



SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 March 2022

| Agenda Item Number | Page | Title | Officer Responsible | Reason Not Included with Original Agenda |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 7. | (Pages 3 - 20) | Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups | Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer | Reports being reviewed and finalised. |

If you need any further information about the meeting please contact Emma Faulkner / Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221953 / 01295 221591

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15 March 2022

Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups

Report of Director of Law and Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

To present the final reports of the scrutiny working groups on Members' Education and Training, and Parish Engagement.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the report of the Education and Training Working Group (Appendix 1)
- 1.2 To note the report of the Parish Engagement Working Group (Appendix 2)
- 1.3 To recommend that the Lead Member for Finance and Governance note and endorse the recommendations of the Members' Education and Training working group
- 1.4 To agree that the work of the Parish Engagement Working Group should be continued in the 2022/2023 municipal year.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Two Scrutiny Working Groups were established at the end of 2021, one to look at Members' Education and Training and the other a Parish Engagement Working Group to look at the relationship between District and Parish councils.

3.0 Report Details

Members' Education and Training Working Group

- 3.1 The Members' Education and Training Working Group scoping document was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2021.

- 3.2 The group have had several virtual meetings to discuss the level of training given to Members as part of the induction programme immediately after election, and the ongoing programme of training for all Members.
- 3.3 The working group have made nine recommendations, which if approved will be implemented with effect from May 2022, starting with the induction programme following the District elections on 5 May 2022.

Parish Engagement Working Group

- 3.4 The Parish Engagement Working Group scoping document was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2021 and the first meeting of the group was in January 2022.
- 3.5 The group have identified a number of areas for further review regarding the working relationship between Cherwell District Council and the parishes, and would like to continue their work in 2022/2023.
- 3.6 New members will be invited to join the group in the new municipal year alongside members of the current group who wish to continue. The Working Group would agree its scope for the review in 2022/23 and submit to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for agreement.
- 3.7 The Chairman of the group would like to thank those members who have been involved and hope for their continued support during 2022/2023.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that the content of the reports are noted and that the Parish Engagement Working Group continue in 2022/2023.

5.0 Consultation

None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not to note the reports, or agree the continuation of the Parish Engagement Working Group in 2022/2023. This is rejected, as the Parish Engagement Working Group have identified areas for further investigation and would like to conclude their review.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to arising directly from this report. Officer support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Members' Education and Training Working Group, and continued support of the Parish Engagement Working Group, can be provided as part of business as usual support.

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director of Finance. 01295 221845,
michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

Chris Mace, Solicitor. 07702 917916, christopher.mace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Team Leader – Performance. 01295 221556,
celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.4 There are no equalities and inclusion implications arising directly from this report

Comments checked by:

Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy. 07881 311707,
emily.schofield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sustainability Implications

- 7.5 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report. Given the council's commitments to become net zero in its estate and operations by 2030 and to enable the district's transition to net zero, it is recommended that the topic is included in the councillors' induction training package.

Comments checked by:

Sandra Fisher-Martins, Climate Action Mobilisation Manager.
07584 174682, sandra.fisher-martins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

All

Lead Councillor

N/A

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 – Members' Education and Training Scrutiny Working Group Report and annexe
- Appendix 2 – Parish Engagement Working Group Report

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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Telephone: 01295 221534 Email: democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Members' Education and Training

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group Report

March 2022

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Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman)

Councillor Mike Bishop

Councillor Matt Hodgson

Councillor David Hughes

Councillor Perran Moon

Councillor Les Sibley

Councillor Doug Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Sandy Dallimore

Councillor Simon Holland

Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillor Adam Nell

Councillor Bryn Williams

Membership of the Working Group

Councillor Patrick Clarke

Councillor Matt Hodgson

Councillor Dorothy Walker

Councillor Sandy Dallimore

Councillor Adam Nell

Executive Summary and Recommendations

The Education and Training Working Group was established in September 2021, to review and evaluate the induction programme and general training offered to Members following the May 2021 elections.

The working group met on four occasions and have made nine recommendations regarding future induction programmes and ongoing training.

The working group believe that approval and subsequent implementation of the recommendations will help newly elected Members quickly get to grips with the workings of the council as an organisation and specifically their role as an elected representative, whilst also building a general knowledge bank of information and resources for returning and longer serving Members.

