

Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Wednesday 13 June 2018

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Committee members:

Councillor Brown (Chair)	Councillor Smith
Councillor Turner	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Hayes
Councillor Hollingsworth	Councillor Rowley

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer
Adrian Arnold, Development Management Service Manager
Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits
Frances Evans, Strategy & Service Development Manager
Lucy Cherry, Leisure and Performance Manager
Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

Also present:

Councillor Andrew Gant, Liberal Democrat Group Leader, Liberal Democrat shadow member for Corporate Strategy & Economic Development, Customer and Corporate Services, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Mark Munday, Fusion Divisional Business Manager

Apologies:

Councillors Tidball and Upton sent apologies.

18. Declarations of Interest

None.

19. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

None.

21. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

22. Items raised by Board Members

None.

23. Scrutiny Committee Reports

The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 05 June, considered reports on Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan; Safeguarding Annual Report; and the Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement (items 8, 12 and 13 of the agenda) and had submitted its views to the City Executive Board for consideration.

Councillor Gant, as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, spoke to the Committee's reports.

He thanked the Board for their responses to the Committee's recommendations for which he was grateful.

Fusion Lifestyle

The Committee had had a thorough discussion about the Fusion Lifestyle report and had been exercised about the fall in visitor numbers and was concerned lest the pressures described only served to drive the numbers down still further. While the Board's response was welcome, he would urge that the action plan to raise numbers was robustly monitored. In particular, the Committee would want to monitor performance against the target of a 3% increase in visitor numbers. The Committee is pleased that consideration will be given to including Fusion Lifestyle indicators on the Council's quarterly performance report. The ambition, via a marketing campaign, to promote swimming opportunities for under 17s, older people and members of the BAME community was very welcome and something which the Committee regarded as very important.

Safeguarding

The response to the recommendation was positive. Notably the new data gathered on the reach of safeguarding work will be included in the following year's Safeguarding Annual Report for Scrutiny.

Modern Slavery

The recommendation had been agreed.

24. Fusion Lifestyle's 2018/19 Annual Service Plan

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report to provide an overarching performance report for the City's contract with Fusion Lifestyle (2017/18).

Councillor Smith introduced the report. The fall in visitor numbers was regrettable and a major part of the Annual Service Plan sought to address that decline. She reminded the Board of the context of the decline which included: being squeezed by increasing numbers of budget gyms on the one hand and some private high quality ones on the other; increasing number of residents taking advantage of opportunities to exercise in parks, open spaces and community centres and events organised by third parties. Oxford was, pleasingly, considered to be one of the countries 'fittest' cities. Residents were able to take advantage of community use provision of the facilities at the Oxford Spires Academy and the Universities' facilities. The Youth Ambition team delivers

activities for young people as does the national award winning in-house Sports and Physical Activity team for all members of the community.

The Bonus concessionary fees and charges offered by the Council (in partnership with Fusion Lifestyle) is generous when compared with other providers. The Council continues to fund free swimming sessions for under 17s and ensures payment of the Oxford Living Wage. All were to be commended.

There was a commitment to reviewing access for those with disabilities and the feasibility for childcare at the Ferry Leisure Centre was being explored.

With reference to the Scrutiny Committee recommendations, there was no reason to be anything less than ambitious in relation to future visitor numbers; more detail about the Annual Service Plan could be shared over the course of the year and it was indeed important to ensure that the proposal for a marketing campaign was followed through.

The Active Communities Manager confirmed that the local market was exceptionally competitive (there were, for example, 15 other health and fitness competitors in the City and immediate surrounding areas). It was important to remember the decreasing costs of the contract to the Council. In 2008/09 it cost the Council c.£2m to deliver leisure services, this is now c.£100k when taking account of Oxford Living Wage, free swimming schemes and utility adjustment elements .

It was noted that visitor numbers had risen significantly at the start of the contract, plateaued and were now, as reported, falling. The Leisure and Performance Manager explained that early improvement could be largely attributed to significant Council investment at the start of the contract enabling a wider activity offer across all facilities, improved quality, as well as the development of the new Competition Standard Pool at Leys Pools and Leisure Centre

The Divisional Business Manager explained that the data cleansing, obliquely referred to in the report, had been a means of re-calibrating the data from time to time to ensure that, as far as possible, like for like comparisons were being made. Customer feedback was gathered in a variety of ways which included: e-mailing customers and a survey of c.200 users per centre; National Benchmarking Surveys; mystery visits as part of the UK quality award Scheme for leisure (QUEST); and biennial non-user surveys. Feedback informed the Annual Service Plan.

While it was recognised that some factors were outside Fusion Lifestyle's control, the Divisional Business Manager also recognised that there were matters which were within its control. In relation to maintenance issues, for example, it was inevitable that as the buildings aged so the number of reactive tasks increased. Overall however he was confident that the measures in place would result in improved performance.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the national and local context of the leisure market;
2. **Note** the overarching performance dashboard for 2017/18; and
3. **Endorse** the Fusion Lifestyle Annual Service Plan as recommend by the Leisure Partnership Board.

