

## **Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET on Wednesday 10 July 2019**

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### **Committee members:**

Councillor Brown (Chair)

Councillor Turner

Councillor Clarkson

Councillor Hollingsworth

Councillor Upton

Councillor Linda Smith (Deputy Leader)

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Hayes

Councillor Rowley

### **Officers:**

Gordon Mitchell, Chief Executive

Tim Sadler, Transition Director

Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive

Aileen Carlisle, Interim Executive Director (Communities and Customers)

Andrew Brown, Committee and Member Services Manager

Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services

Lindsay Cane, Legal Services Manager / Company Secretary

Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services

Lucy Cherry, Leisure and Performance Manager

Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

### **Also present:**

Mark Munday, Fusion Lifestyle, Divisional Business Manager

Graham Ashby, Fusion Lifestyle, Contract Manager

### **Apologies:**

Councillor Tidball sent apologies.

### **36. Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **37. Addresses and Questions by Members of the Public**

None.

### **38. Councillor Addresses on any item for decision on the Board's agenda**

None.

### **39. Councillor Addresses on Neighbourhood Issues**

None.

## **40. Items raised by Board Members**

None.

## **41. Scrutiny Committee Reports**

The Scrutiny Committee had met on 4 June 2019 to consider the Fusion Lifestyle Annual Service Plan. The Committee and Member Services Manager reminded the Cabinet of the Committee's one recommendation in relation to outreach work and of the Cabinet's agreement to it.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Housing, Councillor Linda Smith said she had been very happy to accept the recommendation as an area of focus which Council Officers would be working closely with Fusion Lifestyle to achieve.

The Finance Panel of the Scrutiny Committee had met on 01 July to consider the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 4. Changes to the report had been tabled at the Finance Panel meeting and the Panel had supported the inclusion of two additional recommendations and the use of urgency rules in respect of an additional key decision. The Committee and Member Services Manager reminded the Cabinet of the Panel's 4 recommendations in relation to: the budget provision for the Citizens' Assembly funding wider related work; improved presentation of performance reports; monthly reporting of progress on major capital schemes being made available to elected members upon request; the use of compulsory purchase powers; and of the Cabinet's broad agreement to them.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management, Councillor Ed Turner noted that it might be difficult to secure some of the £200k Citizens' Assembly budget for the purposes of a Scrutiny review and that the Committee's base budget might prove to be a better route if a review was sought. The recommendations in relation to improved presentation and reporting, particularly in relation to capital schemes and slippage, were welcome. The recommendation in relation to revisiting the case for Compulsory Purchase Orders was already Council practice and would continue to be.

The Chair said the work being done to improve reporting and delivery of the capital programme was welcome, and the Cabinet would still want exception reporting in relation to slippage. The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders was an important power to have access to when needed.

## **Q4 Integrated Performance 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.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management, Councillor Ed Turner introduced the report. He was pleased to note a positive financial outturn, and some good performance outcomes. There were some challenges in relation to expectations of car park income. The savings from efficiencies approached a creditable £7m, over the last 4 years. It would be timely to refresh the 13 corporate performance indicators in

parallel with the development of a new Corporate Plan. Slippage from the original capital budget of £63m was not good but, as a percentage, better than previous years. This was largely attributable to an absence of loans to the housing company because of the government's decision to lift the HRA borrowing cap. There will be some significant changes as to how the capital programme is assembled in future. Schemes would be included in the capital programme at a later stage when there was a good degree of confidence that they could be delivered.

In discussion it was noted that it would be helpful if sources of funding for projects and schemes were noted, as recommended by the Finance Panel, not least because some funding was time limited and had to be returned if not spent. The steps being taken to improve oversight and delivery of the capital programme were most welcome. The need for Cabinet to approve relatively low value carry forwards (eg £750) was questioned. A reduction in car park revenues was largely predictable given changes in patterns of car use and ownership, and policies designed to deter driving into the City; forecasts for car park revenues should, accordingly, err on the side of caution. Local consultation and engagement had contributed to many of the schemes in relation to which there had been slippage; this involvement was important and should not be sacrificed for the sake of speedier completion. While it was important to note slippage it was also important to recognise the obverse and the amount which has been achieved.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the financial outturn and performance of the Council for the year 2018/19 and also the position on risks outstanding as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019;
2. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the General Fund as shown in paragraph 6 and on Appendix D;
3. **Agree** the additional transfer to the General Fund Repairs and Maintenance Reserve of £0.610 million detailed in paragraph 2 a;
4. **Agree** the carry forward requests in respect of the HRA as shown in paragraph 14 and on Appendix D;
5. **Agree** the additional transfer to the HRA Contributions to HRA Projects Reserve of £3.716 million detailed in paragraph 2(c);
6. **Recommend** to Council the inclusion of an additional £1.53m budget within the HRA in 2019-20 for completion of the Tower Block refurbishment scheme;
7. **Agree** to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to agree the terms of the Towers contract final account with Fortem based on the principles detailed in Appendix G; and
8. **Recommend** to Council the inclusion of £200k in 2019-20 in respect of costs to establish a citizens' assembly together with associated staffing costs for reporting and research.

