

Minutes of a meeting of the CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD on Tuesday 18 December 2018

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Committee members:

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| Councillor Brown (Chair) | Councillor Turner |
| Councillor Chapman | Councillor Clarkson |
| Councillor Hayes | Councillor Hollingsworth |
| Councillor Simm | Councillor Upton |

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive
Tim Sadler, Executive Director Sustainable City
Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive
Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Anita Bradley, Monitoring Officer
John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer
Amanda Ford, Principal Planner

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
Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Apologies:

Councillors Linda Smith and Rowley sent apologies.

105. Declarations of Interest

None.

106. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public

None.

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

Councillor Wade spoke in relation to item 7 (Housing Panel recommendation re the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol).
Councillor Gant spoke in relation to item 9 (Annual Monitoring Report) and item 10 (Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan).

108. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues

None.

109. Items raised by Board Members

None.

110. Scrutiny Committee Reports

Westgate Centre

At its meeting on 4 December 2018, the Scrutiny Committee had considered a report about the impact of the Westgate redevelopment on the City Centre, since it had opened a year previously. Cllr Gant, in his capacity as Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, was grateful for the Board's response to the recommendations. He drew particular attention to the Committee's focus on the Oxford Living Wage (OLW) while recognising the limited extent to which it could be insisted upon. He welcomed the agreement to promote the OLW and said the Committee would be pleased to be kept informed about progress. The engagement with local retailers to understand where public realm improvements were needed was also welcome and Committee would be pleased to hear about the timetable for that in due course. Finally, the Committee would also be pleased to hear about the outcome of the recent shop frontage survey of occupancy levels, referred to in the Board's response.

The Board Member for Culture and the City Centre said the Council was committed to principle of the OLW and took every opportunity to promote it while noting that it was not appropriate to target any one employer to introduce it over and above another.

The Chair said that she always raised the matter of the OLW in her conversations with employers. While appreciating elements of the Committee's reports she was disappointed with its apparent focus on the negative consequences of the Westgate Centre and insufficient recognition of its benefits. The retail sector throughout the UK was under immense pressure for a variety of reasons and it was unreasonable to ascribe the pressures in the City, disproportionately, to the Westgate Centre.

Councillor Gant said the Committee had heard that some retailers were asserting a 'cause and effect' as a result of the Westgate Centre but he would of course pass the Chair's views back to the Committee.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

At its meeting on 12 November 2018, the Scrutiny Committee's Housing Panel had considered a report concerning preparations being made for the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

Cllr Gant, speaking on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee's Housing Panel, thanked the Board for its positive response to the Panel's recommendation.

The Chair, passing on a message from Cllr Smith, was pleased to report that the first exit survey of SWEP clients had been conducted the previous week.

Cllr Wade, speaking as a Councillor on an item for decision on the agenda, said that SWEP provision was important and the opportunity to exercise some discretion in its application was welcome. Nonetheless, the temperature threshold for its operation should be raised and the window for its time of operation be widened. More provision should be made for those who were especially vulnerable and every effort made to secure government funding to assist with the provision.

The Chair reassured Cllr Wade that the Council took every opportunity to secure funding for this area of work and the ambition was to get to the point where there was no rough sleeping at all. It was, however, necessary to return to the fundamental point that rough sleeping was driven to the greatest extent by a succession of government policies, such as the introduction of Universal Credit and reduced funding levels in many parts of the public sector.

The Board Member for Finance and Asset Management noted that the government's ambition to reduce rough sleeping by half by 2022 was worthy if ambitious and would not be achieved by measures in "drips and drabs" but, rather, by fundamental changes to address the causes described by the Chair.

111. Annual Monitoring Report 2017-2018

The Acting Head of Planning Services had submitted a report asking the City Executive Board to approve the Annual Monitoring Report for publication.

The Board Member for Planning and Transport introduced the report.

Cllr Gant, speaking as a Councillor on an item for decision on the agenda, questioned the data in the Housing Trajectory section of the AMR suggesting that the cited "average annual completion target of 400 dwellings per year" when set against the accompanying table giving annual completion figures for the last 12 years represented a shortfall. He also suggested that the City's housing shortfall should be addressed by revisiting the protection afforded to employment sites.

In relation to housebuilding The Board Member for Planning and Transport said the critical matter was the cumulative total, rather than the annual figures which contributed to it, and that was on target. In relation the protection afforded to employment sites he said that a proper balance had to be struck between the need for jobs and the need for housing. He believed that the current balance was the right one. To remove the protection in the Local Plan for a category of employment space would have to apply to all of that category and not just some.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

- 1. Approve** the Annual Monitoring Report 2017/18 for publication; and
- 2. Authorise** the Acting Head of Planning Services to make any necessary additional minor corrections not materially affecting the document prior to publication.

112. Draft Consultation Budget 2019/20

The Head of Financial Services had submitted a report to propose a Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 2019/20 Budget for consultation.

The Board Member for Finance and Asset Management introduced the report briefly in anticipation of a fuller debate, in due course, in Council.

The proposals were being framed in challenging times. Government grant is reducing to zero in April 2019, interest rates remain low (and therefore affect the returns on council investments), and the Council is exposed to wider economic risks which might affect the local economy, investment income and commercial property.

However, once again a fully balanced four-year budget is proposed, which retains front-line services in full, continues to support the most vulnerable, including extra spending towards the Council's aim of ending homelessness and support for the Oxford Living Wage, and includes £192 million of capital investment over the four-year period.

