

Committee: Executive
Date: Monday 3 November 2014
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman)	Councillor George Reynolds (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Ken Atack	Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor John Donaldson	Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor Tony Ilott	Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor D M Pickford	Councillor Nicholas Turner

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest that they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

The Chairman to report on any requests to submit petitions or to address the meeting.

4. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 12)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2014.

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

7. **Local Management Organisations** (Pages 13 - 28)

6.35pm

Report of Head of Environmental Services

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is for the Council to determine a clear policy regarding developers setting up local management organisations which own and maintain public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas on new developments, which then levy a service charge on residents for the maintenance & upkeep of such areas.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the policy that the Council's strong preference is that public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas on new developments continue to be adopted by the Council in conjunction with the relevant town or parish council with a commuted sum based on accurate costs which reflects the Council's tendered rates for maintenance.
- 1.2 To approve the policy that the Council will only consider a local management organisation proposed by any developer, if all the conditions set out in Appendix 1 are met.

8. **Pre-Application Fees for Licensing Act 2003 and Other Licensing Applications** (Pages 29 - 36)

6.45pm

Report of Director of Community and Environment and Interim Shared Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager

Purpose of report

To consider the introduction of fees for providing pre-application advice in relation to licence applications subject to consultation.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the introduction of a discretionary pre-application advice service and charges for licence applications.

- 1.2 To agree to the introduction of pre-application charging from 1 April 2015.
- 1.3 To approve the future extension of the scheme to other types of licence applications should this be successful.

9. Improvements to Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres

(Pages 37 - 44)

6.55pm

Report of Director of Community and Environment

Purpose of Report

To consider a range of service improvements to Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres and facility improvements to Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To support in principle the facility improvements proposed for Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre subject to an acceptable outcome of further contractual negotiations;
- 1.2 To note and welcome the operational improvements put in place at Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres; and
- 1.3 To receive a further report on the scope for facility and customer improvements at Bicester Leisure Centre.

10. North West Bicester Update (Pages 45 - 68)

7.05pm

Report of Commercial Director (Bicester)

Purpose of report

To advise Members of the expenditure of the Eco Town grant received in 2010 and projects delivered in Bicester, to enable consideration of the proposals for future expenditure and to authorise a change to the delegation for authorisation of expenditure.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 Note the expenditure that has taken place and the committed funding from the Eco Town grant
- 1.2 Note the progress that has been made in delivering projects to meet the aims of the One Shared Vision for the Town

- 1.3 Agree the delegation of future expenditure to the Commercial Director (Bicester) in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

11. North West Bicester Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (Pages 69 - 76) 7.15pm

** Please note the appendix to this report will follow as it is currently being finalised **

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

Purpose of report

- a) To update the Executive on the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support proposals for an Eco-town development of up to 6,000 homes on land at North West (NW) Bicester.
- b) To endorse the Draft document and seek approval for public consultation on the Draft NW Bicester SPD.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the Draft SPD for public consultation (a copy to be placed in the Members Room)
- 1.2 To authorise officers, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any further non-substantive changes to the Draft SPD prior to public consultation

12. Housing Strategy Priority 5: Homeless Prevention Action Plan Update (Pages 77 - 106) 7.25pm

Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing

Purpose of report

To update the Executive on the progress of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013-2015.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the update of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan which takes account of learning from the current year's plan, and reflecting Cherwell District Council's application for the Gold standard accreditation for homelessness services.
- 1.2 To approve for the 2015/16 financial year, the ring-fencing of the homeless grant monies provided as part of the Council's general financial settlement awarded by central Government.

13. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following report contains exempt information as defined in the following paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

1 – Information relating to any individual

2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

4 – Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

Members are reminded that whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the meeting to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, members should balance the interests of individuals or the Council itself in having access to the information. In considering their discretion members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

No representations have been received from the public requesting that this item be considered in public.

Should Members decide not to make a decision in public, they are recommended to pass the following recommendation:

“That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

14. **Commissioning of Services for Banbury CAB** (Pages 107 - 116) **7.35pm**

Exempt Joint Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing and Interim Shared Community Partnerships and Recreation Manager

15. **Banbury Town Council Open Spaces** (Pages 117 - 120) **7.45pm**

Exempt Report of Head of Environmental Services

(Meeting scheduled to close at 7.55pm)

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01295 221589 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

This agenda constitutes the 5 day notice required by Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 in terms of the intention to consider an item of business in private.

Evacuation Procedure

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Natasha Clark, Democratic and Elections
natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 221589

Sue Smith
Chief Executive

Published on Friday 24 October 2014

Agenda Item 5

Cherwell District Council

Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 6 October 2014 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council
Councillor G A Reynolds (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ken Atack, Lead Member for Financial Management
Councillor Norman Bolster, Lead Member for Estates and the Economy
Councillor John Donaldson, Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures
Councillor Michael Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor Kieron Mallon, Lead Member for Performance and Customers
Councillor D M Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Also Present: Councillor Barry Richards (representing Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group)
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Joint Working and Communications

Officers: Sue Smith, Chief Executive
Karen Curtin, Commercial Director (Bicester)
Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment
Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation
Paul Sutton, Head of Finance and Procurement
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

50 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

51 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

52 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

53 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

1. Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, members of the public were permitted to film, broadcast and report on the meeting, subject to the efficient running of the meeting not being affected.

55 **Customer Satisfaction Survey Results 2014**

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which updated the Executive on the results of the annual satisfaction survey and identified any areas to be reflected in future business and/or performance plans.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Performance and Communications reported that overall satisfaction levels now peaked at its highest recorded level of 77%. This represented a 17% increase since the council began undertaking Customer Satisfaction Surveys in 2006.

Resolved

- (1) That the results of the customer survey, with particular reference to improvement in areas that were identified as priorities as an outcome of the survey undertaken in 2014, be noted.
- (2) That the following priorities and areas of focus for future action be agreed:

Customer Priorities

The 'top 6' key services which are perceived to be a priority by local residents in greater magnitude than other council services.

- 1) Household waste collection
- 2) Household recycling collection and food/ garden waste collection service
- 3) Dealing with anti-social behaviour/ nuisance
- 4) Providing affordable housing
- 5) Street cleaning and tackling environmental crime
- 6) Supporting the creation of jobs in the local area

Suggested Areas for Future Focus

- a) Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour: The positive increase in satisfaction with the Council's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour and nuisance recorded last year has been maintained in 2014, with 56% satisfied. This is notably higher than the lowest recorded level of 30% in 2007. However ranked third in the above perceived priorities.
- b) Sports and Leisure facilities: Overall satisfaction with leisure activities provided by Cherwell District Council remains in line with previous years, with 56% satisfied with their provision and 11% dissatisfied. The leisure activities provided by the Council are the lead driver of overall satisfaction and as such, it is important to maintain satisfaction levels in this area. There are also areas of dissatisfaction to be addressed within Leisure Facilities. This year, ratings have remained stable; 68% are satisfied with the leisure facilities provided by the Council overall vs. 69% in 2013.
- c) Continuing to focus on Street Cleansing and dealing with environmental crime' one of the 'top 6' priorities street cleansing is a service that is experienced by all residents and plays an important part in terms of quality of life and enjoyment living within a local area. It is a service upon which the Council is judged and valued by many residents and as such should remain an on-going area of focus.

Reasons

This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2014 customer satisfaction survey. It highlights a general trend of improvement across council services as well as areas where continued focus is required.

The report also highlights customer priorities and these will be used to help inform budget setting, the development of the Council's Business Plan, Performance Pledges and 5 year Strategy.

As well as these high level findings the survey includes a wealth of service specific detail that will be used by service managers to help underpin service planning.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To accept the recommendations as outlined in part one of this report.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations and request additional work or alternative priorities arising from the survey findings.

The Head of Transformation submitted a report which presented the Council's performance for the period 01 April 2014 – 30 June 2014 as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

Resolved

- (1) That the following achievements be noted:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Northwest Bicester: Delivery of the Masterplan to the agreed timescales is reporting as Green. The next stage in delivering the Masterplan will be the submission and processing of planning applications for the development. It is anticipated that applications will be received for the majority of the site before the end of the year and determined during 2015.
- Graven Hill: deliver the Council's vision for this strategic site is reporting as Green. Huge progress has been made on concluding the S.106 issues and completion of the land transaction expected in early August 2014. The business case for creation of a 'group structure' of Companies Limited by Shares (Holding Company and Development Company) has been approved by the Executive (16th July) with companies incorporated and inaugural meeting of both companies held on the 7 July 2014. Six key work themes have been identified as necessary to deliver the council's vision for Graven Hill: consolidation of land assembly & boundary issues; On-going engagement with Ministry of Defence (MOD); Ecology and ground investigation; Design and planning; Delivery and procurement; Sales, marketing and investment.

Safe, Green and Clean

- Tonnage of waste sent to landfill is reporting as Green. On track and with a number of actions planned during 2014/15 to reduce amount sent to landfill.
- Number of fly tips enforcement actions (compared with same period 2013/14) is reporting as Green*. During the quarter 50 warning letters, 13 Section 71 Notices and 1 formal caution were issued. Warning letters work very well in circumstances when it would not be suitable to take a more formal approach.
- Percentage of nuisance cases responded to within prescribed period of 48 hours is reporting as Green. Case load increased from 183 in Quarter 4 2013/14 to 452 in Quarter 1 but despite the increasing case load response times have been maintained.

Thriving Communities

- Average time taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit in days is reporting as Green*. Changes continue to be processed well within target and this is expected to continue through the year.
- No of households in temporary accommodation is reporting as Green*. The number of households in temporary accommodation remains within the target set. The Housing Team continue their service delivery with an on-going focus on homelessness prevention. This helps to keep the number of those progressing to make a statutory homeless application low, which in turn maintains the current performance for provision of temporary accommodation.
- Maintain a minimum usage level of visits to leisure facilities (Total of visits to District Leisure Centres and WGLC, NOA and Cooper) is

reporting as Green*. Throughputs are up 18,913 on June 2013 with:
- Spiceball Leisure Centre up 1,907, Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre up by 5,144 and Bicester Leisure Centre up by 11,862 - the increase is attributed to the play and teach pool figures.

- Processing of major applications with 13 weeks is reporting as Green*. The measures introduced last year continue to show improvements. A figure of nearly 91% has been achieved this quarter and this continues to represent sustained and significant progress compared to historic performance.

Sound Budgets and Customer focussed council

- Maximise income through designing services that can attract a market is reporting as Green. Some market work has been undertaken to ascertain the capacity to trade. Until the new operating model is in effect trading potential is limited.
- Increase our use of social media to communicate with residents and local businesses is reporting as Green. Facebook and Twitter continue to be used extensively at CDC, with residents engaging with the communications team on a daily basis on a variety of subjects. The range of messages that are promoted through social media also continues to grow as departments become more aware of what can be achieved on a limited or no budget.
- Deliver an annual balanced budget setting out the five year financial plan (Medium Term Financial Strategy) is reporting as Green. Currently developing updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with actions to address future anticipated pressures

- (2) That the following performance related matters be identified for review or consideration in future reports:

Cherwell: A District of Opportunity

- Bicester town centre regeneration including the Council Community Building is reporting as Amber. Planning permission obtained for the Community Building. We are currently reviewing costs ahead of awarding construction contract. Completion is aimed for Q4 2015.
- Agree next steps for the development options for Kidlington against agreed timescales and milestones is reporting as Amber. Masterplans follow on from Local Plans. These are currently delayed while the Local Plan issues are resolved.

Safe, Clean and Green

- Number of fly tips recorded (compared with same period 2013/14) is reporting as Red. There is no obvious trend showing so far regarding the number of fly tips. It has however been noted that there has been a small increase in the number of white goods being left out on the verge, for the scrap metal collectors. Investigations cannot always identify the resident that has left them out.
- Percentage of nuisance cases resolved within 8 weeks is reporting as Amber. Of the 452 cases received in Quarter 1, 425 were resolved. Due to the high number of cases resolution, performance has continued to be good although slight slippage is inevitable. A greater level of activity tends to occur in Quarters 1 and 2 as it is

seasonal. There has been an increase in the number of complaints about barking dogs and the figures here include those from Operation Jazz which is now in its third year. This operation, running 2 nights per week, has proved very successful and consequently officers are dealing with more calls.

Thriving Communities

- Processing of minor applications with 8 weeks is reporting as Red. The impact of greater overall application numbers together with a higher proportion of majors has affected the processing of minor applications. The emphasis on majors has resulted in a backlog of registration which has in turn had an impact on overall performance, 55% compared with a target of 65%. Short term measures have been put in place (allocation of additional staff and overtime working) to reduce the registration backlog. In addition the registration team has been relocated and the whole process is being modelled using "PlanSim" software which will allow the impact of changes to the process to be understood before introduction. These changes are expected to see an improvement in performance by the end of the next quarter.
- Percentage of planning appeals allowed against refusal decision (%) is reporting as Red. The performance measure is volatile as it is based on low overall appeal numbers and therefore each decision can impact on the performance measure for appeals. There is no evidence of poor performance, though this continues to be carefully monitored.

Sound Budgets and Customer Focussed Council

- Increase organisational capacity and efficiency and Improve workforce planning and development is reporting as Amber. Action Plan is being developed as part of the HR & OD Strategy work as part of 3 way working. During 2014/15 the focus will be on planning for this with implementation expected in 2015/16.
- Deliver significant reduction in phone contact by implementing additional online services is reporting as Amber. Suspension of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Customer Portal project pending 3 way working reviews will impact on the opportunity to achieve "significant" reductions. However work continues in the interim to use current software provision to implement online services where viable.

Reasons

This report presents the Council's performance against its corporate scorecard for the first quarter of 2014/15. It includes an overview of successes, areas for improvement and emerging issues to be considered.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items and/or add to the work programme for review and/or refer to Overview and Scrutiny.

57

Quarter 1 2014/15 Financial Performance

The Director of Resources submitted a report which summarised the Council's Revenue and Capital position, treasury management and procurement performance for the first three months of the financial year 2014-15 and projections for the full 2014-15 period.

The report also presented information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy during 2014-15 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice

Resolved

- (1) That the projected revenue and capital position at June 2014 be noted.
- (2) That the quarter 1 (Q1) performance against the 2014-15 investment strategy and the financial returns from the funds be noted.
- (3) That the contents and the progress against the Corporate Procurement Action Plan be noted.

Reasons

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which this Council has adopted requires a regular budget monitoring report. This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2014-15 Financial Targets for Revenue, Capital and Procurement Monitoring.

Alternative Options

Option 1: As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

58

Budget Strategy 2015 to 2016 and Beyond

The Director of Resources submitted a report which informed the Executive of the service and financial planning process for 2015-16, to approve the 2015-16 budget strategy and to agree the budget guidelines for issue to service managers to enable the production of the 2015-16 budget.

The report also presented the most recent Medium Term Revenue Plan (MTRP), sought consideration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015-16 and agreement of the Council's approach to Business Rates pooling for 2015-16.

Resolved

- (1) That the updated Medium Term Revenue Plan for the Council's revenue budget for 2015-16 to 2019-20 be noted.

- (2) That the overall 2015-16 budget strategy and service and financial planning process be endorsed.
- (3) That the proposed budget guidelines and timetable for 2015-16 (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be agreed.
- (4) That agreement be given to consult on the retention of the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2015-16 and authority be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to make the final decision on the scheme.
- (5) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Financial Management, to make the final decision on Business Rates pooling for 2015-16.

Reasons

The Council needs to set guidelines and a timetable for the preparation of draft estimates for 2015-16. These guidelines should support the objectives contained in the Business Plan, Service Plans and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To disagree with the recommendations set out above. This is rejected as it will unnecessarily delay the formulation of the detailed budget for 2015-16.

59

Outcome of the Review of Flooding at Hanover Gardens, Bicester

The Commercial Director (Bicester) submitted a report to update on the outcome of the investigation into the root cause of the flooding at Hanover Gardens on 24 December 2013.

Executive thanked both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council Officers for their hard work in assisting the residents and management team at Hanover Gardens and, in particular, the efforts to ensure affected residents were rehoused as quickly as possible. Executive also extended their thanks to the companies and hotels that had supported the residents.

Resolved

- (1) That the proactive response provided by Cherwell District Council to assist the residents and management team at Hanover Gardens be noted.
- (2) That the outcome and recommended actions from the Environment Agency Report (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.

- (3) That it be noted the Council has agreed to run an information campaign in October 2014 throughout the District on the importance of preventing debris from entering all rivers in the district.
- (4) That it be noted that a partnership meeting with all interested parties continues to monitor any outstanding actions and the Council has representation through the Head of Housing and Regeneration.

Reasons

The immediate response provided by the Housing Team to the situation at Hanover Gardens on 24 December 2013 and for the period between Christmas and New Year was in line with Council policy and was at the high standard we expect. The team have been formally thanked for all the work that they undertook during the festive period.

As stated in Appendix 1 it is not possible to eliminate the risk of flooding from rivers but the recommendations identified in the report are positive steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Bure in the future particularly in relation to preventing debris from entering the River Bure which was the root cause of the flood at Hanover Gardens.

The Council as a member of the partnership who worked together to review this issue will ensure that it fulfils its action by the agreed date and ensure that all residents of the District are aware of how important it is to prevent debris from entering the River Bure. An information campaign beginning with a press release concerning this report will run throughout October 2014.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To approve the recommendation

Option 2: To reject the recommendation

60

Hanwell Fields Community Centre Solar Panels

The Director of Community and Environment submitted a report which recommended the installation of solar PV panels on the roof of Hanwell Fields Community Centre, Rotary Way, Banbury and the use of a capital fund to finance the solar PV installation.

Resolved

- (1) That the installation of solar PV panels on the roof of Hanwell Fields Community Centre, Rotary Way, Banbury be approved.
- (2) That the use of capital (ref:50211" Hanwell Fields Community Development Fund") to finance the solar PV installation be approved.
- (3) That the division of resultant income as follows be approved: CDC to retain one third of the feed in tariff income to accumulate a reserve for

maintenance and the eventual replacement of the inverter which has a design life of 10 years (approximately half that of the panels) and to cover increased insurance costs of the building. The remaining two thirds of the feed in tariff income would be passed on to the Community Association.

Reasons

The proposed project will assist the HFCA to remain solvent and continue to provide and facilitate valued community services. For this reason it is legitimate use of a fund intended to promote community development.

At minimal cost to the District Council, this project will serve as a test case for provision of solar panels in CDC's other community centres.

The proposed project will reduce the carbon footprint of this CDC owned facility.

Alternative Options

Option 1: To amend the proposed split of income from the Feed in Tariff
Reason: Less than one third of the income is less likely to cover the council's maintenance costs.

Option 2: To reject the recommendations

61 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

62 **South West Bicester Sports Village**

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report relating to the South West Bicester Sports Village.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (2) As set out in the exempt minutes.
- (3) As set out in the exempt minutes.

- (4) That a further update report on the project following the receipt and evaluation of construction contract tenders be submitted to Executive.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative Options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

63

Woodgreen Leisure Centre

The Director of Community and Environment submitted an exempt report relating to Woodgreen Leisure Centre.

