
- 14 August

All meetings start at 5pm.

179. 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 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 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.

180.Highways Maintenance - confidential appendices

There was no substantive discussion of these appendices except to note that the confidential status of Appendix 4 should be withdrawn as soon as possible (subject to agreement of Oxford County Council and removal of figures).

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.30 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 17 April 2018

This page is intentionally left blank