### **43. Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan for Oxford leisure facilities (2019/20)**

The Head of Community Services had submitted a report to recommend that the Cabinet endorse Fusion Lifestyles 2019/20 Annual Service Plan for the continuous development, management and operation of leisure services in Oxford.

The Active Communities Manager introduced the report. He reminded the Cabinet of the challenging environment in which Council based leisure services now operated, competing with budget and other commercial providers as well as people choosing to exercise outdoors, sometimes with the support of technology. He was pleased to be able to highlight a number of very positive indicators such as an increase in the number of "active participation visits" by 25%; the positive outcome of an external audit to sense-check the quality of Fusion data; a 4% increase in active visits from target groups; all 5 of the Council's Leisure Centres continuing to be accredited to the UK quality award scheme (Quest) ; Barton and Leys Pools and Leisure Centres moving from a 'Good' to a 'Very Good ' rating; an 83 % customer satisfaction rating; active steps being taken to reduce the centres' carbon footprint; and seeking stronger links with the Council's corporate objectives.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Housing, Councillor Linda Smith, was pleased with these creditable indicators, particularly the 25% increase of visits and the steps to reduce the carbon footprint. She was also pleased to report on the success of the pilot crèche facility at the Ferry Leisure Centre, all of which provided a good foundation for the following year.

The ambition to reduce the carbon footprint was recognised as most welcome but it was suggested that the ambition on Fusion's part might be greater. Carbon reduction now featured as a regular item in the monthly management meetings and a number of Salix projects were being considered. The Council's Active Communities team was to be congratulated for all it was doing and being the first Council in the country to achieve the Quest UK quality assurance standard at the highest level of 'Outstanding'. The ambition to get more inactive people active was very welcome. New arrangements for the local GP infrastructure would include one Social Prescribing co-ordinator in each area and it was confirmed that Fusion would liaise with them as appropriate, adding them to their list of stakeholders. The Oxford Sports Park would be open, with full community access, by September.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the national and local context of the leisure market;
2. **Note** the overarching performance dashboard for 2018/19, as attached as Appendix 1; and
3. **Endorse** the Fusion Lifestyle Annual Service Plan as recommended by the Leisure Partnership Board and attached as Appendix 2.

#### 44. Barton Oxford LLP

The Regeneration and Major Projects Service Manager had submitted a report asking the Cabinet to note the progress made with the development of Barton Park by the Joint Venture and to note the update in relation to the purchase of the affordable housing.

The Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Councillor Mike Rowley reminded the Cabinet about the origins of the housing development in Barton and its ambition to provide 40% of affordable housing for social rent. 35 homes had now been let and occupied with a further 60 planned by the end of the year. Good progress was being made with the community facilities as part of the development and the new pavilion and sports facilities have been handed over to the Council. Great importance was attached to helping new residents to integrate with current Barton residents. The report sought to require quarterly reports on progress to the Council's Shareholder.

It was agreed that care and clarity were needed when using the expressions 'affordable housing' and 'social housing' which were frequently misunderstood.

It was noted that the project had not been without its challenges but it was good that the obstacles had been overcome to deliver a scheme that accorded with the Council's values. While there had been some delays, this was not unexpected given the state of the local building market and the associated skills/capacity shortage and the high standards demanded for this project.

The Chair sought reassurance that the rights and opportunities available to Council tenants would also be available to the new tenants at Barton given that they were, strictly, tenants of the Oxford City Housing (Investment) Limited. The Head of Housing said work was being done to develop a scheme which would align with the essential ingredients of the Council scheme. In the interim, there were discussions at the allocation stage to ensure that new residents would be able to cope at the outset. The Head of Housing also confirmed that service charges for communal areas and outside spaces were eligible housing costs for the purposes of Universal Credit.

Cabinet resolved to:

1. **Note** the progress made by Barton Oxford LLP in bringing forward development at Barton Park;
2. **Note** the current financial position in relation to potential payments from the Joint Venture;
3. **Note** the progress of the purchase of affordable housing on the site and the arrangements between the Council and its Housing Company (OCHIL) for ownership; and
4. **Require** quarterly reports to be made to the Council's Shareholder body (which will have an expanded remit to receive reports from companies and joint ventures which do not have shareholders, such as Barton Oxford LLP) on the overall progress of the Barton Park development, to include information on overall delivery of housing, with particular reference to social rented homes, and the financial performance of the project in general.

#### **45. Dates of Future Meetings**

Meetings are scheduled for the following dates:

- The meeting which had been scheduled for 07 August is **cancelled**
- 11 September
- 09 October
- 13 November
- 11 December

All meetings start at 6pm.

#### **46. Minutes**

The Cabinet resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 as a true and accurate record.

#### **47. Matters Exempt from Publication**

#### **48. Q4 Integrated Report Appendix G**

No matters were considered in confidential session.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.00 pm**

Chair ..... **Date: Wednesday 11 September 2019**