Resolved

- (1) As set out in the exempt decision notice.
- (2) As set out in the exempt decision notice.
- (3) That a further report on the outcome of the tendering process be submitted to Executive.

Reasons

As set out in the exempt minutes.

Alternative Options

As set out in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 November 2014

Local Management Organisations

Report of Head of Environmental Services

This report is public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is for the Council to determine a clear policy regarding developers setting up local management organisations which own and maintain public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas on new developments, which then levy a service charge on residents for the maintenance & upkeep of such areas.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the policy that the Council's strong preference is that public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas on new developments continue to be adopted by the Council in conjunction with the relevant town or parish council with a commuted sum based on accurate costs which reflects the Council's tendered rates for maintenance.
- 1.2 To approve the policy that the Council will only consider a local management organisation proposed by any developer, if all the conditions set out in Appendix 1 are met.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Historically public open spaces, outdoor sports pitches and play areas in Cherwell built by developers on new housing developments have been adopted by Cherwell District Council along with a commuted sum to fund the on-going maintenance for fifteen years. Most of these facilities are transferred to Banbury Town Council, Bicester Town Council or the relevant Parish Council along with the commuted sum.
- 2.2 In the most recent proposed developments, the developer has often expressed a desire to set up a local management organisation (LMO), to carry out many of the services currently delivered by the Council and then impose a management service charge on residents. This will be an annual charge in addition to their Council Tax.

- 2.3 These proposals have often taken up extensive amounts of officer time but so far the traditional approach with a commuted sum has largely been followed.
- 2.4 LMOs can result in a number of issues for residents. Residents have to pay a service charge to cover services. These charges often seem to rise rapidly beyond inflation. Often these rises come from poor planning for future on-going costs such as replacement of play equipment.
- 2.5 It is even possible for a gated community ethos to develop as residents who are paying a service charge believe that residents nearby who are not paying a service charge should not be using these paid for facilities.
- 2.6 The Town & Parish Councils which the Council provide current services for and which are usually responsible for such sites after adoption are opposed to any LMO arrangements.
- 2.7 Local accountability can be eroded as elected members have no control of local facilities and services provided by a LMO.
- 2.8 Another concern is the standard of maintenance that is delivered. There is the potential for different standards to be delivered in different developments and that that there can be no certainty that the areas of green infrastructure will be improved in line with any district wide Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 2.9 Developers have yet to be able to demonstrate that they can maintain areas cheaper to the same standard as in most cases they do not have the same economies of scale that the Council can achieve through a District wide approach. The Council has extensive information on grounds maintenance rates from its Landscape Management contract and it is these rates which are used to calculate the necessary commuted sum for developers.
- 2.10 Officers are currently involved in protracted discussions/negotiations with developers, having to explain the Council's position on LMOs, relying on the Council's previous successful track record of the management and maintenance of public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas. Therefore, adopting a clear policy on such arrangements will be beneficial in future negotiations with developers.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The majority of open spaces and play areas are maintained by Town or Parish Councils. Customer satisfaction with how these spaces are maintained is high with the latest 2014 customer satisfaction survey showing 77% satisfied.
- 3.2 On new developments, the developer is usually required to provide a commuted sum covering the maintenance of open spaces for 15 years. The sum is calculated from rates the Council achieved through competitive tendering the Landscape Maintenance Contract. These rates are regularly benchmarked and have always been shown to be extremely competitive.
- 3.3 However, developers can perceive that the commuted sums when calculated over 15 years to be large especially when required to be paid in full and therefore if this

payment can be avoided through a LMOs, it directly improves the profitability of their developments. They can achieve this by setting up a LMOs which will maintain open spaces and play areas. They are funded by levying a charge on residents on the development, this is in addition to the normal Council Tax charges.

- 3.4 For the Council, these arrangements lead to loss of local accountability as local members then have no control over facilities on these developments. The standards on such developments can be variable and may not fit into any district wide Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- 3.5 For residents, such arrangements inflict a service charge onto residents in addition to Council tax. These service charges can often rise significantly above inflation and residents can feel they have no influence over them. Residents can also feel that since they are paying such service charges then nearby residents not from their development should not be using facilities such as play areas since they are not paying for them. Sometimes, residents living in developments where a management company is set up feel they are paying twice – their Council Tax goes towards maintaining public open space, outdoor sports pitches and play areas and then they will have to pay a service charge as well.
- 3.6 Within new developments there are elements of affordable housing, implementing service charges which seem to rise above inflation could make affordable housing more challenging. Although provisions within a Section 106 Agreement can be used to stop any service charge making the affordable housing unaffordable, this may result in the service charge for private homeowners going up or the cost being passed on to the Registered Providers.
- 3.7 For developers these arrangements may seem attractive as they can avoid a commuted sum and the future costs of maintaining open spaces can be passed onto residents via LMOs. Developers regularly challenge the commuted sums requested since these can be significant sums of money. These challenges can be addressed through the detailed evidence base of operations and the rates the Council incurs in the current competitive landscape maintenance contract.
- 3.8 There are a number of risks associated with LMOs included standards. Having a LMO doesn't mean that standards will be low and a sufficiently resourced LMO may deliver good standards. However, if the LMO fails to deliver the required standards or goes into administration, the Council it will be difficult for the Council to influence improvement or may have to become the service provider of last resort with no funding. In these circumstances, it is important to make provisions within the Section 106 Agreement to ensure the developer agrees to step in rights for the Council.
- 3.9 To gauge how LMOs are viewed in other areas, the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) carried out a short survey with other members on behalf of the Council. A response was received from five authorities. The experiences from the five authorities were varied. The details of the responses received are set out in Appendix 2. There are small examples of LMOs in operation in the District and the Council does have evidence of dissatisfaction of many aspects with one of these.
- 3.10 Town & Parish Councils who are usually responsible for the on-going maintenance of open spaces, play areas and sports pitches are opposed to LMOs. The views of Banbury Town Council are set out in Appendix 3.

- 3.11 The proposed policy in Appendix 1 clearly sets out the requirements on developers if they choose to set up a LMO rather than pay a commuted sum.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 LMOs maintaining open spaces and play areas can be satisfactory but they can sometimes bring few benefits to residents and usually levy an additional charge to residents. However, there can be potential savings to a developer for such an approach in avoiding a large up front development cost.
- 4.2 Therefore, it is important that a policy on LMOs is in place to ensure adequate safeguards and standards are established and certainty is provided for residents if a developer seeks to follow this approach.
- 4.3 In recent public inquiries, the Council's technical specifications and rates for landscape maintenance were endorsed by the inspector. Consequently the commuted sums requested on new developments have a strong basis for provision.

5.0 Consultation

Banbury Town Council
Bicester Town Council
Association for Public Service Excellence
The Council's Planning Team

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified.

Option 1 Approve the policy that the Council's strong preference is for adoption of open spaces, parks and sports pitches with a commuted sum to cover the on-going maintenance.

Option 2: To reject the proposed policy

Option 3: To ask officers to develop alternative proposals

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 If the Council does not have a policy on LMOs or a requirement for developers to meet certain conditions through a Section 106 Agreements, the financial implications could be significant if that organisation later failed. The impact would depend on the size of the development. However, if the Council had to pick up the on-going maintenance, the costs would be in line with the rates tendered in the

Councils Landscape Maintenance Contract but with no funding to support such costs.

Comments checked by: Joanne Kaye, Interim Strategic Finance Accountant
joanne.kaye@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk 01295 221545

Legal Implications

- 7.2 Whilst this decision will not have the weight of a Supplementary Planning Document through the Local Plan process, it will send a clear message to developers that the Council's preference is for parks, play areas and open spaces to be transferred into public ownership. If these areas must be transferred to a Private Management Company, the requirements for such bodies will be governed through a Section 106 Agreement

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance
kevin.lane@southnorthants.gov.uk – 0300 0030107

Risk

- 7.3 The risks will be reviewed and managed as part of the operational risk register and if and when necessary will be escalated to the corporate risk register in a timely manner.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian, Acting Corporate Performance Manager,
0300 0030113, louise.tustian2@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold met	No
Community Impact Threshold Met	Yes

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This report directly links to all four of the corporate priorities and objectives set out in the Cherwell District Council Business Plan 2014-15 as follows:

Cherwell - A District of Opportunity
Cherwell – Safe, Clean and Green
Cherwell – Thriving Communities
Cherwell – Customer focussed Council

Lead Councillor

Councillor Tony Illott, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Proposed conditions for Local Management Organisations
2	Responses received from APSE
3	Banbury Town Council
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ed Potter Head of Environmental Services
Contact Information	0300 003 0105 ed.potter@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Appendix 1

CDC – LOCAL MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Provide a method statement of how the funding will be provided to the Management Company to cover maintenance costs in perpetuity.
2. Provide a method statement of how capital funding for replacement items/unforeseen costs will be generated.
3. The Council's twice yearly inspection costs will be paid as a commuted sum for the first fifteen years for monitoring of the management company's maintenance standards.
4. Confirmation that the standards of maintenance will be identical to the standard set out in the Councils Technical Specifications for Landscape and Cleansing Operations.
5. Confirmation that a diminishing bond will be put in place to cover the Council's costs of maintenance and management of the site, to be available for council to draw on if standards delivered by the Management Company do not match those set out in the Council's Technical Specifications.
6. Confirmation that the Council has the step in rights if the management company let standards drop below the standards set out in the Councils Technical Specification along with the rights to recover its costs.
7. Confirmation that at no point will the service charges levied on residents increase the rents for affordable housing above 80% of the open market rents as published by the Home and Communities Agency (HCA), where Affordable Rents are in place.
8. Confirmation that all Public Open Space, Outdoor Sports Pitches and Play areas remain accessible and usable by the general public in perpetuity.
9. If the management company goes into administration, confirmation that title deeds of all public open space, outdoor sports or play areas transfer to the council as the provider of last resort.

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Network query responses

Query Title: GM0359 - Proposals by developers to use Local Management Organisations to deliver grounds maintenance - 180614

Description:

A member authority is considering whether to support developer's applications to set-up Local Management Organisations to deliver grounds maintenance services on new developments. We would be very grateful if you could help by answering the following questions:

- What are your experiences of maintenance carried out on new developments by Local Management Organisations? Including: standards achieved, customer satisfaction and addition costs passed on to residents.
- What policies do you have in place surrounding the response to applications from developers looking to use LMOs to deliver grounds maintenance?
- Do you have a policy in place that gives you first refusal on maintenance of land on new developments?
- Do you have a policy in place that means land comes under local authority management after a period of time?

Name:

Authority:

Responses

Date: 18 June 2014

Authority: CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name: Lyn Davies

Telephone: 01492 575299

Email: Lyn.Davies@conwy.gov.uk

Response:

Our responses to your questions would be:

(i) What are your experiences of maintenance carried out on new developments by Local Management Organisations? Including: standards achieved, customer satisfaction and addition costs passed on to residents.

- On those developments that LMOs funding GM operations we have had relatively few complaints of any shortfall in service. The GM standards the Authority use have been given to the developer as a guide to the standard necessary. We have no indication as to the cost levied on each householder.

(ii) What policies do you have in place surrounding the response to applications from developers looking to use LMOs to deliver grounds maintenance

- We are, more and more, due to reduction in budgets, encouraging developers to set up management agreements for GM on new developments. We have in place a 25 year commuted sum for maintenance arrangement for those developments where we actually adopt the land.

(iii) Do you have a policy in place that gives you first refusal on maintenance of land on new developments?

- No we do not have such a policy but we indicate to developers that we would be interested in tendering for such works. To date we have not been asked to submit costs for any operations.

(iv) Do you have a policy in place that means land comes under local authority management after a period of time?

- We have a policy that allows us to adopt land if the developers pays to us a lump sum which will cover all maintenance costs for a 25 year period but obviously in year 26 the whole cost falls to the Authority.

We would be interested in seeing all replies to this query.

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Date: 18/06/2014

Authority: RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name: Sean Lawson

Telephone: 01788 533850

Email: sean.lawson@rugby.gov.uk

Response:

Currently we haven't experienced this, but we have a very large development coming forward and they are talking about this style of delivery.

Therefore we would be very interested to hear of others experiences and pitfalls

.

Date: 18/06/2014

Authority: HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name: Patrick Kilburn

Telephone: 01423 841106

Email: Patrick.Kilburn@harrogate.gov.uk

Response:

I refer to the email sent out through APSE

We have done this a few times now with varying degrees of success and we are still trying to tie it down. I am assuming that you are working on a similar basis to us in that you are trying to keep down costs.

I will try to answer each of your questions but if after reading them you want something else please feel free to email or ring me.

1. What are your experiences of maintenance carried out on new developments by Local Management Organisations? Including: standards achieved, customer satisfaction and addition costs passed on to residents.

Ans: Mixed is the honest answer. Where there is open space to maintain in some instances they have done it well but if there are associated things like sports facilities etc then these have not been anything like as good. The difficulty is that we just do not then seem to have any enforcement powers to address. As you can see I am from the operational side but closely linked with planning re these agreements but it just seems to be really difficult to get the developers to sort out if they do not comply. AS a result we then get the complaints from the residents and the members.

2. What policies do you have in place surrounding the response to applications from developers looking to use LMOs to deliver grounds maintenance?

We do not have a written policy as such but what we do is offer the developer an option to transfer the open space to the Council for a commuted sum. The basis for the calculation is along the lines of a sum of money that is invested and we then use the interest to pay for each years maintenance. This means we will never run out so to speak. However as you can imagine this can be a high figure and as a result by default developers are opting for LMO's which as a service manager trying to deliver services with reducing budgets I do not mind.

3. Do you have a policy in place that gives you first refusal on maintenance of land on new developments?

No. To be honest I think if we were to do this we would have to significantly reduce the commuted sums for the maintenance part of the service which would mean it would run out and I would then have to dilute the overall service to accommodate. I think this is generally wrong so we do not encourage this.

4. Do you have a policy in place that means land comes under local authority management after a period of time?

No. To be honest not sure how effective this would be and again I am not looking to adopt and dilute service delivery to existing areas.

Hope this helps and would be interested to receive a summary of your findings.

Date: 19/06/2014

Authority: RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BC

Name: John Spanswick

Telephone: 01443 490215

Email: John.C.Spanswick@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

Response:

In relation to this enquiry I would respond as follows on behalf of Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC.

- What are your experiences of maintenance carried out on new developments by Local Management Organisations? Including: standards achieved, customer satisfaction and addition costs passed on to residents.

Experience has shown that in many instances these organisations do not maintain the area to a suitable standard and over a relatively short period of time the original landscaping and layout declines to a point whereby it becomes a problem and then residents complain to the local authority about it. The original developer has long moved away and is rarely interested in sorting out the issue.

- What policies do you have in place surrounding the response to applications from developers looking to use LMOs to deliver grounds maintenance?

We do not have a specific policy in place, but in response to planning applications we usually provide a maintenance cost that the developer can consider and make it clear that we would prefer to adopt the land with a commuted sum wherever possible.

- Do you have a policy in place that gives you first refusal on maintenance of land on new developments?

No

- Do you have a policy in place that means land comes under local authority management after a period of time?

No, but this could happen after a very long period of time with no trace of the original developer.

Date: 19/06/2014

Authority: GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name: Melvyn Cryer

Telephone: 0115 901 3788

Email: Melvyn.Cryer@gedling.gov.uk

Response:

- What are your experiences of maintenance carried out on new developments by Local Management Organisations? Including: standards achieved, customer satisfaction and addition costs passed on to residents.

Recent developments have included attenuation tanks built under green space areas. Where this has occurred the Developer has favoured giving the maintenance of the land to an LMO. Grounds maintenance in these areas tends to be to a good standard. This may be due to the fact that we (GBC) ask for a 10 year maintenance contribution from the developer under normal circumstances and that in these situations the sum is passed from the Developer to the LMO to fund future maintenance.

- What policies do you have in place surrounding the response to applications from developers looking to use LMOs to deliver grounds maintenance?

Our policy states that the Developer must seek the Council's permission to appoint an LMO and approval must be given by the Council

- Do you have a policy in place that gives you first refusal on maintenance of land on new developments?

To date we have not done this, we will normally adopt the land if it is deemed suitable for handover. But I may look to draw up such a clause in the next revision of our S106 SPG.

- Do you have a policy in place that means land comes under local authority management after a period of time?

Our policy states that until the Service manager, Parks and Street Care Service approves the land as ready for adoption, transfer will not take place. Until that time the Developer will organise the maintenance of the area themselves. Equally I have worked for other authorities who delay handover as standard practice for 12 or 24 months to get over the initial establishment phase when many plants die off and need replacing.

In my experience, in practice many developers ignore the permissions required unless your planning inspectors are on their backs when trigger points are reached. I have had situations where Developers have appointed their own LMO and they have started maintaining the site and no one from the Development company bothered informing the Council. We assumed that the maintenance was of a temporary nature before handover occurred only to find that the contractor had been permanently awarded the contract without approval by the Council. Much to our annoyance.

We don't know what back room deals were done between Developer and Contractor, but lose the 10 years maintenance money as a result. That said the standard of maintenance on the whole has been OK.

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Banbury Town Council

Mark Recchia MA ACIS FILCM
Town Clerk

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Caroline Roche
Planning Officer (Major Developments)
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
BANBURY OX154AA

Our Ref: MJR/PL1
Your Ref: CR/05/01337/OUT
Please ask for: Mark Recchia
Email: mark.recchia@banbury.gov.uk

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└
Date: 26 January 2012

Dear Caroline

Re: Amendments to Section 106 Agreement – Bankside Development

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on this issue, which is one of fundamental importance to the Town Council. We do understand the dilemma facing the Planning Authority, where it is being charged with delivering a quota of new housing but is coming up against developers who say they cannot afford to pay the up front commuted sums required for future maintenance. However, our experience of this model operating in other areas is that it is not sustainable, and that the local authority is left to pick up the pieces, without a commuted sum, if/when the management company folds. Our newly appointed Recreation & Amenities Manager has previous experience of this happening in East Hertfordshire on a number of sites (Bishop Stortford; Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth).

Leaving aside the arguments over future sustainability of the model, we would question how the open space provision operated under a management company and funded so directly by its residents can be anything other than a gated community, with facilities only available to residents and providing no benefit to the town generally. It has long been the case that, with the hope value of residential development attached to land around our towns, the only way local councils can deliver essential infrastructure such as allotments, sports pitches or cemetery provision is through the Section 106 process. There have been previous discussions between the Leader of the Town Council and the former Strategic Director, John Hoad, around the provision of allotments at Bankside. Will not the scope for providing a contribution to the wider infrastructure of the town be much reduced under a management company model?

If this model is established it would also be the case that residents who purchased these properties would be paying to support the green infrastructure of other housing estates through their Council Tax whilst also funding their own via an Estate Rent charge. This would seem inequitable to residents of this development, who would no doubt be pressing for a rebate in their Council Tax bills, but so far as I am aware there are no provisions for removing these properties from the Council tax base calculations?