25. Local Development Scheme 2018-2021

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development and Regulatory Services had submitted a report to approve the updated programme for the preparation of documents that will form the City Council's Local Plan.

Councillor Hollingsworth introduced the report. He drew particular attention to paragraph 5 of the report which set out the revised timetable for production of the Oxford Local Plan which was intended to give sufficient time for it to take account of the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework, publication of which was expected in July.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Approve the Oxford Local Development Scheme 2018-21.

26. Extension of Home Choice Pilot

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report to provide a review of the first year of the Home Choice pilot and to approve, in principle, the extension of the pilot to March 2019.

Councillor Smith spoke to the report. The Home Choice scheme, introduced in 2003, sought to reduce homelessness. Demand for it was increasing as private rents rise and changes to Government policy put more pressure on individuals and families. The Home Choice Pilot was introduced in 2016 to deal with the inequality in approach to private sector tenants outlined in the report. Thought needed to be given to making the scheme sustainable, hence the recommendation for a review and a further report to the CEB in the Autumn.

Councillor Rowley said the scheme did not provide an answer to the challenges posed by the costs of the private rented sector but it had helped a great many people and it should, at the very least, continue for a further year.

The Revenues and Benefits Programme Manager reminded the Board that the scheme was but part of a range of strategies to deal with the problem of homelessness. The scheme was attractive to landlords and increased the number of potential properties for those in need, a group for whom little else was available. Other Local Authorities had expressed interest in the scheme.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** in principle, the extension of the Home Choice pilot until March 2019; and
2. **Instruct** the Head of Housing to undertake a further review of the pilot later this year, and report the findings to CEB in October 2018.

27. Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-2023

The Head of Housing Services had submitted a report to request the City Executive Board to recommend to Council approval of the amended Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-23 (and associated appendices) following a 4 week period of public consultation.

Councillor Rowley introduced the report. A pre-consultation version of the strategy had been to the March meeting of the CEB. He wished to draw the Board's attention to just two points. The anticipated Government guidance on the mandatory use of Flexible Fixed Term Tenancies had yet to be published. It was therefore proposed that the Council should continue to issue introductory 12 month tenancies for new Council tenants. The consultation had indicated support that it was reasonable for rents to be based on a percentage of household income, an approach which would have implications for the Council's Housing Company.

The Strategy and Service Development Manager noted that Appendix C of the Strategy (Oxford City Context) would be reviewed and updated annually.

The Chair thanked all those who had contributed to this valuable piece of work.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the amendments made to the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-23 (and associated appendices) in response to feedback from public consultation; and
2. **Recommend** to Council, approval of the amended Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-23 (and associated appendices).

28. Oxford City Council Safeguarding Report 2017/18

The Assistant Chief Executive had submitted a report on the progress made on the Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2017/18.

Councillor Hayes introduced the report in the absence of Cllr Tidball. The report provided a very comprehensive picture of the Council's position in relation to safeguarding. He drew the Board's particular attention to three matters: the rigorous audit of the Council's procedure (via the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board) resulting in 8 out of 10 indicators being the best possible; imminent implementation of "My Concern", a central reporting system for safeguarding concerns; and awareness training having been delivered to about 400 staff.

The Chair thanked all those involved for a thorough report about a very important area of work.

The Monitoring Officer noted that the reference in Appendix 3 to the Data Protection Act should be to the Data Protection Act **2018**.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the key achievements of the Safeguarding work delivered through Oxford City Council during 2017/18;
2. **Agree** the Safeguarding Action Plan 2018/19 set out in Appendix 1; and
3. **Approve** Oxford City Council's safeguarding policy updated April 2018 subject to the correction noted above.

29. Modern Slavery Act – Transparency Statement 2017-2018

The Assistant Chief Executive had submitted a report to approve the Modern Slavery Act – Transparency Statement for 2017 – 2018.

Councillor Hayes introduced the report. The statement makes clear that the Council is compliant with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. As a result of the Scrutiny Committee consideration (see above), the interconnection with the Council's wholly owned companies and their own statements will be referenced.

The Council undertook a significant amount of work to support a wide range of people at the risk of exploitation. He drew attention to recent research by the University of Buckingham which suggested that every £1 spent in providing early support for vulnerable people could save up to £3.35 that might otherwise be spent in support and assistance at a later date.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement 2017-2018; and
2. **Delegate** the approval and publication of modern slavery transparency statement to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

30. Q4 2017/18 Integrated Report

The Head of Financial Services and Head of Business Improvement had submitted a report to update Members on Finance, Risk and Performance as at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Turner introduced the report. The overall financial position remained favourable with expenditure on target and a slight increase in the anticipated surplus. There was favourable variance in both the Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme. In relation to Performance Management the overall picture was positive with twelve of the sixteen corporate performance measures delivered as planned and four falling short (of which one was the number of visitors to the Council's leisure centres, see above). Of the new scheme requests, £200k for City Centre Improvements was recognised as important (and chimed with a previous recommendation from Scrutiny Committee).