The recommendations of the group are:

1. That the Member Education and Training Working Group (“the working group”) be a standing working group that reviews induction/training on an ongoing basis. The group will be formed of existing and newly elected members, with newly elected members automatically receiving an invite to join the group. Maximum membership of the group to be capped at 7, reviewed annually with existing Members (e.g. 2021 new Members) to have the option to continue with the group or stand down.
2. The current working group to continue to operate to support the ongoing Member training programme.
3. A library of FAQ/crib sheet/information documents be produced by relevant officers, in consultation with the working group, as a brief introduction and overview to the key aspects of being an elected Member, including but not limited to:
 - Attending a full Council meeting
 - IT matters, including the mod.gov app
 - Dealing with residents
 - Dealing with officers
 - Departments available to shadow
 - Dealing with planning queries
 - Dealing with frequent resident queries i.e. hedge/footpath/pothole queries
 - Dealing with more complicated resident issues i.e. highways
 - Safeguarding
4. A library of short guidance documents to be produced by relevant officers, in consultation with the working group, covering topics including but not limited to:
 - Dealing with fellow elected Members
 - Working with town and parish councils

- The role of a Committee member
 - The role of the Committee Chair(man)
 - The role of an Executive Member
 - The role of the Chair(man) of the Council
 - The role of the Leader of the Council
 - The role of the council's statutory officers: S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Paid Service
5. Where practicable, the trialling of short committee specific training sessions held immediately before/after scheduled Committee meetings, similar to the training programme in place for Planning Committee. Sessions to be 15/20 minutes in length and based on one of three areas:
 - Relevant – linked to an item on the agenda
 - Reminder – a refresh of information previously provided
 - Requested – by Members in advance of considering a particular item
 6. Production of information for each service/department, including details of the areas covered by the service/department, the preferred method of contact, structure and managers/teams.
 7. Development and promotion of the Members' portal.
 8. Delegation to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the working group, to agree an induction and training programme for the May – July 2022 period following the May 2022 elections.
 9. Delegation to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the working group, to agree the welcome pack for councillors elected at the May 2022 elections.

The working group suggests that each political group give consideration to the information and guidance provided to their respective election candidates, to help them prepare for the role of an elected Member. The working group acknowledge that they and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have no remit over the working of individual political groups, and the decision of whether or not this suggestion is taken up would be down to each individual group.

Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Chairman of Education and Training Working Group

Introduction

At the September 2021 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Sandy Dallimore proposed that a working group be established to review education and training for Members, to gather views and feedback on the induction process and ongoing member training, to identify any areas of development or improvement.

The Committee supported the suggested topic and agreed to establish a working group, with a scoping document (Appendix 1) being considered and agreed by the Committee in October 2021.

Objectives and context of the review

The induction programme for newly elected Members has expanded since 2018, and in May 2021 was combined with the County Council induction programme due to both authorities holding elections in the same year, as a one off as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Member training has recently been given a better focus, with Members receiving several quality training sessions at the beginning of the 2021/22 municipal year.

Reviewing the training and looking at improvements and focus is on benefit to all, as is looking at the ongoing needs of member training. Looking at and understanding the knowledge needs of Members is key to the future deliverable training and council operations.

There is an obvious need for Members to understand their role and scope within the organisation and the wider community. This leads to a better and more efficient working environment, and Members are able to fulfil all aspects of their role.

Conclusion

The recommendations of this review are aimed at improving the annual induction and ongoing training available for Members, and giving an understanding of the information and knowledge needed by all Members to allow them to fulfil their role effectively and efficiently.

The working group acknowledge that each Member will have different reasons for standing for election and the amount of time they can commit to carrying out the role. The recommendations relating to guidance documents are designed to cover the basics of the role of member, to act as an initial knowledge base to be built on during the term(s) of office served.

The working group have also made a suggestion relating to the role of the political groups in preparing their candidates for a possible role as an elected Member. All members of the working group are from different political groups and have different experiences regarding their selection and subsequent election, but all agreed that it would be useful for each group to consider the information they give to their candidates during the election process, and ongoing support to those who are elected.

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Member Education and Training Review Group Scoping Document

This scoping template is designed to assist councillors and officers in establishing the focus of a scrutiny review group. It emphasises the need for scrutiny review groups to have a clear purpose, rationale and focus for their work, and to make the best use of the resources available within a given time frame.