Grounds maintenance operations within Banbury are already extremely complex. With Oxfordshire being a three tier County areas of public open space can already be under the management regimes of the town, district or county councils or even Sanctuary Housing. The general public already find it difficult to identify the responsible body and introducing a further element of open space maintained by a management company can only add to this confusion.

Cont'd...

If this model is to become the norm for the maintenance of future open space land in the area it will also be the case that the Town Council would be unable to benefit from the economies of scale that would result from managing a larger portfolio of land.

We do not as yet have details of how any management company would be structured. Would the intention be that it would be a commercial enterprise or some form of public interest company? Initially when the District Council's housing stock was transferred into housing association management (Charter) there was an equal number of Board Members representing the tenants, the council and the community at large. However, with subsequent incorporation into larger bodies the level of influence that local councillors could have over matters affecting housing conditions in their neighbourhoods was inevitably reduced. Over 50% of our precept is given over to maintaining the town's parks and open spaces and as a local council, we could not support proposals which significantly reduced the role of the "local councillor".

In conclusion, the Town Council would be very much opposed to a "management company" model, notwithstanding that the freehold ownership of the open spaces might remain with a public authority. The day to day management of the land would clearly be taken out of the hands of the local council and this would run contrary to the Government's general thrust towards a greater role for local councils, through the delegation of services, in the Localism Act.

I hope these comments help to reinforce the District Council's initial rebuttal of the proposals put forward by the developers, and that the Planning Authority feels able to maintain this stance.

Yours sincerely

Mark Recchia
Town Clerk

Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 November 2014

<p>Pre-application Fees for Licensing Act 2003 and Other Licensing Applications</p>
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Report of Director of Community and Environment and Interim Shared Public Protection and Environmental Health Manager

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the introduction of fees for providing pre-application advice in relation to licence applications subject to consultation.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the introduction of a discretionary pre-application advice service and charges for licence applications.
- 1.2 To agree to the introduction of pre-application charging from 1st April 2015.
- 1.3 To approve the future extension of the scheme to other types of licence applications should this be successful.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities a 'general power of competence'. This gave powers to do anything that an individual with full capacity may do. Section 3 of the Act allows local authorities to charge for providing a service that is not required to be provided by legislation.
- 2.2 The majority of licence regimes allow or require the Council to set a fee for application, variation or renewal but only on a cost recovery basis which can only be used to run the licensing service.
- 2.3 A pre-application charge would not fall within this scope and would allow the Council to draw additional income but at the same time provide a quality advice service to applicants. Although initially this is unlikely to attract a large volume of applicants, there is potential to widen the scheme to other types of licence.

3.0 Report Details

Background

- 3.1 The Licensing Act 2003 is the primary legislation that makes provision for the licensing of the sale of alcohol, entertainment and the provision of late night refreshment in the District. Under the act, the licensing authority is both responsible for the administration and determination of applications. Although the Council has a statutory duty to administer applications, that duty does not extend to the provision of pre-submission advice and assistance.
- 3.2 In 2013/14, the Council's licensing team processed 24 applications for new premises licences and full variations of existing premises licences under the Licensing Act 2003. All of these applications required some form of statutory consultation with responsible authorities.
- 3.3 There were numerous other Licensing Act applications, including minor variations, premises licence transfers, variations of designated premises supervisors, etc, but it is proposed that discretionary fees only apply to new and full variation applications. This is due to the fact that these are more complex in nature and as a consequence licensing officers spend a considerable amount of time with applicants.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.4 The introduction of a discretionary pre-application assistance and advice service for licence applications would be beneficial because the Council will receive better quality applications from the onset. Owing to the fact that applicants would be advised regarding the licensing objectives (see para 3.7 below) in the case of the Licensing Act 2003, or given other expert advice on licensing conditions, in the event that the pre-application regime was to be extended to other types of licence application; this could well benefit residents of, or businesses operating in, the District.
- 3.5 From discussions with potential applicants, officers know that some are put off by the application process because of the length of the forms and the amount of information – some of which is legal and/or technical – required when submitting an application. Guidance notes and policies are publicly available to applicants, but the prescribed application process is inherently complicated mainly because it is closely linked to the primary legislation. For example, national Licensing Act, application forms are statutory, lengthy and not the easiest to understand, and applications have to comply with guidance laid down under section 182 of the act.
- 3.6 Officers routinely reject incomplete or incorrectly served applications which are not resubmitted because applicants perceive the process to be too difficult and onerous. This increases the burden on businesses. By introducing a pre-application advice fee, a formal transparent quality service can be offered which assists applicants to “get it right first time”.
- 3.7 As part of the application process, applicants must identify steps they propose to take to promote the licensing objectives, which are:
 - (a) the prevention of crime and disorder;

- (b) public safety;
- (c) the prevention of public nuisance; and
- (d) the protection of children from harm.

- 3.8 Less knowledgeable or inexperienced applicants often do not put forward sufficiently robust conditions, but in the absence of representations, the Council is still under a duty to issue the licence as applied for. In the absence of relevant objections, the Council is not empowered to impose conditions.
- 3.9 As a result, the operation of the licence could have an adverse effect on the social wellbeing of a community through, for example, causing a public nuisance or attracting crime and disorder. This is sometimes due to a misunderstanding of the section 182 guidance (mentioned above) which differs from the Act itself. Officers are of the opinion that better quality and better thought through applications could alleviate some problems that exists with licensed premises.

Charging Fees

- 3.10 As mentioned above, section 3 of the Localism Act enables local authorities to charge where the council is providing a service relying on general power of competence. A charge can be made where the local authority is not under a duty to provide the service and the person has agreed to the service being provided.
- 3.11 There is also a duty to ensure that taking one financial year with another, the income from charges does not exceed the costs of provision of the service, in other words the Council cannot make a profit from charging for the service.
- 3.12 The Council has a discretion under the Act not to charge for providing a service relying on the general power of competence but it is considered appropriate to charge a fee to cover the costs in providing the service because as a discretionary service it will require officer time that, if not charged for, would be costed into the general licensing budget. The pre-application fees would be separated from that.

Process

- 3.13 By introducing a pre-application fee applicants or persons indicating an interest in applying for a licence will be given the opportunity to take advantage of officer assistance at the appropriate fee.
- 3.14 The level of pre-application advice and assistance will be determined by the scale of the application. The nature of the pre-application advice and assistance offered for both small and medium to large scale applications will be the same although the officer time allocated will differ because medium to large scale applications will demand more officer time.
- 3.15 These will be defined as:
- Small scale applications would normally consist of applications relating to premises that occupy a relatively small floor area or premises where the proposed licensable activities will largely be ancillary to the operation of the premises, for example, independent shops and food led restaurants

- Medium to large scale applications would be any other premises that occupy a large premises or where licensable activities will form part of the primary operation of the premises.

3.16 Officers will confirm and agree the scale of an application with applicants at the onset of offering the advice. It is not anticipated that this will be an onerous process.

3.17 It is proposed that the pre-application advice and assistance will consist of:

- advice and assistance with completing the application forms;
- advice on appropriate conditions taken from the pool of standard conditions outlined in the Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy;
- advice on drawing up plans to accompany the application in accordance with the relevant regulations;
- advice on nominating an appropriate designated premises supervisor;
- assistance with completing the statutory notices and advertising, and
- one or more site visits to ensure plans are compliant with prescribed regulations and the appropriate statutory notices are correctly on display.

3.18 The discretionary fee will be calculated based on the amount of officer time allocated per type of application, and based on the average cost per hour for Licensing Officers. The initial proposed fee structure is broken down below:

<u>PRE-APPLICATION CHARGES</u>			
<u>Small scale applications*</u>	<u>Officer time*</u>	<u>Average cost*</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assistance with application form	1 hr	£40.00	£40.00
Assistance with advertising	30 mins	£20.00	£20.00
On site visit number of visits /mileage	1 hr	£40.00	£40.00
Total time taken	2 hrs 30 mins		£100.00
<u>Medium to large scale applications*</u>	<u>Officer time*</u>	<u>Average cost*</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assistance with application form	1 hr 30 mins	£60.00	£60.00
Assistance with advertising	30 mins	£20.00	£20.00
On site visit	1 hr 30 mins	£60.00	£60.00
Total time taken	3 hrs 30 mins		£140.00

*this may vary (based on the above fees) in the event that the application process takes longer /turns out to be more complicated than originally anticipated.

- 3.19 At this stage it is difficult to predict future income as it will depend on a number of factors including take up and number of applications. Any income generated will therefore be regarded as nominal in the first instance. Should the service be a success and once there is a clearer understanding of the scale of annual income it can be built into future draft budgets.
- 3.20 Assuming all applicants for new premises and full variations took advantage of this pre-app service, and based on the average number during 2013/14, the estimated income in the first year would be c.£2,700.
- 3.21 Applicants who decide not to take advantage of the proposed new process will still be supplied with the relevant guidance notes and policies and to ensure that the new process does not become overly bureaucratic, no fees will be charged for straightforward queries at this time.
- 3.22 A log will be kept detailing the amount of time spent on each application as an agreement would have been made prior to the advice being given. The licensing authority reserves the right to charge extra (based on the above fees) in the event that the application process takes longer /turns out to be more complication than originally anticipated. Any proposed increase will be discussed with the applicant at the earliest opportunity.

Exemptions

- 3.23 It is recommended that exemptions be applied in certain circumstances in line with the exemptions already in place under the Licensing Act, i.e. educational institutes, buildings used for religious purposes, village and community halls, etc.

Separation of Duties

- 3.24 Licensing officers only have delegated authority to determine unopposed applications. Applications that are opposed have to be referred to a Licensing Committee for determination. As a consequence, it is not envisaged that the operation of the new process would cause significant problems with the administration and determination process.
- 3.25 However, it is important to avoid conflict of interest and in the interests of transparency that arrangements for clear separation exist between officers who offer pre-application assistance and those who are responsible for the subsequent administration and determination of that application.
- 3.26 This means that the officer giving the pre-application assistance and advice will not have any subsequent involvement with that individual application; this will be monitored by the Licensing Team Leader. There are currently sufficient staffing resources in place to accommodate this arrangement.
- 3.27 The introduction of the discretionary fee structure will not affect the Council's statutory duties. Officers will still carry out their statutory functions of processing the licence application and fulfil their role as the Licensing Authority including enforcement duties.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Licensing Act 2003 states that all licensing matters must promote the four licensing objectives (as outlined in para. 3.7 above). With a Licensing Officer giving expert advice to prospective applicants, it is envisaged that this promotion will be satisfactorily achieved.
- 4.2 Introducing a pre-application scheme will provide a quality service to applicants assisting them to get it right first time. This can only enhance the quality of applications submitted to the Council, which may ultimately cut down on the time spent and the cost of dealing with licensing applications at hearings.

5.0 Consultation

Members of the Licensing Committee have been consulted and any late comments will be reported to this meeting. The Committee Chairman has also been consulted directly and supports the recommendations.

As pre-application advice is not a statutory function and the service will be discretionary, it is not felt that an external consultation is necessary

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: To approve the introduction of fees for pre-application advice

Option 2: Not to approve the introduction of fees; officers will continue to provide advice but a fee will not be recovered.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The introduction of a discretionary fee will allow the council to recover some of its costs when providing pre-application advice. The fees detailed in section 3.18 of this report will meet this requirement and will be monitored to ensure that the income from this service does not exceed the cost of service provision.

Comments checked by:

Joanne Kaye, Strategic Finance Accountant, 01295 221545,
joanne.kaye@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 As set out in the report.

Comments checked by: Chris Mace, Solicitor, 01327 322125,
christopher.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 There is a risk that if policy and legislation has not been correctly followed, any resulting appeal could be successful.

Comments checked by: Chris Mace, Solicitor, 01327 322125,
christopher.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy

Lead Councillor

Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	David Macey F.Inst.Pa MloL ABII, Licensing Team Leader
Contact Information	01327 322283 jackie.fitzsimons@southnorthants.gov.uk

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 November 2014

<p>Improvements to Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres</p>

Report of Director of Community and Environment

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider a range of service improvements to Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres and facility improvements to Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To support in principle the facility improvements proposed for Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre subject to an acceptable outcome of further contractual negotiations.
- 1.2 To note and welcome the operational improvements put in place at Bicester and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centres.
- 1.3 To receive a further report on the scope for facility and customer improvements at Bicester Leisure Centre.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 For the past year or so, officers in conjunction with Cherwell Leisure Ltd (CLL) have been working in partnership with Parkwood Community Leisure (PCL), the Council's operating contractor, to improve operational standards at Bicester Leisure Centre (BLC) and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre (KGLC). In late 2013 and early 2014 in particular, whilst operating standards have generally been good and in line with the agreed contract specification, there have been times when there has been inconsistencies, particularly in BLC.
- 2.2 A range of improvement measures had been agreed earlier in 2014 and have gradually been implemented over the past year by PCL. However, when the Council undertook its annual customer satisfaction survey in the early summer of 2014, it was clear from the results that, despite an overall increase in overall customer satisfaction, inconsistency of cleanliness and customer service standards in the

leisure centres did have a negative impact on the results. This was because the programme of improvements were only part completed and potentially meant that the improvement in the Council's overall customer satisfaction level could have been greater had this not been the case.

- 2.3 Consequently, officers and CLL have been in further dialogue with PCL to accelerate the remaining improvements and to ensure that previous inconsistencies of service standards are eradicated. The outcome of this dialogue has resulted in many improvements which are summarised in this report and the opportunity has been taken at the same time to explore facility improvements which may help this position and the long term performance of the centres. As a consequence of this, there has arisen an immediate opportunity to consider some facility changes and improvements at KGLC at no cost to the Council which need early consideration and a decision due to a time limited Parkwood Leisure funding opportunity. Similarly, there are potential changes which can be considered in BLC which are not contained in this report as they are not developed enough at this stage. These will therefore be the subject of a further report.

3.0 Report Details

Operating Improvements

- 3.1 The operational standard concerns centred largely around inconsistent cleaning standards, delayed facility condition survey works in accordance with the lifecycle works programme, high turnover of key staff and the knock on effect of these on the customer. It is pleasing to note that since the early part of 2014, PCL have responded positively to all of these matters which can be summarised as follows;
- Improved management and operational structures.
 - Increases to salary ranges to aid staff retention.
 - Additional staff training – Support from RoSPA; Icon & National Governing Bodies of Sport.
 - Improved monitoring of performance through the Council & Pro Insight mystery visitor reports.
 - Increased cleaning resource.
 - Improved management of condition survey works. Whilst overdue in some cases, significant progress has now been made.
 - Significant 'non condition survey' improvements to the facilities (i.e. improved marketing; retail presentation; fitness & aerobics class equipment; new cleaning machines).
 - Simply more focus on detail!
- 3.2 From the above and the Council's monitoring systems, it is evident that PCL have improved their staff professionalism, have put in place measures to maintain a better and more effective management structure, addressed the cleaning issues and have improved the facilities generally. Linked to these are communication and marketing initiatives which are geared to growing their customer base.
- 3.3 In addition, PCL have a number of future developments which will include further equipment replacement, staffing changes to free up the operational rather than administrative time of key staff, further cleaning resources and targeted refurbishment activities.

Facility Improvements

- 3.4 This operational review has also provided the opportunity to consider some facility changes and improvements which would benefit many customers. There is the potential to reconfigure some of BLC's health and fitness facilities to cater for the recent notable increase in users and also to create the capacity to cater for an on-going increase in numbers given the growth in population predicted for the town. However, the development of the detail of these potential changes is not sufficiently advanced to be considered at this point by the Council, nor does it have time critical funding issues so it is intended that a future report be submitted on this.
- 3.5 The same exercise for KGLC is sufficiently advanced and can benefit from some recently agreed investment by PCL. This involves a number of proposed facility changes to better reflect and cater for the current activity demand of customers. Unsurprisingly, the greatest increase in demand is around the health and fitness activity programme and as such, the following is proposed;
- Convert the existing aerobics area into a free weights and functional training area. This will increase capacity for user growth, provide a more contemporary training area and improve the overall operating performance of the centre.
 - Convert the existing crèche and multi use purpose area into a new aerobics studio. This will improve the use of a valuable and currently underutilised space and allow for an increase on the aerobics and group fitness activity programme for a growing user base.
 - Convert the Crazy Coliseum play area into a dedicated spinning studio. This is a response to spinning which is the most popular class in the centre and currently compromised in the multipurpose hall.
 - Relocate the crèche into the underutilised first floor multipurpose room overlooking the pool. Install new soft play equipment to widen the programming capacity.
 - Relocate the current vending area to the reception lobby and supplement this in the main circulation area with a healthy eating vend option.
- 3.6 These proposals (shown also in Appendix 1) are a positive move forward for the centre and will benefit a significant proportion of its users. They offer far better use of the internal space and are driven by the activities which have over the past year or so exhibited the greatest growth in demand. Overall therefore they should contribute to improved centre performance and improved customer satisfaction.
- 3.7 However, it is acknowledged that there are two negative aspects. The first is the reduced size of the relocated crèche facility which may lead to negative comment from these users. In this respect, it should be noted that it is of sufficient size to accommodate current user levels and will have the added advantage of new soft play equipment. The second negative aspect is the removal of the Crazy Coliseum play facility as it is not possible to compensate for this on a like for like basis. The proposal to address this in part is to offer free of charge the use of the soft play facilities when not used as a crèche area (NB the crèche is only used M-F mornings) and to offer free of use soft play inflatables in one of the squash courts when not in use for squash.
- 3.8 There is still further detail to be finalised regarding the effect of these PCL funded changes will have on the base contract such as utilities, lifecycle costs and

benchmarking. However, these issues are not anticipated to be problematic and it is expected that the overall performance of the centre will be improved which will be of benefit to both customers and the Council.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Council strives for continuous improvement in its services and indeed invites entrepreneurial flair from the operator and this can be regarded as an example of that. Five years after it entered a long term contract for its modernised leisure facilities is a reasonable period for changed patterns of use to be established and improvements to be considered. The proposed improvements will benefit the biggest part of leisure centre customer growth and address the dynamic nature of the health and fitness sector.
- 4.2 By retaining these improvements within the centre's current footprint, it does however mean that users of the Crazy Coliseum will not have like for like facilities provided. The offer of free use of two soft play environments will in some way compensate for this but only in part.
- 4.3 For changes of this nature which are both customer driven and very relevant, officers have requested, that subject to the decision of the Executive, PCL are to undertake a short in centre consultation period from 4 November to gain specific and overall customer views prior to implementation to see whether there are any other improvement and mitigating measure which could be implemented.

5.0 Consultation

None to date. See 4.3 above

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative option has been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Undertake no change. This is not proposed as it would mean that the centre would continue to be constrained in accommodating the growth in health and fitness demand.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Further dialogue is underway with PCL and CLL to ensure that the changes are fully reconciled within the contract framework which all parties are subject to. Specific areas which require further analysis are the effect on utilities, lifecycle programme and costs and the effect on benchmarking. The five year benchmarking process is particularly important as the first period for this ends in December 2014 at the same time when these works are programmed to be undertaken.