The Council will review how best to use the government's welcome decision to lift the restriction on borrowing in the Housing Revenue Account, and how both this, and Oxford City Housing Ltd, can help address the city's housing shortage. There would be no increase in park and ride charges.

He drew attention to the early success of Oxford Direct Services as a wholly owned local authority trading company, its increasing efficiency and increasing return to the Council which vindicated the "insourcing" model which had been adopted.

The Board Member for Customer Focused Services congratulated all those involved for having assembled a set of thoughtful and balanced budget proposals, its inclusive approach was commendable.

The Head of Financial Services gave an update on the Provisional Finance Settlement announced by the Government on 13 December 2018 and the impact on the Authority's Consultation Budget in the following areas :

- **Council tax Referendum level** - confirmed as previously proposed at 3% for local authorities
- **New Homes Bonus** - the 2019/20 allocations show limited change from indicative figures previously announced. No changes to the deadweight threshold (at 0.4%) or the eligibility of properties to qualify for the funding
- **Business Rates Pilots** – the Council was unsuccessful in its bid to be a Business rates pilot in 2019-20. No change to MTFP as no increased income assumed.
- **Revenue Support Grant** – for this authority this will be zero from 01 April 2019 and the Government have withdrawn plans to apply negative support grant. This position had been assumed in the MTFP
- **Retained Business Rates** – Little change to that forecast for the baseline funding level or tariffs for 2019-20

- **Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention** – The Government has published consultation papers on these areas which the authority will be responding to within by the deadline of 21 February 2019.

The Chair concluded by drawing attention to the Council's continued commitment to supporting the most disadvantaged members of the community, reducing inequalities, as evidenced by the proposals for supporting people in poverty.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the 2019-20 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets for consultation and the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in Appendices 1-9, noting :

a) the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £24.175 million for 2019/20 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 2.99% or £8.94 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £307.80 per annum (subject to the assumption in paragraph 22)

b) the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2019/20 of £43.162 million and a reduction of 1% (£1.03/wk) in social dwelling rents from April 2019 giving a revised weekly average social rent of £102.26 as set out in Appendix 4

c) the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme as shown in Appendix 6.

2. **Agree** the fees and charges shown in Appendix 7

3. **Delegate** to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Board Member for Finance and Asset Management the decision to determine whether it is financially advantageous for the Council to enter into a Business Rates Distribution Agreement as referred to in paragraphs 29-30 below; and

4. **Ratify** their decision to implement the Premium Council Tax of 100% for properties that have been empty for more than 2 years and approve the escalated rate of premium council tax when permitted to do so, as referred to in paragraphs 13- 16 below.

5. **Authorise** the Section 151 Officer to make any necessary minor correction to the draft consultation budget 2019/20 proposals before formal consultation commences.

113. Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan

The Acting Head of Planning Services had submitted a report to consider the Examiner's Report, approve modifications to the Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan and agree that the Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan be submitted to a referendum.

Cllr Gant, speaking as a local Councillor on an item for decision on the agenda, paid tribute to the work of the three Chairs of the St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum and those officers, notably Tom Morris and Amada Ford, who had got the plan to its present state. He was pleased to say that the Forum supported the latest iteration of the plan.

The Board Member for Planning and Transport introduced the report, adding his thanks to those involved. The next step would be a referendum as set out in the report before coming back to Council for final approval. He noted that all neighbourhood plans had to be compatible with whichever Local Plans were in force at a particular time.

It was agreed that references to electoral wards which might not exist by the time the plan was effective should be removed to avoid possible subsequent confusion.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Approve** the Modifications to Policies in the Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan as recommended by the Examiner's Report (September 2018);
2. **Approve** the factual modifications that have been made for the purpose of correcting errors and approve the factual modifications relating to textual changes in the introductory chapters or in terms of the justification for the policies in the Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan; and
3. **Agree** that the Summertown and St. Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan (as modified in the form at Appendix 4) is submitted to a referendum.

114. Marsh Road Car Park

The Executive Director of Sustainable City had submitted a report to introduce a parking tariff at Marsh Road Recreation Ground.

The Board Member for Planning and Transport introduced the report which sought to fulfil a planning condition relating the improvement of the car park. Once agreed the County Council as Highways Authority would need to give its consent via a traffic order. All steps would be taken to encourage the County Council to expedite this stage of the process.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Introduce** a pay & display parking scheme at Marsh Road Car Park;
2. **Add** Marsh Road Car Park to the existing Off-Street Parking Order;
3. **Agree** that the level of penalty charges is kept in accordance with all other City Council operated car parks;
4. **Agree** the tariff level and hours of operation at the car park as set out in the report; and
5. **Delegate** to the Executive Director of Sustainable City the consideration of any consultation responses in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Planning and Transport and to take any steps necessary to confirm the parking order.

115. Street naming and numbering

The Head of Law and Governance had submitted a report to request a determination on the street name for the former Temple Cowley Pool site.

The Chair introduced the report and proposed that the street be named Sher Afzal Close.

The City Executive Board resolved to:

Agree that the name of the new road on the site of the former Temple Cowley Pool should be Sher Afzal Close .

116. Minutes

The City Executive Board resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2018 as a true and accurate record.

117. Dates of Future Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- 22 January 2019
- 12 February 2019
- 13 March 2019
- 10 April 2019

All of which will start at 6pm.

118. 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.

119. Update from Appointments Committee meeting

The Chair gave Board members an update on the meeting of the Appointments Committee earlier that day and on the proposed appointment to the post of Executive Director Development.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.05 pm

Chair

Date: Tuesday 22 January 2019