This document will act as a reference guide throughout the review process to ensure the does not deviate from its intended purpose.

| | |
|---|--|
| Review Group Overview & Scrutiny Committee Member Lead | Cllr Sandy Dallimore |
| Membership | Five new members elected in May 2021 – Councillors Patrick Clarke, Sandy Dallimore, Matt Hodgson, Adam Nell and Dorothy Walker - and a further two longer serving Members. |
| Officer Support | Emma Faulkner - Democratic and Elections Officer Service Managers involved in 2021 training. |
| Background | The induction programme for newly elected Members has expanded since 2018, and in May 2021 was combined with the County Council induction programme due to both authorities holding elections in the same year as a one off as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Member training has recently been given a better focus with Members receiving several quality training sessions at the beginning of the 2021/22 municipal year. Reviewing this training and looking at improvements and focus is of benefit as is looking at the ongoing needs of member training. Looking at and understanding the needs and knowledge needs of Members is key to the future deliverable training and council operations. |
| Rationale | There is an obvious need for Members to understand their role and scope within the organisation and within their community. This leads to a better and more efficient working environment and Members able to fulfil all aspects of their councillor role. |
| Indicators of Success | Recommendations as to how to improve the annual education of members and ongoing training for members. An understanding of the information and knowledge needed by members so as they can fulfil all aspects of their role effectively and more efficiently. |
| Out of Scope | Officer education and training. Political grouping operations and training. |

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|---|---|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Method / Approach | Identify the knowledge needs of members to understand their role and scope within the organisation. Review the training given looking at the positives and the negatives. With recommendations to improve. Identify areas where additional knowledge and training is needed. Look at the ongoing needs to keep the information fresh and relevant. | | |
| Guest speakers / Witnesses / Experts | Longer serving Members if not appointed to the working group Teresa Reed, Learning and Development Manager Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources and Director of HR to provide support and advice as required Service Managers involved in 2021 training. | | |
| Evidence required and documents | Course material, slides and presentations notes for training given. Post-training evaluation questionnaire Desk top research and direct contact to obtain information from other authorities and national organisations i.e. Local Government Association. | | |
| Site Visits | None | | |
| Risks | Availability of councillors and officers to progress the work. | | |
| Projected Start Date | 19 October 2021 | Draft Report Deadline | 7 March 2022 |
| Meeting Frequency | As required | Projected Completion Date | 15 March 2022 |

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee | Date: 19 October 2021 |
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Draft Outline of meetings

(Review Group members are reminded that they will be required to undertake evidence gathering and work outside of the meetings detailed below to ensure that the Review completion date is met)

| |
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| Meeting 1 – |
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| Meeting 2 – |
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| Meeting 3 – |
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| Meeting 4 – |
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| Meeting 5 – |
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Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Parish Engagement
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report
March 2022

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- 6.0 Context and Background Information

1.0 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman) | Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman) |
| Councillor Mike Bishop | Councillor Sandy Dallimore |
| Councillor Matt Hodgson | Councillor Simon Holland |
| Councillor David Hughes | Councillor Ian Middleton |
| Councillor Perran Moon | Councillor Adam Nell |
| Councillor Les Sibley | Councillor Bryn Williams |

Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Parish Working Group

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Councillor Sandy Dallimore | Councillor David Hughes |
| Councillor Bryn Williams | Councillor Tim Hallchurch |
| Councillor Kieron Mallon | |

Councillor Andrew McHugh had a standing invite to this review as Executive Lead Member whose portfolio the review scope sits within.

2.0 Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank Kevin Larner, Healthy Communities Manager for his contribution to the Parish Working Group