Comments checked by: Martin Henry, Director of Resources, 030000 30 102, martin.henry@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 It is intended that the further negotiations with PCL and CLL about the improvements will be undertaken within the existing contract framework for the centre. This is necessary to avoid the risk of changes outside the contract altering the basis of the original PCL award to such extent that a new procurement contest would need to be undertaken.

Comments checked by: Richard Hawtin, Legal Team Leader Non Contentious, 01295 221695, Richard.hawtin@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All Kidlington and surrounding wards

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Cherwell Thriving Communities – to provide high quality and accessible leisure opportunities

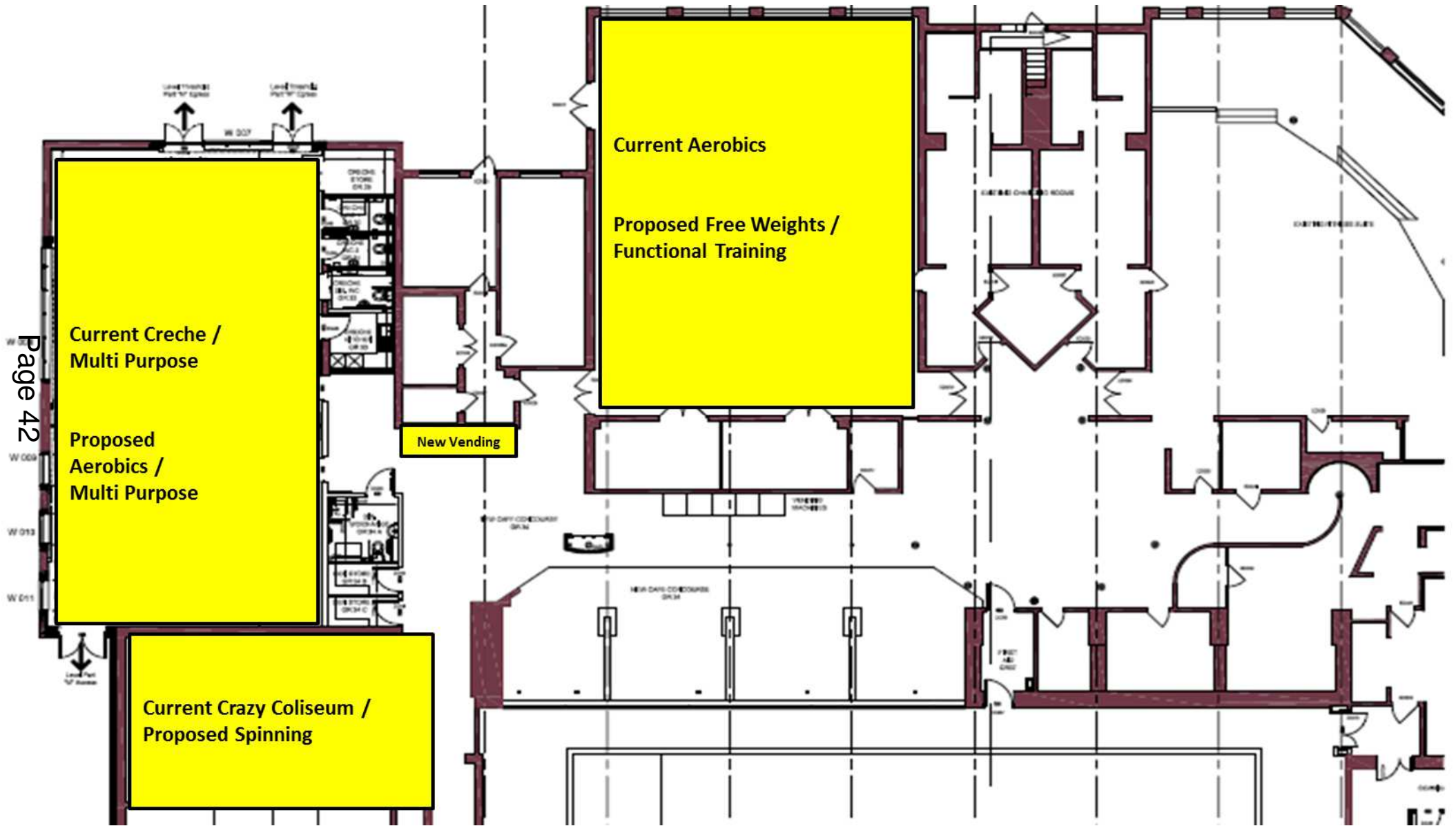
Lead Councillor

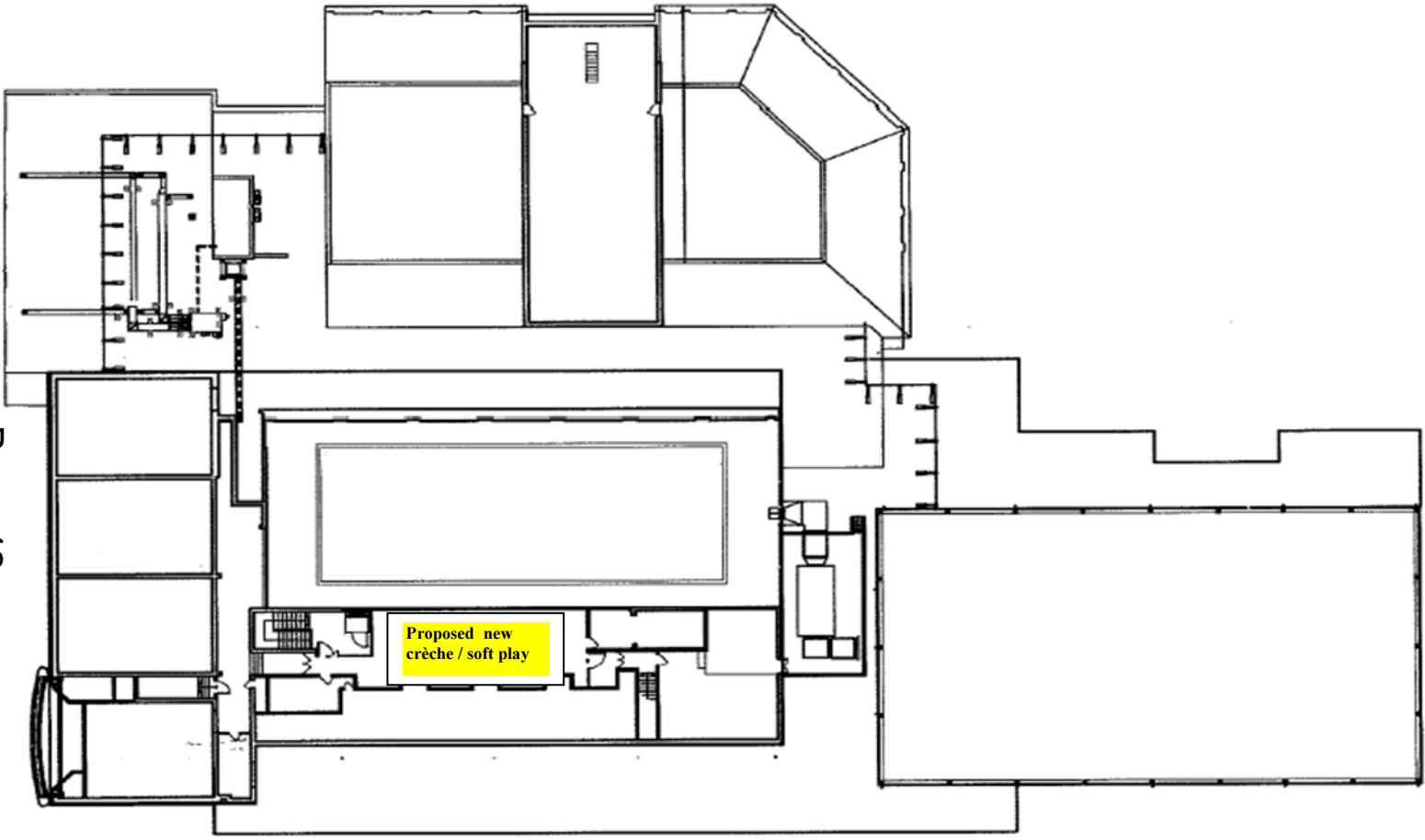
Councillor George Reynolds, Deputy Leader

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Kidlington Leisure Centre Facility Improvements
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Ian Davies
Contact Information	030000 30101 ian.davies@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Appendix 1





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Cherwell District Council

Executive

November 2014

North West Bicester Update

Report of Commercial Director (Bicester)

This report is public

Purpose of report

To advise Members of the expenditure of the Eco Town grant received in 2010 and projects delivered in Bicester, to enable consideration of the proposals for future expenditure and to authorise a change to the delegation for authorisation of expenditure.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 Note the expenditure that has taken place and the committed funding from the Eco Town grant
- 1.2 Note the progress that has been made in delivering projects to meet the aims of the One Shared Vision for the Town
- 1.3 Agree the delegation of future expenditure to the Commercial Director (Bicester) in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Following the announcement by the Government of £60 million ring fenced allocation for eco towns in July 2009 the Council submitted a bid for growth funding from this allocation. The purpose of this funding was to pump prime and support private sector development at NW Bicester.
- 2.1.2 Following the submission of the bid in November 2009 the Council was notified of the outcome of the Bid in March 2010 and received £7,886,620.75 capital funding and £1,834,065.75 of revenue funding to support the delivery of an eco town. A further £460,000m was identified from the Department of Children Schools and Families to fund the zero carbon sixth form centre at Cooper School. This latter funding was not received due to a change in funding priorities.

- 2.1.3 In the second round of Eco Town funding a further grant was also secured in 2010 of £3.55m comprising of £150,000 revenue and £3.4m capital.
- 2.1.4 The grant funding has been used to support the delivery of a series of demonstration projects within the town, the progression of the development at NW Bicester and the delivery of projects that met the aims of the One Shared Vision for Bicester, through the support of a dedicated project team. The report below outlines the funding spent to date whilst appendix A provides further details of the individual projects.
- 2.1.5 This report also identifies priorities for the remaining funding which is earmarked to facilitate the early delivery of the first primary school on the site and the delivery of an eco business centre to support the incubation of small businesses in the town. The report also considers the potential to recycle funding through further projects.
- 2.1.6 In 2010 the Executive agreed delegation for the Eco Town grant to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council. With the appointment of a Commercial Director with responsibility for Bicester it is recommended that the delegation is altered to reflect the revised structure and that the Commercial Director (Bicester) is given delegation for expenditure in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 As part of the negotiation with DCLG, prior to the receipt of grant funding, a Strategic Delivery Board was established for Bicester to bring together public sector interests to ensure the delivery of the NW Bicester development. This Board has met quarterly since 2010 to steer the project and works on a consensus basis. The Board supported the development of a vision for Bicester, known as the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision, which set out the aspirations for the town as a whole, not just new development. This Vision has helped to direct the work of the Board and therefore priorities for the project team. The vision can be viewed at <http://www.ecobicester.org.uk/cms/content/eco-bicester>. The terms of reference of the Board have recently been reviewed and changes introduced. The terms of reference are attached at Appendix B.

Grant Expenditure

- 3.2 The Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) has received regular reports on the funding position and overseen expenditure and delivery of projects. The grant revenue funding has supported a dedicated project team which has worked both on the delivery of the NW Bicester development but also on the delivery of projects in the town. Early projects were identified demonstration projects that DCLG encouraged, to see early delivery of works within the town. These included the provision of demonstration buildings showcasing sustainable building technology and a focus on sustainable travel within the town and energy efficiency in buildings. The funding of a dedicated project team has been instrumental in ensuring that proposals at NW Bicester progress and deliver to eco town standards resulting in a development that is already being recognised as a national exemplar. Equally

importantly it has enabled the delivery of early projects and on going work to deliver the Shared Vision for the town.

Revenue Expenditure

- 3.3 It was originally envisaged that the revenue funding would support a project team for five years. However not all posts originally identified have been filled and therefore some revenue funding remains. In addition given the success of a dedicated project team in ensuring delivery, the relatively limited grant revenue funding has been supported with interest earned on capital to prolong the funding of the team (see budget at Appendix C). The project team expenditure, together with expenses and consultancy has resulted in revenue expenditure to end of March 2014 of £1,127,944 offset by £443,303 of interest earned on the unused grant.

Capital Expenditure

- 3.4 A range of projects have been delivered supported by the project team. The aim has been to work with partners to maximise the delivery whilst minimising calls on the grant funding. Each project has been different but support has ranged from;

- grant to directly deliver a project; for example a grant of £2,825 was provided to Bicester Town Council to enable the creation of a community garden in Garth Park for use by an outreach group and £277,006 has been spent on delivery of sustainable transport initiatives.

- grant that has attracted other funding, for example grant of £190,000 for a subsidised household insulation scheme brought in matched funding from energy companies and householders of £2.20 for each £1 of grant.

- grant to pump prime the delivery of projects by others, for example the delivery of the Demonstration Building in Garth Park where the provision of the hard standing for £14,000 was funded and grant of £40,000 to fund a dedicated staff resource to establish Bicester Green, the reuse centre

- grant used as match funding to attract other funding, for example the Green Deal pilot project where £100,000 of grant attracted another £280,000 of grant, and the heat network feasibility study where £20,000 attracted a grant of a further £80,000 and £20,000 from Oxfordshire County Council.

- other projects have been delivered by others and support has been limited to staff time in supporting or bidding for funding for example the Sanctuary Housing demonstration development at Thyme Close and monitoring of the energy efficiency of the properties.

Further details of projects are set out in Appendix A.

Committed Funding

- 3.6 There is a commitment to spend £6.250m of capital funding to support the early delivery of a primary school on the development at NW Bicester. A school has been seen as important to supporting the formation of the new community and establishing sustainable patterns of travel. Normally schools on new development

are funded through developer contributions and therefore are only viable on large scale developments (about 1000 dwellings) and often are not delivered until developments have a number of occupations. The purpose of identifying funding is to ensure the delivery of the school as early as possible with funding being recouped through developer contributions as the first phase builds out and from later phases of the development.

- 3.7 One of the aims of the eco town development was to increase the level of local employment. The provision of an eco-business centre to provide supported incubation work space has therefore been identified as a priority for funding. Land for the eco business centre will be secured as part of the first phase of development at NW Bicester and £3m of funding has been earmarked to support the initial delivery of the project. A detailed report on the delivery of an Eco Business centre is programmed for the December Executive. There is potential for future income generation or recycling of the capital funding from the project.
- 3.8 Some funding also remains committed to sustainable travel and energy efficiency projects £600,000 and £130,000. A sustainable transport strategy is being developed which will help to prioritise works, but it is anticipated that it will be used to focus on cycling improvements at the southern end of the Banbury and Buckingham Roads in Bicester so comprehensive routes are achieved along these roads. A Boiler scheme is currently operating in the town and take up of this will be reviewed as colder weather impacts and in the light of changes to government initiatives and funding on energy efficiency.

Future Funding Plans

- 3.8 Further funding will be reliant on the receipt of developer funding to allow the recycling of school funding, funding from the eco business centre and access to other sources of funding such as further grants. Whilst there can be reasonable confidence in being able to recycle the school funding the timing is uncertain as it will rely on the speed at which development takes place. Never the less two potential areas of spend have been identified assuming repayment of the first tranche of developer funding in the medium term. The first is that if the forward funding of the school is successful this approach could be repeated elsewhere on the development to ensure early delivery of facilities. For example the approach could have benefits in providing the first school on the land on the south of the rail line to facilitate the creation of the community and sustainable travel patterns. In addition there remains the potential for investment in energy generation, for example through the work to explore the development of a heat network connected to Ardley, which could also provide future income for the Council. It is recommended that these options are kept under review as recycled funding becomes available.

Delegation for Funding

- 2.1.7 In 2010 the Executive agreed delegation for the Eco Town grant to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council. With the appointment of a Commercial Director with responsibility for Bicester it is recommended that the delegation is altered to reflect the revised structure and that the Commercial Director (Bicester) is given delegation for expenditure in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Over the last 4 years a considerable amount of work has been done in Bicester and as this report demonstrates a number of outcomes have been delivered. Work has now started on site at NW Bicester on a national exemplar development as well as a masterplan for the whole site being submitted. The Project Team has worked with the promoters A2Dominion to ensure that the development meets the high standards set in the Eco Towns Planning Policy Statement. With work underway on site the potential to deliver key infrastructure on site in the form of the school and eco business centre is now closer, with the school due to start on site in March 2015 and steps now being taken to formalise the delivery of the eco business centre.
- 4.2 A number of projects have been delivered in the town, particularly focussing on energy efficiency and sustainable travel. These have delivered demonstration projects as sought by DCLG and delivered against the aims of the One Shared Vision for the town.
- 4.3 Over £30m worth of grant funding has been attracted to Bicester, including the DCLG eco town funding. This has been instrumental in the range of projects that it has been possible to deliver in the town. This approach of seeking external funding is continuing with further work being done to enable projects to continue to be delivered in the town.
- 4.4 Grant funding is a small proportion of the overall investment that has taken place in the town. A study by Montague Evans estimated that over £184m of private sector funding has been invested in the town since 2009 in the construction of housing and commercial premises. Furthermore the report concluded in terms of future development as part of the growth of Bicester, the estimated value of the housing sites identified in Bicester is £950 million which is expected to be supported by approximately £700 million of infrastructure investment.
- 4.5 Never the less as the town grows the DCLG eco town funding remains an important source of funding for the delivery of projects in the town. Importantly the funding is enabling a project team to be employed and this is instrumental particularly in the attraction of additional funding and delivery of projects in the town. To maximise the benefits from the grant the ability to recycle funding over time to provide for further investment in the town is sought where feasible.
- 4.6 Future funding will largely rely on the receipt of developer funding to repay the investment in the primary school or income from the eco business centre. Limited funding remains for sustainable travel initiatives and energy efficiency projects is also ring fenced. Other sources of funding are actively being sought including grants from other sources and projects that can be delivered in partnership. This is necessary to be able to continue to deliver projects to meet the outcomes of the One Shared Vision.
- 4.7 The appointment of the Commercial Director (Bicester) has increased the Council's capacity for delivering the planned growth and associated benefits in Bicester along with the required infrastructure. The change of delegation of the eco town funding to the Commercial Director (Bicester) in consultation with the Leader of the Council is recommended to ensure that funding continues to be appropriately targeted.

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: to leave the delegation with the Chief Executive or not to delegate responsibility for spending eco town funding.

With a Director for Bicester now appointed it is logical that delegation now reflects the revised structure. Much funding is day to day and with no delegation the Council would have less flexibility in the timing of decisions with regard to funding.

Option 2: To commit to future spend of recycled funding

The timing of the receipt of recycled funding is uncertain and over time priorities and pressures can change. It therefore is difficult to commit to funding specific projects at the current time. Some flexibility is therefore sought to review priorities as funding becomes available.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no new financial implications from this report. The grant funding is monitored as part of the Council's budget monitoring process. Interest earned on the unspent capital is added annually.