Councillor Chapman, in his role as Board Member for Customer Focused Services, was pleased to note the favourable variance of Direct Services and looked forward to their continued positive performance.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial outturn and performance of the Council for the year 2017/18 and also the position on risks outstanding as at 31st March 2018;
2. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the General Fund and recommend to Council the establishment of budgetary provision of £364k in respect of the new bids shown in paragraph 6 and Appendix D;
3. **Agree** the additional transfer to the General Fund Capital Financing Reserve of £533k detailed in paragraph 2 a;
4. **Agree** the carry forward requests outlined in paragraph 16 to 19 in respect of the HRA as detailed in Appendix D and recommend to Council the establishment of budgetary provision of £70k in respect of the new bids;
5. **Agree** the additional transfer to the HRA Contributions to HRA Projects Reserve of £0.550 million detailed in paragraph 2 (c);
6. **Note** the underspend against the latest budget on the Capital Programme of £636k detailed in appendix B, the funding for which will be returned to Capital Financing Resources; and
7. **Agree** to allow the roll forward of all CIL related allocations, totalling £130k in 2018/19, detailed in paragraph 9.

31. Clarification of Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to clarify the operation of the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme for recipients of Universal Credit.

The Leader introduced the report. The report was simply to clarify the intended purpose of the report agreed by the Council on 29 January. The scheme will be subject to ongoing review and proposals for a consultation will come to the CEB in September. Of concern are the cumulative consequences for those who are self-employed and particular steps will be taken to engage with that group of people.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Note** the clarification of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme;
2. **Approve** a notice of clarification of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to be published on the Council website; and
3. **Instruct** the Head of Financial Services to ensure that all applications for Council Tax Reduction, for the financial year 2018/19, are calculated in accordance with the original intentions of Council.

32. Appointment to Outside Bodies 2018/19

The Head of Law and Governance had submitted a report to agree appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations for the 2018/19 Council Year.

The Leader introduced the report. The nominations provided were agreed subject to the following changes:

- Risinghurst Community Centre - Removal of Councillor Roz Smith from the list. A replacement to be agreed in discussion with Councillor Tidball and the Monitoring Officer;
- City of Oxford Charity – Addition of Councillor Altaf-Khan to the Liberal Democrat post; and
- Headington Parish Charity – Following the resignation of Councillor Wilkinson, agreed that a replacement should not be sought until after the forthcoming by-election.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** appointments to charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as shown in Appendices 1A – 1E, subject to the changes mentioned above.
2. **Note** the guidance for appointees as detailed in Appendix 2;
3. **Agree** to adopt the draft categories for appointments to outside bodies as detailed in the report at paragraphs 7 - 8; and
4. **Agree** to remove EMBS Community College, District Council's Network Association and the LGA General Assembly from the list of charities, trusts, community associations and other organisations as detailed at paragraph 14 of the report.

33. Response to consultation on the planning application for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS)

The Head of Planning, Sustainable Development & Regulatory Services had submitted a report to consider the City Council's response to Oxfordshire County Council which is determining the planning application for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Councillor Hollingsworth introduced the report. A scheme of this size inevitably raised a number of issues and concerns, mitigation for which is sought in the proposed response. Given the areas affected by the scheme, hydrology was, inevitably of particular concern. There was a need, for example, to ensure that adjoining meadows/wet lands were not adversely affected. The need to remove some trees could be mitigated to some degree by new planting which could perhaps extend to the provision of Black Poplars, an endangered species. The recognition of the need to protect aspects of heritage and urban design were very welcome.

The Development Management Service Manager said there had been good communication with the applicant and the County. The reports appendices contained a great deal of technical detail but he drew particular attention to the importance of addressing matters to do with air quality, archaeology, hydrology, traffic movement (with particular reference to construction vehicles) and the consequences of the scheme for the Council's Park and Ride provision. There would be close monitoring of the project once underway to ensure that the agreed mitigations were being implemented and having the desired effect.

The Chair welcomed this detailed report for scheme that was important both for the City and further afield and thanked all those who had contributed to it .

The City Executive Board resolved to:

- 1. **Note** the contents of the Council’s response to the consultation; and
- 2. **Endorse** the Council’s response to the consultation

34. Minutes

The Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2018 as a true and accurate record.

35. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 11 July 2018
- 14 August 2018
- 18 September 2018
- 16 October 2018
- 14 November 2018
- 18 December 2018

All meetings start at 5pm.

36. Matters Exempt from Publication

No matters were considered in confidential session.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.15 pm

Chair

Date: Wednesday 11 July 2018

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