3.0 Executive Summary & Recommendation

- 3.1 The Parish Working Group (PWG) review looked at the working relationship between Cherwell District Council (CDC) and Parishes within the District. It started to map the various interactions, highlighting areas that work well and where there may be areas for improvement in the relationship and working practices.
- 3.2 The first meeting of the Working Group was on 7 January 2022 with a subsequent meeting on 26 January 2022. Due to time constraints with the review starting late in the municipal year, whilst mapping and preliminary work has been undertaken, it has not been possible to undertake a deep dive review of areas of potential improvement. As a result, the PWG is recommending that the review continue in 2022/23 to enable the areas it has identified for further work, as set out below, to be completed.
- 3.3 The PWG has liaised with a few parishes and a notification was put in the Parish Bulletin that the review was taking place. From information received so far, it has been ascertained that, in general, there is a good working relationship between District and Parish. The PWG consider that a full survey of Parishes within Cherwell should be undertaken as this would identify more accurately the feelings of Parish Councils and highlight areas for possible research.
- 3.4 When discussing areas for review, the PWG agreed that larger towns and parishes had a different relationship with the District Council than smaller parishes. It was agreed that three meetings should be arranged with the different sized parishes. One being for small parishes, one for medium sized and a third for the three large parishes of Banbury, Bicester, and Kidlington to discuss their interactions with the District Council.
- 3.5 It was also agreed that it would be beneficial for a two Parish Clerks to be extended a standing invitation to the Working Group to ensure that ideas and views from the parish perspective were represented.
- 3.6 One area brought to the attention of the Working Group was that better communication was required between council departments and district councillors, in particular to support district councillors in their interaction with parishes in their ward, including attending parish council meetings. It was agreed that a mapping exercise of all current interactions between the district and parishes be undertaken covering both statutory/formalised and more general.
- 3.7 Our recommendations:**
- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to continue the work of the Parish Working Group in 2022/2023.

- (2) The 2022/2023 Working Group should submit a scoping document (Terms of Reference) to the May/July Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting which should incorporate the areas set out below with a view to extending the good working relationship between District and Parish Councils and seeking to find solutions where any discord is found.
- Further clarity and work on Statutory roles, responsibilities and interactions
 - Feedback to be invited from Parishes via the Parish Bulletin
 - A Consultation with Customer Services re signposting should take place
 - Provision of information to ward councillors regarding parishes in their ward
 - Survey of Parishes to ascertain parish views on their interactions with the district
 - Organise three meetings with Parishes (large, medium and small)
 - Investigate legal interactions and IT Interaction/integration
 - Invite 2 parish clerks to join the group

Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Parish Working Group.

4.0 Introduction

- 4.1 At the November meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a scoping document (appendix 1) for a review of the relationship between Cherwell District Council and the Parishes within the district was agreed by the Committee.
- 4.2 Councillor Dallimore had brought the topic to the attention of the Committee and along with Councillors Hughes and Williams formed a working group. An invitation was sent to all non-executive members of the council to join the working group and Councillors Mallon and Hallchurch came forward and agreed to join.
- 4.3 Kevin Larner, Healthy Communities Manager had also been contacted by Councillor Dallimore and also agreed to be involved in the work of the group.
- 4.4 Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing was also given a standing invitation to meetings of the group.

5.0 Objectives of the review

- 5.1 CDC and parishes in the district interact in many ways. The review would look at the working relationship between CDC and parishes in the district. It would map the various interactions highlighting areas that worked well and where there may be areas for improvement in the relationship and working practices.

- 5.2 The Working Group also wanted to establish the perspective of the parish councils and sought to consult all of the parishes within the district. Consultation would take place firstly by way of survey and also through meetings with groups of large, medium, and small parishes. The Working Group also agreed that two parish clerks would be encouraged to join the work of the group.
- 5.3 The group agreed that their work should continue in the 2022/23 municipal year with some work ongoing and other work being rolled into next year. New members would be invited when considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.0 Context and Background Information

- 6.1 Within Oxfordshire there is a three tier system of local government: county; districts and city council; and town/parish councils.
- 6.2 Each tier/local authority is responsible for delivering different services:

County – Responsible for services across the whole of the County including:

- Education
- Transport
- Planning
- Fire and public safety
- Social care
- Libraries
- Waste management
- Trading standards

District – Responsible for services across the whole District including:

- Rubbish collection
- Recycling
- Council Tax collections
- Housing
- Planning applications
- Elections

Parish – Responsible for local issues including:

- Allotments
- Public clocks
- Bus shelters
- Community centres

- Play areas and play equipment
- Grants to help local organisations
- Consultation on neighbourhood planning

They also have the power to issue fixed penalty fines for

- Litter
- Graffiti
- Fly posting
- Dog offences

6.4 The District Council provides support to Parish Councils but support is also available through the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) which provide training for clerks and a high level of support. It is highly recommended that all clerks join at least one of these associations.

6.5 The district council has a statutory responsibility to monitor vacancies and run elections for parish councils. The district council is responsible for carrying out community governance reviews.

6.6 The Monitoring Officer is responsible for providing support in upholding the Code of Conduct of Councillors, and maintains a record of all parish councillors Register of Interests, which are published on the district council website.

6.7 CDC Planning department consults with parish councils.

6.8 The Wellbeing Team run Parish Liaison Meetings and send regular communications to each parish clerk.