Comments checked by: Joanne Kaye, Interim Strategic Finance Accountant, 01295 221545, joanne.kaye@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 There are no new legal implications from this report.

Comments checked by: Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 003 0107 kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

Bicester, Chesterton and Caversfield

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

District of Opportunity

Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Eco Bicester Projects List
B	Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board Terms of Reference
C	Eco Town Financial Appraisal
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Karen Curtin, Commercial Director (Bicester) Jenny Barker, Team Leader Development Control & Major Developments
Contact Information	01295 221828 Jenny.barker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Appendix A –Bicester Projects

Community Garden, Bicester Town Council provided disability persons the chance to grow their own produce in a working environment which meets their training and personal requirements. Since BTC started to buy in bedding plant stock, the nursery compound had become redundant; an existing glass house was removed to free space for a community garden. The space then provides an area for raised beds giving wheelchair/mobility vehicle access. The raised beds provide users of the garden access to grow at various different levels. The rear of the site was cleared and used as an open growing ground for minor disabilities. The site also includes pots and other growing containers required for growing seed onwards. Following a successful season, the users of the site use the produce to cook their own meals during the day at the centre located at the Garth.

Bryan House, a joint project of the Eco Bicester team and the Sanctuary Group, consists of 23 energy efficient affordable homes in Bicester, located in a Conservation Area. Completed in 2013, the development comprises a mix of rented and shared ownership homes all built to Levels 4 and 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes – a first in the district. The overall reduction in energy usage is 70%. These properties have been monitored since construction by Oxford Brookes University allowing valuable lessons to be learnt on the construction and operation of higher code level housing. The monitoring of Bryan House is funded through TSB.

Insulation scheme

An Eco Bicester funded scheme to provide subsidised cavity and loft insulation to Bicester residents. During the 18 months period approximately 1700 installations were completed which represents 13% of the housing stock in Bicester. In total, £590,000 was invested directly into Bicester's housing stock.

Demonstration Building

The Eco Bicester Demonstration Building, built to PassivHaus standards, promoted CO2 and energy saving, creating a place for learning for it's over 3,000 visitors some from as far away as Australia and China. A varied programme of engagement activities were delivered during the two years it was open. The Demo House, as it became known, evolved into a well – used resource for the whole community, a full scale example of sustainable building (solar pv, super insulated, ground source heat pump, heat recovery system) all residents in Bicester could experience and use. The Demo House has now been deconstructed and is relocated to Warwickshire by SPAKS-SLC to also work as a demonstration building.

Cooper School

The new sixth form centre for Cooper School is a zero carbon building, built to BREAM standard very good including solar PV, ground source heat pump and a biomass boiler. This building includes real time energy monitoring in the main entrance, so that the building's performance is visible to staff and pupils on a daily basis. In terms of carbon the school has actually saved over 41.5 tonnes in its first year, which is the amount which it would have used had it pulled the energy from the national grid.

Travel behaviour

The Eco Bicester Travel Behaviour Demonstration Project has included a "Cycle for Bicester" scheme incorporating a cycling package comprising of 20 bicycles available

to loan, free bike fixing sessions (approximately 30 bikes fixed at each session), additional cycle parking (town centre and Bicester North Station) as well as minor changes to the cycling network including removal of barriers in Southwold and a cycle/pedestrian link (approximately 100m) adjacent to the Bure Park local centre west of the Banbury Road.

The cycle loan scheme ran between March 2012 and November 2012 and it is understood approximately 50 bikes were loaned to local residents using the Demonstration Building as the local facility for the scheme. Based on this take up, the scheme has continued to operate from March 2013 to today using the Bicester Green facilities as a collection point. It is understood that 7 bikes a month on average have been loaned to residents per months.

LEAF

The DECC funding initiative, dubbed **Leaf (Local Energy Assessment Fund)**, was applied for and funding used to assist residents in Highfield, a community in Bicester, to save money and energy in their homes. We organised free energy saving workshops and training in schools and in the community. In partnership with Oxford Brookes University, local community action group Grassroots Bicester and environmental charity BioRegional, we mapped 374 dwellings in the area of Highfield.

Green Deal Communities

To kick start DECC's flagship **Green Deal Communities** retrofitting project, the Pioneer Places funding provided for energy retrofits and to test the new Green Deal infrastructure. We have conducted 100 domestic and 10 non-domestic assessments with the results leading to the selection of 14 homes and 3 businesses to receive funded energy saving measures. The example buildings were then invited to take part in a Bicester Open Homes day to showcase their energy efficient homes to the community.

Bicester Green, which is part funded by the EcoBicester initiative and is a social enterprise entering its second year. Bicester Green's aim is to reduce waste, reduce hardship and reduce isolation by running a centre for re-use and sustainability. It facilitates the repair and re-use of household items from the Bicester area that would otherwise go to landfill. These repaired items are then sold to those in need. Their second hand bikes help people get around in Bicester in a healthy, sustainable and low cost way.

Heat Network

Funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Eco Town funding and Oxfordshire Council a technical and commercial feasibility study into a heat network is currently being undertaken. The aim is to use the heat from the energy from waste plant at Ardley (Viridor) to heat the homes in NW Bicester and subsequently the wider town. Expected completion of the study is summer 2015.

Eco Bicester Boiler Scheme

A subsidized scheme to receive £300 off a replacement boiler funded by the Eco Bicester team. Boilers account for around 60 per cent of what residents spend in a year on energy bills, so an efficient boiler makes a big difference. The scheme has started in April 2014 – so far 130 residents have registered their interest. To qualify

for the boiler cash back the old boiler must be rated D or as a rule of thumb if the boiler is older than 10 years it is likely to be rated D. This scheme supports the replacement of gas, LPG and oil boilers.

PhD student Oxford Brookes University

Eco Bicester team, A2Dominion and Bioregional as well as Oxford Brookes University are co-sponsoring a PhD student to assess the performance of NW Bicester homes on the first phase. The scope of the study is to review the performance of the buildings against the eco-town aspirations and the one planet community aspirations of the Exemplar as well as assessing data collected in the construction and post occupancy phase.

Living Lab

The Bicester Living Lab has been launched as a partnership project between A2 Dominion, BioRegional and the Eco Bicester team. The mission of the Bicester Living Lab is to bring world-leading research and innovation into sustainable buildings and communities within Bicester to enable the creation of a truly sustainable town for the 21st century and to build an ongoing framework of learning and improvement for the various sustainable initiatives and programmes. The website <http://bicesterlivinglab.org/about-the-living-lab> went live and contains presentations and images of the launch event.

John Paul II Community Centre

The John Paul II Centre fulfilled the ambition to build a new community centre for a Bicester Parish Church, and is currently the largest civic building in the UK to be certified PassivHaus. The formal opening took place in November 2011 and the venue is now available for use and hire.

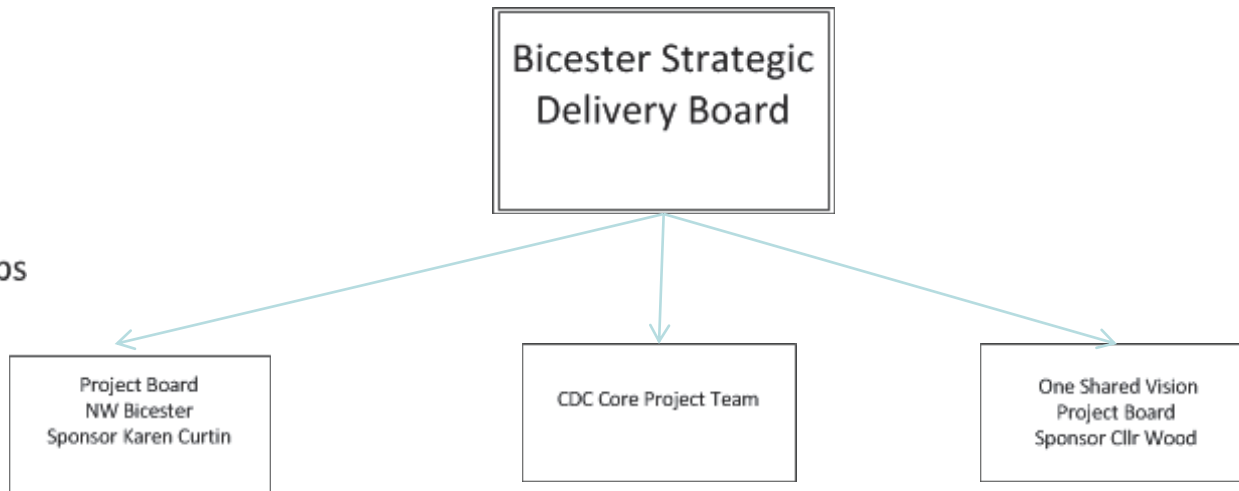
The Garth / Bicester Town Council

The Garth, home to Bicester Town Council has received insulation applied to the inside face of all of its exterior walls plus secondary glazing for all of its windows, thanks to a grant from the government's Technology Strategy Board. The solution adopted by the council and its project partners BioRegional, architects and building consultants Ridge and Partners LLP and Oxford Brookes University, was to insulate the building's exterior walls from the inside using an advanced, computer-controlled technique. The expected energy reduction due to the insulation scheme is 30%.

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Structure

BICESTER – ONE SHARED VISION



Page 57
Working Groups



Eco Bicester
be part of it

NW Bicester Steering Group

Purpose

Page 58
“The overarching purpose of the NW Bicester Steering Group is to ensure the successful progress of the NW Bicester development as a national exemplar of sustainable development, to the agreed timescales and in line with all strategic developments in and immediately adjacent to the town, so that they progress in a logical and coherent manner to the ultimate benefit of the town.”



Eco Bicester
be part of it

NW Bicester Steering Group

Terms of Reference

- The steering group will:
- Ensure delivery of the final master plan
- Monitor progress of its delivery
- Problem solve and take appropriate action to maintain delivery
- Manage resources appropriately and within approved limits
- Provide monthly update reports to the One Shared Vision Steering Group

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Eco Bicester
be part of it

NW Bicester Steering Group

Proposed Membership

- Director (Bicester)
- NW Bicester Delivery Manager
- NW Bicester Implementation Officer
- A2 Dominion Regional Development Director North
- A2 Dominion Project Director
- Farrells Master planner
- A2 Dominion Planning Consultant (Barton Wilmore)
- Communications Officer CDC
- Communications Officer A2D



NW Bicester Steering Group

Action Plan – key actions

- Monitor the delivery of the Exemplar project
- Completion of the Master plan
- Submission of outline planning application
- Progress delivery of the Eco Business Centre



One Shared Vision Steering Group

Terms of Reference

- Ensure a cohesive delivery of the objectives of the Bicester One Vision objectives.
- Problem solve and take appropriate action to maintain delivery of the outcomes focussed action plan
- Monitor progress of achievements against the 4 themes:
 - Community first - people and places
 - Economy
 - Transport and movement
 - Environmental sustainability
- Monitor progress of the NW Bicester Steering Group 2014/15 Action Plan
- Monitor the outputs of the key strategic development sites in Bicester
- Manage resources appropriately and within approved limits
- Provide update reports to the Bicester Strategic Delivery Board



One Shared Vision Steering Group

Action Plan – key actions

- Deliver a Sustainable Travel Strategy
- Development of an Action plan to address the objectives and funding requirements of the Sustainable Travel Strategy
- Maximise the identification of funding opportunities to deliver the One Vision Objectives
- Delivery of retrofitting and energy efficient projects and where appropriate arrange for these to be showcased to the Strategic Delivery Board
- Monitor the NW Bicester Steering Group Action Plan



One Shared Vision Steering Group

Action Plan – key actions

- Engagement in producing the Bicester Master Plan (subject to CDC Local Plan process)
- Update the One Vision website
- Develop a Communication Plan including the use of social media
- Monitor key strategic developments in the Town and arrange for these to be showcased to the Strategic Delivery Board
- Provide an outcomes focussed visual update of Action Plans to the quarterly Strategic Delivery Board



ECO TOWN - MONITORING STATEMENT 2014/15 as at 30th September 2014

APPROVED ESTIMATES - Based on Initial Funding of £9,720,687

plus 2ND BID funding of £3,550,000 * ; total funds £13,270,687

PROJECT BUDGET

Project Reference	Project Codes	Approved Budget		
		Approved Budget Revenue	Approved Budget Capital	Total Approved Budgets
CAPACITY				
1	Local Authority Core Project Team	1,454,132	0	1,454,132
2	Consultancy	995,873	0	995,873
	Expenses etc	61,945	0	61,945
	Interest Received	(600,505)	0	(600,505)
OFF SITE PROJECTS				
4	Exhibition House	26,055	0	26,055
10	Travel Behaviour	75,000	825,000	900,000
11	Energy Saving Schemes	0	334,180	334,180
	Boiler Replacement Schemes		35,000	35,000
	Green Deal		130,820	130,820
12	Reuse Centre Seed Funding	40,000		40,000
INFRASTRUCTURE				
	North west Primary School		6,250,000	6,250,000
	Eco Business Centre		3,000,000	3,000,000
	Uncommitted Infrastructure Fund		643,187	643,187
	TOTAL	2,052,500	11,218,187	13,270,687

Spent	Spent	Spent	Spent	Projected Budget				Total
				2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	
171,632	130,000	130,000	217,218	202,000	201,282	201,000	201,000	1,454,132
34,676	148,865	128,334	147,644	168,675	127,679	120,000	120,000	995,873
2,575	3,887	1,169	11,944	12,000	12,000	12,000	6,370	61,945
0	(216,900)	(145,000)	(81,402)	(75,000)	(75,000)	(7,203)	0	(600,505)
OFF SITE PROJECTS								
14,594	4,505	2,055	4,901	0	0	0	0	26,055
137,106	288	1,109	62,630	601,497	97,369	0	0	900,000
169,033	168,397	(129,321)	0	20,000	53,036	53,036	0	334,180
			0	35,000				35,000
			0	130,820				130,820
		33,956	6,053	0	0	0	0	40,009
INFRASTRUCTURE								
0	0	50,000	0	500,000	5,700,000	0	0	6,250,000
0	0	0	14,600	50,000	1,935,400	1,000,000	0	3,000,000
0	0	0	0		321,594	321,594	0	643,187
529,616	239,042	72,301	383,589	1,644,992	8,373,359	1,700,426	327,370	13,270,696
Additional Funding								
0	0	0	0	(209,909)	(2,493,750)	(831,250)	0	(3,534,909)

Additional Funding

Total Developer Contributions		(3,534,909)	(3,534,909)
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2014/15 BUDGET MONITORING

Project Reference	Project Codes	Budget Approvals		
		Approved Budget Revenue	Approved Budget Capital	Total Approved Budgets
CAPACITY				
1	Local Authority Core Project Team	202,000		202,000
2	Consultancy	168,675		168,675
	Expenses etc	12,000		12,000
	Interest Received	(75,000)		(75,000)
OFF SITE PROJECTS				
4	Exhibition House	0	0	0
10	Travel Behaviour		601,497	601,497
11	Energy Saving Schemes		20,000	20,000
	Boiler Replacement Schemes		35,000	35,000
	Green Deal		130,820	130,820
12	Reuse Centre Seed Funding	0	0	0
INFRASTRUCTURE				
	North west Primary School		500,000	500,000
	Eco Business centre		50,000	50,000
	Infrastructure Fund	0	0	0
	TOTAL	307,675	1,337,317	1,644,992

Revenue Spend/Committed			Capital Spend/Committed		
Revenue Spend to Date	Revenue Committed	Total Revenue Spend / Committed	Capital Spend to Date	Capital Committed	Total Capital Spend / Committed
40,047	89,953	130,000	0	0	0
65,815	84,185	150,000	0	0	0
8,564	3,436	12,000	0	0	0
0	(75,000)	(75,000)	0	0	0
OFF SITE PROJECTS					
0	0	0	0	0	0
996	0	996	0	50,000	50,000
	0	0	0	20,000	20,000
34,015	0	34,015	0	0	0
10	240	250	75,000	110,000	185,000
0	0	0	0	0	0
INFRASTRUCTURE					
0	0	0	0		0
0	0	0	0		0
0	0	0	0		0
149,447	102,814	252,261	75,000	180,000	255,000

Projected Budget Variances		
Revenue Variance	Capital Variance	Total Variance
(72,000)	0	(72,000)
(18,675)	0	(18,675)
0	0	0
0	0	0
OFF SITE PROJECTS		
0	0	0
996	(551,497)	(550,501)
0	0	0
34,015	(35,000)	(985)
250	54,180	54,430
0	0	0
INFRASTRUCTURE		
0	(500,000)	(500,000)
0	(50,000)	(50,000)
0	0	0
(55,414)	(1,082,317)	(1,137,731)

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 November 2014

<p style="text-align: center;">North West Bicester Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document</p>

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

- a) To update the Executive on the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support proposals for an Eco-town development of up to 6,000 homes on land at North West (NW) Bicester.
- b) To endorse the Draft document and seek approval for public consultation on the Draft NW Bicester SPD.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the Draft SPD for public consultation (a copy to be placed in the Members Room)
- 1.2 To authorise officers, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make any further non-substantive changes to the Draft SPD prior to public consultation

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Approximately 345 Hectares (800 acres) of land was identified by Cherwell District Council as having the potential to accommodate a 5,000 home eco-town at North West Bicester. The site was included in the Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS) Annex A in 2009 as a location with potential for an eco-town and subsequently proposed as a large scale development in Policy Bicester 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan.
- 2.2 The site underpins the strategic objectives for Bicester and has led to significant support from Government funding, the creation of the Eco Bicester Project Strategic Delivery Board, the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision (2010) and national recognition of the growth proposals for Bicester. More recently the eco-town development

proposals have informed the preparation of the Bicester Masterplan (Consultation Draft 2012) and continue to support the Council's policy position.

- 2.3 A hybrid application was submitted in November 2010 for the first phase of development (Planning Application Reference: 10/01780/HYBRID) and approved in July 2012. The planning application was supported by a masterplan.
- 2.4 In March 2014, the developers, A2Dominion submitted a Vision Document including a Draft Masterplan to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for comment. A revised document and supporting information was submitted to CDC in May 2014. The revised masterplan area covers approximately 400 hectares (1000 acres).
- 2.5 The Draft NW Bicester Masterplan was used as the basis for a five week public consultation on the Issues and Options between 18 June and 24 July 2014. The consultation exercise included an event in Bicester on 10 and 11 July 2014 which was attended by members of the public and local residents. The consultation has informed the preparation of the Draft SPD. A summary of the consultation is contained in the Appendices.
- 2.6 Construction began on the site in June 2014. Three outline planning applications have been submitted on the NW Bicester site as follows:
- 2.7 Application 1 (Planning application reference: 14/01384/OUT): This application was submitted in August 2014 and relates to approximately 155 hectares (374 acres) of land north of the A4095 Lords Lane between the railway line and Banbury Road (B4100). The proposals include up to 2,600 new homes (up to 250 extra care homes), green infrastructure, land for a new primary school and further land for an extension of the phase 1 exemplar primary school and possible extension to its playing fields. A new local centre will be provided to meet the needs of the community. The application provides for access arrangements and the partial realignment of Bucknell Road through the site.
- 2.8 Application 2 (Planning Application reference: 14/01641/OUT): This application was submitted in September 2014 and relates approximately to 51 hectares (123 acres) of land south of the railway line and north west of the A4095 Howes Lane, including Aldershot Farm and Gowell Farm in Bicester. The proposals include up to 900 new homes, open space, land for a primary school, secondary school and local centre. It also provides part of the realigned Howes Lane and site access arrangements.
- 2.9 Application 3 (Planning Application reference: 14/01675/OUT): This application was submitted in October 2014 and relates to approximately 14 hectares (34 acres) of land at the junction of Middleton Stoney Road and Howes Lane. The proposals include a 9.45 hectare (23 acre) employment zone together with 4.5 hectares (11 acres) of residential land as part of an employment-led mixed use development comprising up to 53,000 square metres (570,500 sq ft) general industrial uses (within Use Class B2 of the Use Classes Order) /storage or distribution (within Use Class B8) and ancillary business uses including offices (within Use Class B1). The application also provides parking and service areas to serve the employment areas, internal roads, paths and cycleways, a new access from Middleton Stoney Road (B4030), temporary access off Howes Lane pending the realigned Howes Lane

proposal, landscaping including strategic green infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) and associated utilities.

- 2.10 Two further applications are expected to be submitted as follows:
- 2.11 Application 4: This detailed planning application will include a proposal to construct a new link road to realign Howes Lane (A4095) in accordance with the Draft NW Bicester masterplan.
- 2.12 Application 5: This application is expected to include proposals for up to 1,700 homes on land east of Middleton Stoney Road and Himley Farm.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 provide the legislative framework for the preparation of supplementary planning documents setting out the form and content of such documents. Further guidance is set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 153 and National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 3.2 National Planning Policy Guidance states that SPDs should only be prepared where necessary and in line with paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It goes on to state that they should build upon policies in the adopted Local Plan. It states that in exceptional circumstances a Strategic Environmental Assessment may be required when producing a supplementary planning document.
- 3.3 Policy Bicester 1 of the emerging Cherwell Local Plan sets out the development standards for NW Bicester. Further guidance on the approach to design and sustainable construction in Cherwell will be set out in a separate Sustainable Building in Cherwell SPD. Any policies in a SPD must not conflict with the adopted development plan.
- 3.4 The Eco-town development at NW Bicester is recognised as a locally and nationally important project delivering large scale development to high environmental standards. In order to assist in delivery of successful schemes through the planning process, the Council's Eco Bicester project team is preparing guidance for applicants, developers and landowners preparing proposals and submissions for planning applications. It will also set out a planning framework to develop proposals from the masterplanning stage to submission of detailed planning applications and implementation.
- 3.5 Proposed Modifications were reported to the Cherwell Full Council meeting on 20 October 2014 who approved for the final proposed modifications to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Plan Examination suspended in June 2014 will recommence. At the Local Plan Examination in June, the Inspector's conclusion was that the Local Plan did not make provision to meet the need for 22,800 new homes identified in the 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The proposed modifications include some minor changes to the wording of Policy Bicester 1 set

out in Part1 of the Schedule (Modifications Numbers 67 to 71). Consultation on the Cherwell Local Plan Proposed Modifications closed on 3 October 2014.

- 3.6 The SPD may be the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment. A SEA Screening Report has been prepared and a fee proposal obtained from consultants working on the Cherwell Local Plan. The report concludes that an SEA will be required given the significant effects arising from the masterplan SPD which are not covered by the Cherwell Local Plan SA.
- 3.7 In preparing the Draft masterplan SPD, officers have taken into account national planning guidance. The Draft masterplan SPD will take account of the national guidance and as such includes sections on masterplan framework and development principles before setting out an implementation/delivery strategy. The SPD sets out the vision for the eco-town masterplan and will be used as informal planning guidance in determining planning applications. Design guidance and character areas are included in the SPD as a guide to developers and reflecting the phasing of the masterplan.
- 3.8 The next step will be to finalise the SPD before publishing the document for a formal six week consultation following the Executive's decision at its meeting on 3 November 2014. The responses from the consultation will be considered before a final report is prepared and presented to the Executive for approval. The programme for preparing the document is attached in the Appendices. The SPD will be used as informal planning guidance as it cannot be adopted as CDC planning policy until the Cherwell Local Plan is adopted.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The NW Bicester Development Framework SPD will guide future eco-town developments and be used as informal guidance in determining planning applications that have been received and will be submitted as the proposals progress. It follows the standards set out in the Eco-towns PPS and emerging Cherwell Local Plan, providing further detail for consideration in planning applications, the development principles and character areas for the site. It is supported by a Sustainability Appraisal which considers the environmental effects of the masterplan proposals.
- 4.2 The Executive is recommended to note the contents of this report and endorse the vision and principles set out in the Draft masterplan as the basis of the Council's policy to be used as the basis for determining planning applications.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 An online five week (18 June 2014 to 24 July 2014) public consultation on the Issues and Options had a low response from the public despite efforts to publicise it widely. Respondents were encouraged to use the CDC consultation portal but could also use a paper copy of the questionnaire to complete the consultation. The consultation was open from and widely publicised in the local press, CDC website and social media. An exhibition displaying the issues and options took place in the Bicester pop-in centre in Manorsfield Road between 12.00 pm and 7.00 pm on 10

and 11 July 2014. Previously A2Dominion had organised a consultation on the masterplan in Bicester town centre. Comments were received from the general public and have been taken into account in preparing the Draft SPD. Comments made by individuals covered a range of issues including the suitability of the site and principle of development and the need for affordable homes.

Oxfordshire County Council Lisa Michelson, Locality Manager	Consultee response to follow
David Flavin, Senior Planning Officer	Requested further information on proposals
Natural England Olivia Euesden	Generally supportive
Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)	Applicants need to demonstrate that a net gain in Biodiversity will be delivered
Neil Rowntree	General comments
Sport England Raymond Cole	
Cherwell District Council Aboricultural Officer Anti Social Behaviour Manager	Detailed comments on tree pits Proposals accord with best practice
Middleton Stoney Parish Council	Concern about increase to 6,000 homes
Chesterton Parish Council	Concern about traffic impact

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: To not prepare and SPD and rely on the Eco towns PPS Cherwell Local Plan policy 1 and submitted Draft masterplan – This option was rejected given the potential for the PPS to be revoked and delay to the Local Plan adoption

Option 2: To commission consultants to prepare the SPD – This option was rejected in favour of the Eco Bicester project team leading on its preparation

Option 3: To await the adoption of the Local Plan before preparing SPD – This option was rejected due to the timescales involved and the necessity to have some form of informal planning guidance when determining the first outline applications later in 2014.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The cost of producing the SPD can be met within existing budgets.

Comments checked by:

Martin Henry, Director of Resources, 0300 003 0102,
martin.henry@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Supplementary Planning Documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions and will guide applicants in making suitable planning applications for development at NW Bicester.

Comments checked by:

Ross Chambers, Solicitor, 01295 221690,
ross.chambers@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

Bicester Wards
Caversfield
Chesterton and Ambrosden
Launton
Bucknell
Middleton Stoney

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This report directly links to all four of the corporate priorities and objectives set out in the Cherwell District Council Business Plan 2014-15 as follows:

Cherwell - A District of Opportunity
Cherwell – Safe, Clean and Green
Cherwell – Thriving Communities
Cherwell – Customer focussed Council

In addition it links to the strategic priorities for the Bicester projects.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Draft SPD – to follow
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Andrew Bowe, Implementation Officer
Contact Information	01295 221842 andrew.bowe@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Cherwell District Council

Executive

3 November 2014

<p>Housing Strategy Priority 5: Homeless Prevention Action Plan Update</p>

Report of Head of Regeneration and Housing

This report is public

Purpose of report

To update the Executive on the progress of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2013-2015.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the update of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan which takes account of learning from the current year's plan, and reflecting Cherwell District Council's application for the Gold standard accreditation for homelessness services.
- 1.2 To approve for the 2015/16 financial year, the ring-fencing of the homeless grant monies provided as part of the Council's general financial settlement awarded by central Government.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy 2012-17 explains the "journey" which Cherwell District Council has taken from high levels of homelessness acceptances and consequent high use of expensive, private sector temporary accommodation to today's position where despite austerity cuts to services, the number is much reduced and the type of accommodation improved. The number is consistently below the target of 43, and households are able to live in purpose built, well managed accommodation.
- 2.2 In order to react flexibly to changing circumstances, in 2013 and in particular the substantial and challenging welfare reforms, a Homelessness Prevention Action Plan was produced to focus on the detail needed to carry out the actions in the Housing Strategy. The attached Homelessness prevention action plan shows the progress which has been made and updates the plan for 2015-16. This update was recommended in the report to Executive on the Homelessness Prevention Action plan 2013.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The Action Plan links into the requirements of the Governments Gold Standard Programme.
- 3.2 The Government has issued a challenge to Local Authorities to reach a Gold Standard for homelessness services. Working towards the Gold Standard for services in homelessness is part of the Regeneration and Housing Service Plan. This is part of our homelessness prevention ethos, as the Challenge is designed to help stem future increases in homelessness and rough sleeping by encouraging local authorities to deliver comprehensive preventative services for all clients - not just the families and very vulnerable individuals who would otherwise be owed a statutory duty.
- 3.3 One of the steps in achieving the Gold Standard is taking part in a process known as a Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR). Local Authorities have been encouraged to form groups of 3 or more to carry out a "critical friend" assessment of each other's homelessness service to make sure the best outcomes are being achieved for customers. Receiving feedback on our service will help us to:
- identify key strengths and weaknesses by highlighting good practice
 - identifying gaps in provision or poor customer service
 - make recommendations for service improvement
 - develop effective improvement plans to help maximise the potential to prevent homelessness wherever possible
 - make the best use of current resources.
- 3.4 We are working with the other local authorities in Oxfordshire to carry out Diagnostic Peer Reviews which will enable us to take the next step in meeting the challenge. This involves 10 steps and as they progress through them, Local Authorities can be awarded a bronze, silver or gold standard.
- 3.5 Cherwell is very keen to meet the requirements for Gold Standard (which can be achieved using existing resources) and will be the first District in Oxfordshire to undertake its Diagnostic Peer Review (DPR) in October 2014. The results of this review will then give an indication of the timeframe it will take for us to proceed to meet the Gold Standard.

Partnership approach

- 3.6 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan 2015-16 continues to maintain a strong focus on partnership. As services respond to the reduction in Council (District and County) funding, best value for money will be achieved by working together on our joint aims. The introduction of the full suite of welfare reforms has been delayed but there will be effects on tenancy sustainment as the freeze on benefits comes in, as well as the failure of local housing allowance to keep pace with rent increases.
- 3.7 The plan is being, and will continue to be monitored by a steering group of statutory and voluntary sector partners, ensuring buy in from all parties and streamlining a joined up approach to holistic homelessness prevention.

Challenges to Homelessness Prevention

- 3.8 The national agenda of the Coalition Government has resulted in a demand for local authorities to offer “more for less” by working more efficiently in a time of reduced funding. For homelessness services, this is at a time when demand is increasing due to changes to welfare benefits. Although the nation is beginning to see signs of economic growth, in Cherwell we are still challenged by lack of skills leading to unemployment, part time or zero hours contracts leading to housing instability, and the failure of wages to keep pace with rents and house prices.

A holistic approach to Homelessness prevention

- 3.9 Through the homelessness prevention action plan services are directed to a holistic approach which tackles the deep causes of homelessness, rather than a crisis response. Homelessness prevention is a more cost effective approach than crisis management (Research by Heriot-Watt University calculated the cost of preventing someone from becoming homeless was £1,700 compared with the £5,300 cost of helping someone after they become homeless). It is also a far better approach for the individuals and households concerned, many of whom are very vulnerable and also include families with children .It contributes significantly to the protection of vulnerable children as well as providing help to the wider community.
- 3.10 The homelessness prevention action plan is based on evidence about the households who present as homeless. This has resulted in a wide range of tools to prevent homelessness including work to improve budgeting, reduce debt and improve employment prospects.

Resources for homelessness prevention

- 3.11 In order to avoid expensive temporary accommodation it is essential to continue to invest in front line services at the Council and through our partners. We provide outreach services for victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes if it is safe for them to do so .We work in significant partnership in both Banbury and Bicester to provide services for vulnerable singles to prevent them sleeping rough as far as possible. We provide general family support to build family resilience to prevent family break up which is often a root cause of homelessness. We also support education and skills training to improve opportunities for those disadvantaged who need skills to access training and employment. The homelessness prevention action plan sets out a co-ordinated approach by the agencies working in this field in Cherwell, to avoid duplication and to produce synergy from our actions.
- 3.12 The funding from Central Government to provide homelessness prevention activity in the district is no longer ring-fenced. Local Authorities have been advised by the then Housing Minister, Grant Shapps, that the money should be retained for homelessness prevention at least until the end of the current parliament. In Cherwell, we use the funding for external partnerships who can deliver through grant agreements. Their performance is monitored regularly to ensure the outcomes are achieved or exceeded. These partners have made a major contribution to Cherwell’s ability to maintain performance and reduce the need for temporary accommodation. They will play a large part in our bid for Gold Standard.

- 3.13 The partnerships have been reviewed as directed by the Housing Strategy 2012-17, Chapter 5 and grant agreements have been modified to take account of the changing environment. Not only do the grants made by Cherwell District Council enhance our partners' ability to reduce homelessness, but they can also assist organisations in leveraging in other funding, as they demonstrate the Council's support.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 It is through adopting this Action Plan that the Council makes clear its commitment to the homelessness prevention agenda to both central Government and its partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors
- 4.2 The Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is a result of a review of the previous action plan as directed by Chapter 5 of the Housing Strategy, which requires a review of partnerships.
- 4.3 The adoption of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is an important step on the Council's journey to achieving Gold Standard for Homelessness Services, and all that lies behind that award.

5.0 Consultation

Public consultation	The actions derive from the Housing Strategy which was subject to the full consultation procedure.
Registered Providers operating in Cherwell and statutory and voluntary agencies providing services for vulnerable people	A public event was held on 24 September attended by many of the partner organisations who work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and Registered provider partners who work with us on tenancy sustainment.
Council members	Other partners were contacted by email. Council members were invited to the "Stronger through partnerships" event on 24 September. The plan has been emailed to Council Members for comment.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

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

Option 1: Not to endorse the Homeless Action Plan 2015/16 which also requests continued ring-fencing of the DCLG element of council grant for homelessness prevention. This has been rejected as it will lead to an increase in statutory duties to

homeless and an increase in spending on provision of expensive temporary accommodation

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The DCLG grant is an unring-fenced grant so the council has discretion over where it can apply that funding. £99,000 DCLG grant included in the overall grant allocation to the Council by CLG is for homelessness provision as part of the 2014-15 budget. The Council will not formally set its 2015-16 budget until February 2015. However the current Medium Term Revenue Plan allocates this same amount for homelessness funding for 2015-16 through to 2019-20.

Comments checked by:

Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager, 01295 221731
nicola.jackson@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk.

Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Council has a statutory duty to provide homeless services including the provision of temporary accommodation to qualifying households.

Comments checked by:

Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 0030107
kevin.lane@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk.

Risk implications

- 7.3 If the Council does not continue to support a homeless prevention approach to delivering its services, it may face an increase in provision of temporary accommodation which may be a significant increased cost to the Council. This will, if and when necessary be escalated from the local strategic risk register (managed at service level) to the corporate risk register.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: Yes

Community Impact Threshold Met: Yes

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

- District of opportunity
- Thriving communities
- Sound budgets and customer-focussed council

Lead Councillor

Councillor Debbie Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Homeless Action Plan 2015/16
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Marianne North, Housing Needs Manager
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Homelessness Prevention Action Plan review and update for 2013 -15

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Foreword

“Last year, I endorsed Cherwell’s Homelessness Prevention Action Plan as having full support from Councillors who want to reduce the number of households and communities whose lives are affected by homelessness. I am pleased to be able to offer the same support to the review of the Action Plan.

Cherwell has moved from a crisis situation of over 400 households in temporary accommodation to less than 40 households who can access purpose built, well managed homes until they can achieve a settled housing solution. We are not complacent about this, and know that it is the result of both good operation work and effective planning.

As a nation, we are beginning to see an economic recovery, and in our district unemployment is down to 1%. These are good signs for the economic success of communities. However, house prices and rents in our district are difficult for some households to afford. We are working in a time of reducing funds for public services, and have yet to see the full effects of welfare reform. I want to make sure that our most vulnerable residents are not left behind. This homelessness prevention action plan focusses in the right places – understanding the reasons for homelessness and providing solutions which really address them through partnership working, in a partnership which includes individuals – personal responsibility, personal resilience and personal health and well-being.”

Councillor Debbie Pickford, Lead Member for Housing

Introduction

Cherwell District Council’s Homelessness Prevention Plan runs from 2013 – 2015, with a review built in after 1 year. The review of this Homelessness Prevention Action Plan comes at an important time strategically, with the following influences on the review:-

- Major reductions in public spending have reduced the amount of funds available for homelessness prevention to the Council and its partners
- The County Council has announced the level of cuts to the former supporting people budget, and is currently in consultation on its proposals to remodel services for

housing related support for adults and young people. This will have a massive effect on homelessness prevention in Cherwell District Council.

- The District Council is setting its budget for 2015/16 in an atmosphere of reduced funding from the County and a reduction in its own budget.
- The implementation of Universal Credit has been delayed but the effects of Welfare reform are beginning to be felt. This includes a new benefit sanction regime, with implications for claimants' ability to sustain a tenancy
- Interest rates have remained low, keeping mortgages more affordable
- The County Council ceased funding the local support scheme (which replaced the social fund) from April 2014

The review sets out the aims and proposed outcomes for the year 2014/15 moving into 2015/16, showing how the Council will continue to work with its partners to prevent homelessness. We will retain the 3 themes of personal responsibility, personal resilience and personal health and well-being as we believe that focussing on these areas is the best way to support residents to avoid homelessness and sustain settled accommodation.

Aims	
With our partners' support, Cherwell District Council aims to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a broad view of homelessness prevention, looking to build personal responsibility, personal resilience and personal health and well being • Continue to keep homelessness levels low through early intervention and crisis prevention • Deliver focussed support which concentrates on preventing homelessness and avoiding repeat homelessness • Understand the causes of homelessness and target prevention services to relevant groups such as emergent households • Provide suitable accommodation to meet the needs of people in the district including better access to private sector accommodation 	

Key facts

Ethnic diversity	Cherwell District Council has lower than average national levels of ethnic diversity. The levels of diversity have increased between the censuses of 2001 and 2011
Unemployment	Unemployment in Cherwell District Council is lower than the national average at 1%
Demand for housing	The numbers on the Housing Register decreased when the new Allocation scheme was implemented but are now rising
	The majority of applicants are seeking 1 or 2 bedroomed accommodation
Empty homes	The number of empty homes in the district has decreased, assisted

	by the Council's Build! initiative and the use of home improvement grants
Court possessions	The number of court possession actions is decreasing faster than the south east and national averages
Homelessness acceptances	The level of homelessness acceptances has not fluctuated greatly over the past year
	Cherwell's levels of prevention are in line with national figures
	The number of preventions which allow applicants to remain in their existing home is lower than the national average due to the nature of the very buoyant local housing market
Reason for loss of last settled home	Very low levels of people being homeless on leaving care
	Few people homeless as a result of leaving hospital
	Main causes are Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate loss of assured short hold tenancy
Prevention and relief of homelessness	Levels of prevention are higher than the SE averages compared to levels of relief
Temporary accommodation	Use of temporary accommodation is low
	The majority of households leave temporary accommodation after a stay of less than 6 months
	Use of bed and breakfast is low
	No 16 and 17 year olds are accommodated in B and B
Rough sleeping	The estimated number of rough sleepers in Cherwell increased from 2 to 14 between 2013 and 2014
The cost effectiveness of early prevention	Research by Heriot-Watt University calculated the cost of preventing someone from becoming homeless was £1,700 compared with the £5,300 cost of helping someone after they become homeless
	The costs of a rent deposit scheme are estimated to be eight-and-a-half times less than the costs of providing accommodation under the main homelessness duty according to an advice note from the Department for Communities and Local Government
	Helping someone to retain their accommodation through mediation(for example settling family disputes is nine times less expensive than finding someone new accommodation according to an advice note from the Department for Communities and Local Government
	Advice on housing options, such as how to solve benefit problems or helping people to manage their finances (i.e. debt advice, benefit take-up), is also estimated at nine times less expensive than finding someone new accommodation

For more detailed information

Appendices

Appendix A	Cherwell District Council homelessness partnerships
Appendix B	Statistical information

Key Findings

We have analysed the data which affects the way we deliver the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan with the following key findings:

- Number of households accepted as homeless has decreased
- Parental eviction overtook the end of an assured short hold tenancy (AST) as the main reason for presenting as homeless from 2012/13. It remained the main reason in 2013/14 although this year, less than half of those presenting as homeless as a result of parental eviction were accepted as homeless. This was due to casework revealing that several households had given up private sector tenancies which they believed to be unaffordable and returned to the parental home. Financial assessment showed they could have afforded the tenancy with improved budgeting skills. We have taken account of this by continuing to promote the Community Bank, and supporting the provision of debt and money advice.
- The increased partnership work with the voluntary sector, together with commissioning an outreach service has resulted in improved intelligence about rough sleeping. It demonstrated that Cherwell has been consistently under resourced through Supporting people and the successor funding.
- The number of casework presentations has increased and the number of duty presentations has decreased
- The number of looked after children is statistically predicted to increase which has implications for their housing need on leaving care
- The number of NEET young people is decreasing.

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Homelessness prevention action plan 2013 - 2015 update

Key Strategic Area 1 Personal responsibility

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Review	Refresh	Resources
Increase access to good quality homes in all sectors	<i>Investigate and enable innovative models of housing provision:-</i> Build to Rent	This model is being actively considered but does not fit into a current programme of delivery at this time. In the recent Build to Rent HCA funding round there were no schemes being proposed for Oxfordshire	Consider for next AHP Continue to investigate opportunities for market rent	HCA grant Registered Provider funds CDC recyclable grant
	Rent-save-own	Similarly this model of affordable housing delivery is part of the overall package of options that are being considered as to whether they can work in Cherwell. At present these types of tenure do not form a significant part of the housing offer.	Continue to investigate funding opportunities and other savings vehicles to access homeownership	Existing grant agreements Existing resources
	Cherwell's own development programme	In 2013-14 there were 34 affordable homes delivered by CDC, these were a mix of 1, 2 and bed flats and houses for rent. Several of these properties were delivered as self-finish units together with a number aimed at those who were aged 18-15 impacted by the single room rate. For 2014-15 CDC will be delivering the remainder of its AHP, Places for Change and Empty Homes programmes. A large majority of the homes being for self- build, including 21 homes at Bicester	CDC's development programme for 2015-16 onwards will focus on the delivery of the Graven Hill site	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Review	Refresh	Resources	
	RP development programmes	<p>In 2013-14 there was a district delivery of 145 rented and shared ownership homes with 59 Help to Buy sales. In the first quarter of 2014-15 there were 30 new rented and shared ownership properties delivered. This is on schedule for 150 new affordable housing delivery by the end of the year.</p> <p>The Help To Buy agency was transferred to Radion and we have worked to build relationships with the new team. The new Allocations policy made accessing low cost homeownership less bureaucratic by removing the requirement to be registered with both the Help to Buy Agent and Cherwell District Council.</p>	<p>RPs will submit their development programmes to the HCA and we will work with them to enable delivery. We believe there will be increased continuous market engagement in the new AHP.</p> <p>CDC maintains a target of 150 units to be delivered in 2015 – 16 through RPs including its own delivery programme</p> <p>We will continue to promote shared ownership and help to buy and require Registered providers to prioritise Cherwell District Council residents for low cost home ownership opportunities</p> <p>We will work with RPs according to Cherwell's Tenancy strategy when requesting disposal of properties to fund new development</p>		
	<p><i>Cherwell Bond Scheme</i></p> <p>Continue to work with private sector landlords to source properties for the Cherwell Bond Scheme and to develop and review the scheme</p>	<p>Despite difficulties in finding Landlords who are prepared to let properties within local housing allowance rates, the bond scheme continues to provide an option for households who cannot provide their own deposit for private sector rentals. The grants scheme provides a source of new properties with nominations rights for different periods depending on the level of grant funding.</p> <p>The Credit Union development officer is investigating ways in which the CU can support Bond Scheme tenants to save up</p>	<p><i>Cherwell Bond Scheme</i></p> <p>Work to promote the home improvement grant scheme to landlords, in return for nomination rights.</p> <p>Continue to work with other landlords promoting the benefits of the Cherwell Bond Scheme</p> <p>Work with the Credit Union to promote savings for Bond Scheme customers</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>Tenancy Relations Officer</p>	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Review	Refresh	Resources	
		for their own deposit fund.			
Contribute to a financial inclusion strategy which focuses on what can be achieved in partnership and plans for the predicted effects of welfare reform	<i>Personal Budgeting:</i> provide debt and money advice to housing applicants	<p>CDC supports CAB with funding through the Council contract to provide advice in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington as well as through an SLA to provide fast track advice for those at risk of homelessness. In the first quarter of 2014, CAB saw 1413 individual clients through the contract and 36 clients through the fast track service.</p> <p>We have connected the Beacon centre and Bridges with Aspire Oxford who can offer work experience and training opportunities</p> <p>We work with the Beacon Centre and Bridges Banbury to fund a Connections service for drop in clients which includes support for independent living and referrals to other agencies such as CAB for in depth debt and money advice</p> <p>See below for Credit Union and pre tenancy training, both of which contribute to this area</p>	<i>Personal Budgeting:</i> Provide debt and money advice to housing applicants via CAB. Continue to provide fast track advice for those at risk of homelessness	Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant agreements Existing resources Voluntary sector resources	
	produce a pack for front line staff to use following training to offer advice and signposting for personal budgeting	Carried forward	Research good practice and produce a pack for advisors	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant	
	find resources to offer a Rent in Advance scheme	Resources have been made available through discretionary housing benefit payments (DHP)	find resources to offer a Rent in Advance scheme including via DHP	Existing grant	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Review	Refresh	Resources
	<p>Establish a Credit Union in Cherwell capable of offering “jam jar” accounts</p>	<p>The Cherwell Community Bank was launched on 19th July at the Castle Quay shopping centre in Banbury. 18 people joined on the day including CDC Council members. See http://www.northamptonshirecu.co.uk/news.asp</p> <p>A service point is held at CAB every Monday and more service points will be developed across the district as volunteers are recruited.</p> <p>The Credit Union has applied for funds from Lloyds Bank to develop its “hub and spoke” approach to maintaining local branding</p> <p>Website development has resulted in a bright up to date website. There is further development on going to differentiate between CCB and NCU clients to reduce potential confusion between the names.</p> <p>A launch is being developed at the Sunshine Centre for early September to promote Christmas savings and affordable loans</p>	<p>Continue to support the development of Cherwell Community Bank, increasing the number of access points across the district.</p> <p>Offer volunteering opportunities to build skills</p> <p>Research forward funding for CU development officer</p>	<p>arrangements</p>
	<p>Target those most in need of Credit union services to take up accounts</p>	<p>The development officer continues to work with Housing Options and Sanctuary Housing to promote CU accounts. Agencies can refer directly to the CU on a specifically designed form which generates a call back from the CU to the person referred</p>	<p>Promote rent payment accounts for those in need to prepare for direct payments.</p> <p>Develop knowledge amongst RPs</p> <p>Improve take up through housing officers and extend training to all RPs with stock in the District</p>	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Review	Refresh	Resources	
	Review the award of Discretionary Housing Payments to ensure compliance with new guidance, while targeting people at risk of homelessness		Work with benefits specialists to target DHP payments		
	Support residents to access mortgage rescue	<p>The Mortgage rescue scheme ended in March 2014. CDC had been one of the most successful authorities in securing mortgage rescue scheme funds due to a combination of the housing market in our area and the excellent casework and partnership provided by CDC Housing Options and CAB. We are using this experience to continue to provide creative options to present to those in mortgage difficulties including the fast track advice service at CAB.</p> <p>So far, we have not experienced many cases where tenants are made homeless as a result of repossession on buy to let mortgages but will monitor trends in this area.</p>	Use learning from Mortgage Rescue to ensure high quality housing options advice continues to be given to people in mortgage difficulties		
	<p><i>Skills and training</i></p> <p>Build an operational working relationship with the Job Centre Plus manager</p>	The JCP Partnerships Manager has joined the Financial Inclusion Group. We have provided contacts of RP partners for the RP group she co-ordinates to boost engagement.	Continue to build relationships including with JCP		
			Work with YMCA and Banbury Foyer to provide training which meets the claimant commitment		

Key Strategic Area 2

Personal resilience

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
<p>Provide support to members of vulnerable groups (including vulnerable adults, victims of domestic violence and young people); to avoid homelessness, be “housing ready” and maintain housing successfully</p>	<p><i>Contribute to the re-commissioning processes and optimise provision in Cherwell for services within the:</i></p> <p>Young People’s pathway</p>	<p>Commissioning is on-going, with tender responses currently being analysed. The interviews will take place over the Autumn and new services will be commissioned.</p>	<p><i>Following the re-commissioning processes continue to optimise provision in Cherwell for services within the</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Young People’s pathway o Domestic Abuse services o Single homeless people <p>Contribute to the implementation of new services following re-commissioning of the young people’s pathway, domestic abuse services and single homeless pathway</p>	<p>Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements County Council funding</p>	
	<p>Domestic Abuse services</p>	<p>The proposed cuts to Council spending will affect Refuge Provision. With the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness Group, we are looking at possible mitigations including better use of enhanced housing benefit and reciprocal arrangements with other local authorities. We have met with reducing the Risk as part of our SLA monitoring. They are developing strategies to continue their work and support the outreach service in the event that County and District funding is cut or withdrawn.</p>	<p>Add DA professionals to the Homelessness Prevention Group Facilitate training in DA services for CAB and other partners Promote need for DA services to Police and Crime Commissioner</p>		
	<p>Single homeless people</p>	<p>Re-commissioning is on-going We have negotiated a proposed funding distribution which relates better to need across the County, resulting in a 300% increase in funding in CDC to £100k. We are working on a proposal for move on accommodation to be provided in Cherwell District Council if the County budget proposals are accepted. This would incorporate the current Cherwell Connection Project Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation abstinence beds</p>	<p>Continue to participate in re-commissioning and development of services. Work with Oxfordshire County Council to develop the new pathway once the budget has been set</p>		

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
			Develop a deeper understanding of the reasons for homelessness including lack of tenancy sustainment and use the analysis to plan future service provision including staff training	Existing resources	
	<i>Review service provision for vulnerable groups in the statutory and voluntary sector:</i> to create better access to services across the district	We have made contact with voluntary groups including Food Banks and have improved partnerships with statutory agencies We are updating the community directory and the professionals' leaflet on domestic abuse services	Maintain and develop partnerships which have been formed Update and reissue web based community directory Review information for professionals and voluntary groups about housing services	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements Voluntary sector resources	
	to optimise value from the floating support service	We monitor delivery in co-operation with the floating support service provider.	Floating support services will be re-commissioned under the new funding arrangements – see above		
	evaluate partnership funding	We conduct regular service level agreement monitoring meetings with all funded organisations to evaluate the provision CAB will be reporting on their performance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September	Evaluate performance and issue new agreements following budgetary process		
Offer opportunities for individuals to participate in improving their housing options	Offer an accredited pre tenancy qualification to housing applicants	Pilot being held at the Foyer in Banbury starting August 2014. Following evaluation we will propose a scheme to RP partners	Evaluate the pilot accredited pre tenancy qualification to housing applicants Offer a district wide accredited scheme in partnership with RP landlords Investigate the appetite for self-funded training	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant Existing grant arrangements County Council funding Voluntary sector	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
				resources	
	Offer skills training through housing development including exploring the potential of the Build! programme to enhance residents' employment opportunities	Residents in Places for Change properties have the option of attending construction skills training through ACE training Kidlington. The first self-builders have begun their training with ACE and will start on site in Autumn 2014	Evaluate and continue to offer skills training to Places for change residents Research the possibility of extending training options to other applicants		
	Work with the Thriving Families service to offer opportunities to households to improve their housing options through addressing challenging behaviours, and issues which are affecting their ability to maintain a settled housing solution	We maintain contact with Thriving Families and will review provision if the needs data dictates it	Maintain partnership with the Thriving Families service to identify opportunities for households to improve their housing options through addressing challenging behaviours, and issues which are affecting their ability to maintain a settled housing solution		
	Work with partners to offer meaningful daytime occupation and volunteering opportunities Campaign to reduce begging	We support the Beacon and Bridges drop in centres Connection floating support encourages meaningful day time occupation We fund BYHP and the Hill to encourage young people to develop positive pass times and access training and educational opportunities. There are issues with the premises at the Hill, and much effort is being made to provide activities in a reduced space. BYHP has joined with Banbury CAG to kick off Banbury Incredible Edible.	Continue to work with partners to offer meaningful daytime occupation and volunteering opportunities Launch campaign to reduce begging in partnership with Banbury town centre co-ordinators and Beacon Centre		
			<i>Move on</i> Review the use and availability of move on accommodation from supported accommodation, including Banbury Foyer and O'Hanlon House Investigate in partnership with	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
			Oxfordshire County Council the implications of the rise in numbers of looked after children and its potential effects on demand for housing services		
			<i>Ex- Offenders</i> Develop partnership with the new CRC responsible for offenders who have served under 1 year sentence	CDC led bid for funding to CLG – results known Autumn 2014	

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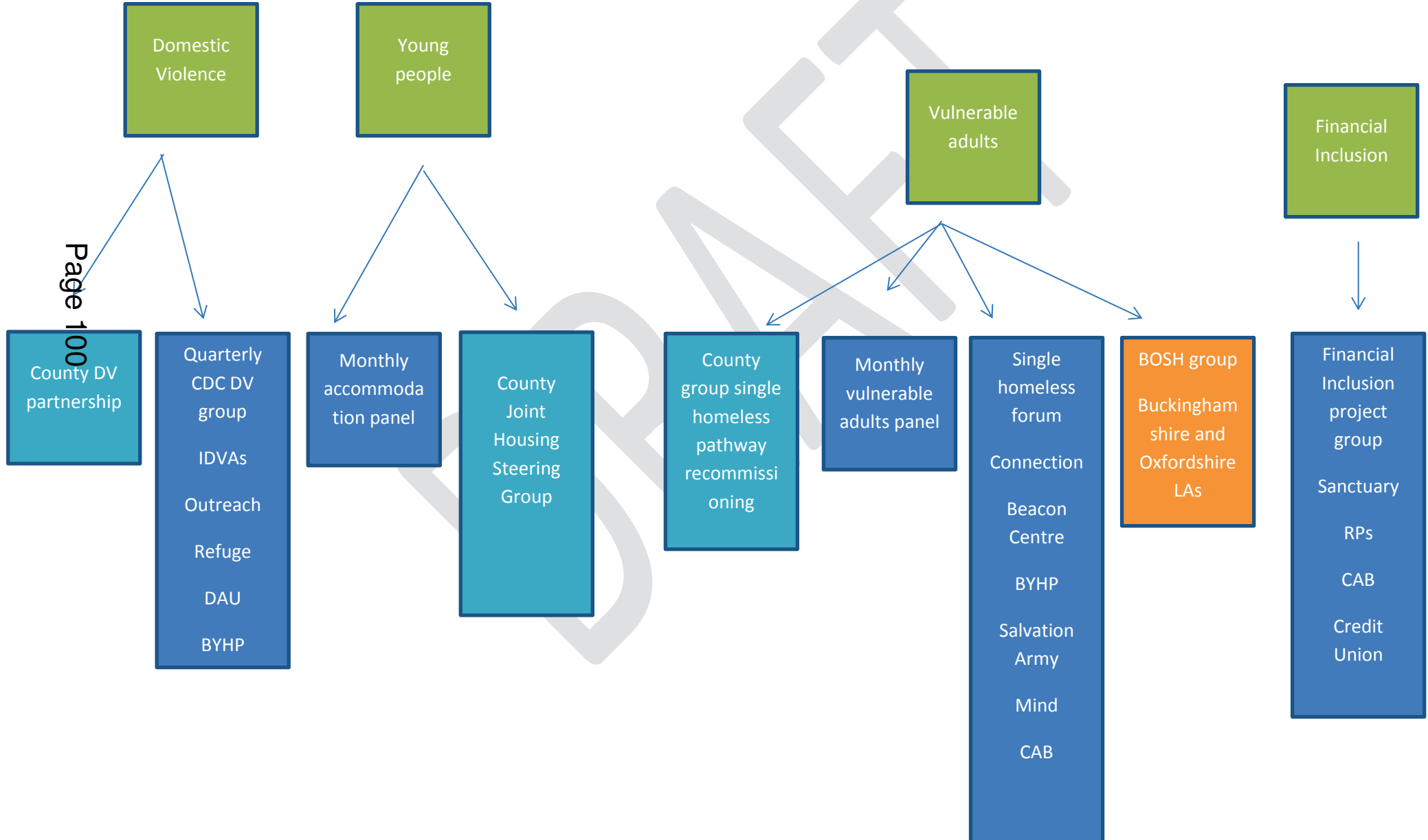
Key Strategic Area 3 Personal Health and Wellbeing

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
Improve partnership working to develop and maintain services in a time of austerity, offering opportunities to develop expertise and share best practice, improve value for money and offer a co-ordinated approach Page 97	Provide forum opportunities for discussion and partnership working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ single homeless forum ○ accommodation panel ○ young people's accommodation panel 	We are reviewing the Single Homeless Forum to provide a Homelessness forum incorporating a Domestic Abuse Group to better cover homelessness issues in the district	Update single homeless forum to provide Homelessness prevention forum for all groups including domestic abuse professionals	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant County Council	
		The accommodation panel meets monthly and reviews cases in a partnership setting, sharing knowledge and expertise	Continue with this successful format Provide training opportunities for members		
		The young people's panel meets monthly and reviews cases in a partnership setting, sharing knowledge and expertise	Continue with this successful format Provide training opportunities for members		
	Participate in forum opportunities for discussion and partnership working:	CDC regularly attends and contributes to the forums which contribute to effective casework	Participate in forum opportunities for discussion and partnership working	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant	
	JATAC				
	MARAC	CDC regularly attends and contributes to the forums which contribute to effective casework and safeguarding			
	Joint Housing Steering Group	CDC attends the JHSG and is participating in the young people's re-commissioning	Continue to develop relationships and understanding through the group		
	Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness Group	The group meets quarterly and has discussed issues including Gold standard and NSNO	Continue to support the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness Group		
Health & Wellbeing Board	As the chair of HSAG CDC co-ordinated the report to the HWB on homelessness and temporary accommodation and co-ordinated the setting of new and renewed targets Councillor Pickford has attended a special meeting of the HWB to discuss the proposed cuts to the former Supporting People funding to represent CDC.	Promote housing and homelessness prevention as key parts of the Health and Wellbeing agenda in Oxfordshire			

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
	Brighter futures theme groups	CDC produced an annual report on the Brighter Futures project to break the cycle of disadvantage, Housing provide the theme lead for advice services and housing delivery.	Work through the Brighter Futures theme Group to improve services in the areas of greatest deprivation		
	Credit union project group	The project group meets monthly and brings together staff in CDC and SNC to share good practice.	Credit Union Project Group will continue to promote and support the Cherwell Community Bank		
	Financial inclusion partnership	The housing team have participated in the financial inclusion partnership	Financial Inclusion partnership will work to provide an action plan		
	HSAG	CDC held the chair of HSAG until June 2014.	Continue to attend and support HSAG as an important part of the Health and Wellbeing agenda		
	Reviewing and forming new groups if necessary	It is proposed to create a Homelessness forum from the Single Homeless forum, with a Domestic Abuse group held in conjunction with it. CDC feel that at time of great change it is more important than ever to bring partners together to reduce duplication and make sure all partners are aware of developments and the services which are on offer.	Reviewing and forming new groups if necessary		
Work towards Gold Standard for homelessness services and continue to provide a high quality housing options service, focussing on homelessness prevention	Work with NHAS and the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness group to meet the Gold Standard and use the diagnostic peer review tool to improve performance	We were disappointed that we were not able to participate in a Gold Standard Peer review in June due to staffing issues at the Partnership support team. However, we will be meeting in early September to set a date for an Autumn review. This is a stage in an application to reach Gold Standard in the Government's challenge.	Work with the National Practitioner Support Service, NHAS and the Oxfordshire Housing and Homelessness group to meet the Gold Standard and use the diagnostic peer review tool to improve performance. Complete a diagnostic peer review by April 2014 and use the outcomes to improve service delivery	Existing resources NPPS resources	
	Implement the new Allocations Scheme ensuring those in greatest need are prioritised for housing: Reassess Applications to achieve appropriate banding under the new scheme	The new Allocations Scheme has now bedded in. It has revealed that there is some mismatch between the stock and the housing register in the area of sheltered housing and we are encouraging partners to conduct their own reviews in this area. The Allocations Scheme will be reviewed in 2015 and minor changes are likely to be	Review the new Allocations Scheme ensuring those in greatest need are prioritised for housing and that there have not been unintended consequences of the review	Existing resources	

Key objectives	Key actions and milestones	Progress Update	Refresh	Resources	
Page 9 Monitor levels of rough sleeping and promote service offers whereby individuals can avoid rough sleeping		made as a result. We will consult all our partners on the changes.			
	Ensure applicants understand the new scheme	We publicised the new scheme to applicants, members and partners agencies. As queries arise, trained staff are available to advise applicants	Ensure applicants are advised of and understand any changes resulting from the review of the allocations scheme		
	Train partners in the new scheme	RP partners have received training and have a working relationship with the Assessment and Rehousing team which enables them to ask for guidance when needed	Ensure partners are advised of and understand any changes resulting from the review of the allocations scheme		
	Explore the options to secure funding for a Sanctuary scheme to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes where safe and appropriate	RP landlords have funded Sanctuary scheme adaptations working in partnership with CDC and the police	RP landlords should continue to fund adaptations.		
	Young people in bed and breakfast accommodation		Maintain low to zero levels of 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation working in partnership with Social Care	Existing resources	
			Continue to improve intelligence gathering through partnership working	Existing resources Homelessness prevention grant funding	
			Work creatively with any additional funding for the single homeless pathway in Cherwell to provide improved services and best value for money	County Council funding	

Appendix A Homeless partnerships **Cherwell District Council Homelessness partnerships (landscape)**



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Appendix B statistical information

1. Demographic overview

Changes between 2001 census and 2011 census

a) Ethnicity

The BME population in Cherwell has increased in the 2011 census compared to the 2001 census.

2011 census Ethnicity - BME

Cherwell	SE	National
12%	13%	18%

Population

Up from 131,785 to 141,868

b) Age

Under 15s down from 19.8% to 18.8%

Over 65s up from 13.5% to 15.3%

c) Qualifications

Level 4 qualifications up from 20% to 28.9%

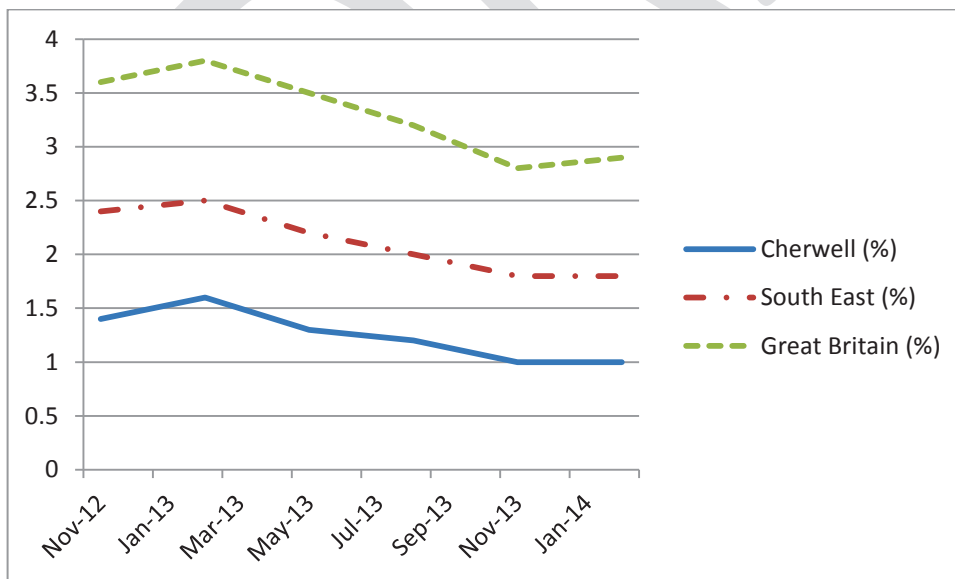
Level 2 qualifications down from 21.6 to 15.2

No qualifications down from 24.5% to 19.7% (national average 22.7%)

d) Unemployment

CDC unemployment rate 1%, UK unemployment rate is 2.9% at February 2014

Unemployment Trends



Source ONS

Proportion of Young People not in Education or Employment decreasing

The majority of young people succeed in education and make a positive transition into adult life and the job market. Unfortunately a small proportion does not make this transition successfully, and become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

As of end December 2013, 4.8% of years 12 to 14 in Oxfordshire were classed as being NEET, down from 6.1% in December 2013. The most common reasons for this in Oxfordshire were given as:

- Seeking employment, education or training (of which 17% live in Cherwell, 31% in Oxford City, 22% in South Oxfordshire, 21% in Vale and 9% in West Oxfordshire).
- Not available to labour market/learning due to illness/pregnancy/parent/unlikely ever to be economically active (10% of NEETs).

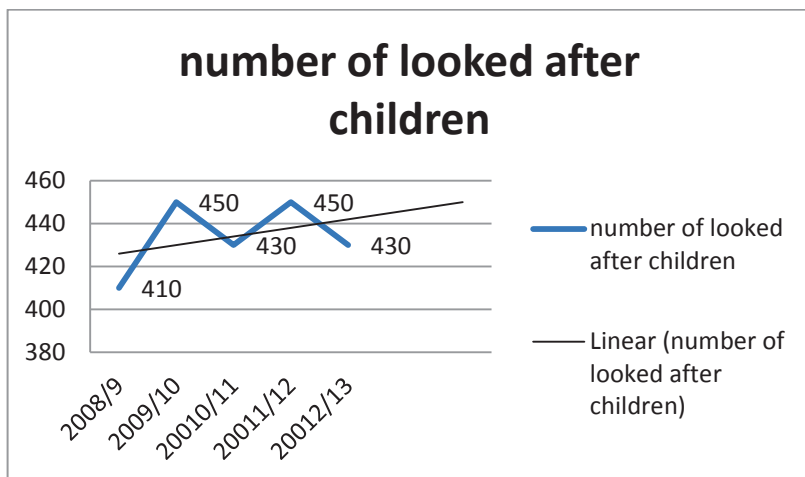
2. Housing demand

The introduction of the new Allocations Scheme had a major effect on the Housing Register. Prior to the introduction of the new scheme, there were close to 4,000 applicants on the Register. The new requirements that applicants must be in housing need to register; plus a requirement to provide evidence of household income and assets under £60,000 have reduced the numbers on the register to 701 in July 2014. However, it should be noted that the trend is upwards – in May 2014, there were 648 applicants on the register. The majority of applicants have a one or two bedroom need.

a) Number on Housing Register July 2014

Applicant Type	Current Bedroom Need	1	2	3	Grand Total
General	1	6	107	121	234
	2	4	151	47	202
	3	3	36	15	54
	4		10	2	12
General Total		13	304	185	502
Homeless	1		2		2
	2		24		24
	3		2		2
Homeless Total			28		28
Transfer	1	50	18	20	88
	2	16	15	6	37
	3	4	22	5	31
	4	1	14		15
Transfer Total		71	69	31	171
Grand Total		84	401	216	701

b) Safeguarding and looked after children



Source: OCC Joint Commissioning Performance Team

More children are being looked after, or identified as at risk. It is likely that this is as a result of increased investment in child protection services. 68% of Looked After Children are placed in a foster placement. There are also rising reports to police of domestic violence in situations involving children. Again, increased reporting is actively targeted and therefore an increase in reported levels does not necessarily mean an increased level of such violence.

3. Trends in Homelessness

a) Figures remain low, and relatively static due to the high levels of prevention work which is carried out. The homelessness figures have for the most part remained relatively unchanged, despite changes in economic circumstances and increased difficulty in sourcing accommodation in the private sector at local housing allowance rates.

2013/14 q2	Cherwell	% total	South East	% total	national	% total
16 – 24`	2	12.5	517	32.3%	3,732	28.0%
25 – 44	12	75%	801	50%	7,270	54.6%
45 – 59	0	0%	222	13.9%	1,779	13.4%
60 – 64	0	0%	19	1.2%	212	1.6%
65 – 74	0	0%	29	1.8%	215	1.6%
75+	0	0%	11	0.7%	100	0.8%

b) Rough sleeping is increasing

Oxfordshire has experienced a 42% increase in rough sleeping from 2012 to 2013. The estimate of 14 rough sleepers submitted from Cherwell to DCLG in November 2103 represented a rise from an estimate of 2. The district was identified by Homeless Link as one of the South East “outliers” (non-representative local authorities, deviating from the norm of increases or decreases).

Cherwell represented 44% of the referrals to the Connection outreach service in Quarter 1 2014/15

Council Areas	Number Referred	Number Accepted for verification	Number of RS actually verified
Cherwell DC	20	20	13
West Oxfordshire	7	7	4
South & Vale DC	19	19	10
Total	46	46	27

c) Reasons for presentations and acceptances

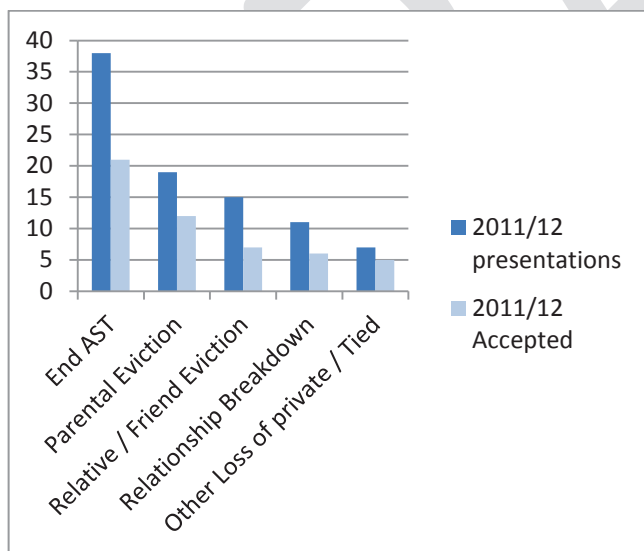
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Cancelled	2	1	0
Number of Presentations	124	127	128
Accepted	62	59	51
Non Priority	10	9	22
Intentionally Homeless	30	24	33
Not Homeless	20	27	14
Not Eligible	2	1	3
198 Referrals	0	2	0
Duty Presentations	72	58	52
Casework Presentations	53	69	76
Emergency TA Placements	87	84	62
B&B & Musketeer	73	67	59
Direct to Self-contained TA	14	17	3

Parental eviction overtook the end of AST as the main reason for presenting as homeless from 2012/13. It remained the main reason in 2013/14 although this year, less than half of those presenting as homeless as a result of parental eviction were accepted as homeless.

Further research reveals that the main reason for this is that applications have been made by households who had previously held tenancies in the private rented sector returning to the parental home. They have then made a homelessness application from there.

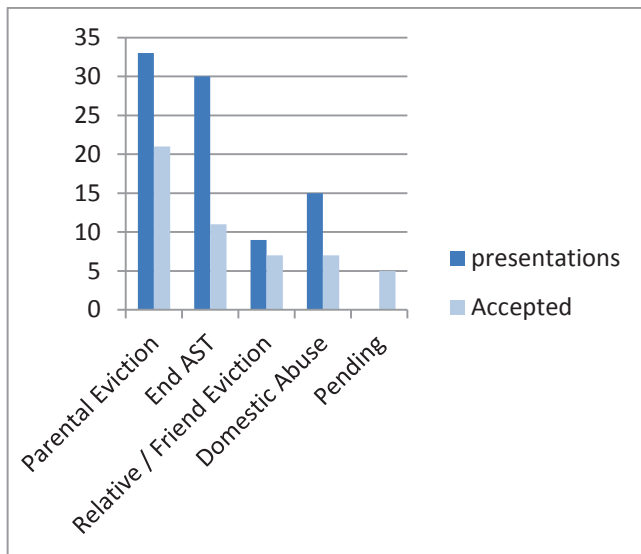
Top 5 reasons for presentations and acceptances by year

2011/12 (top 5 reasons same for both presentations and acceptances)



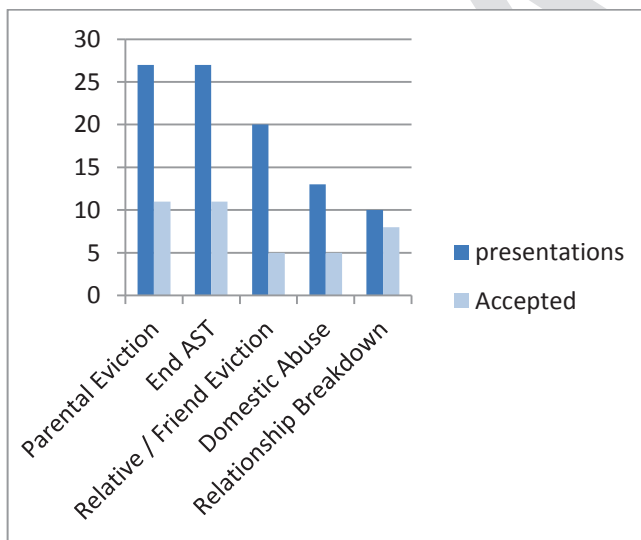
2012/13

Presentations and acceptances



2013/14

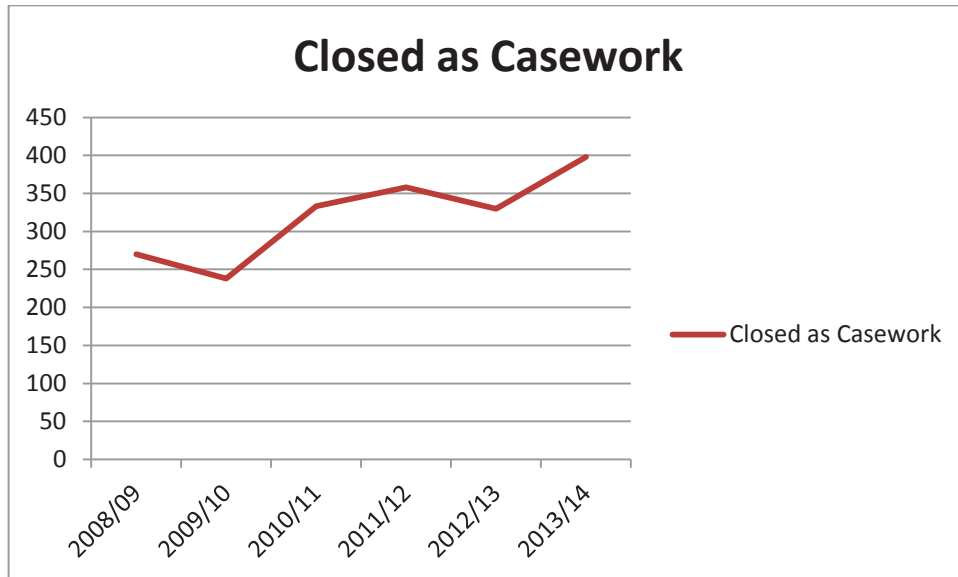
Presentations and acceptances



	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Accepted	62	59	51
Non Priority	10	9	22
Intentionally Homeless	30	24	33
Not Homeless	20	27	14
Not Eligible	2	1	3
198 Referrals	0	2	0
Duty Presentations	72	58	52
Casework Presentations	53	69	76

- Number of households accepted as homeless has decreased
- Number found to be non-priority has increased
- The number of casework presentations has increased
- Number of duty presentations has decreased
- There is an increase in cases presenting due to domestic abuse.

Advice and Prevention



Over 1,000 cases present each year requiring advice and prevention case work intervention. The proportion requiring in-depth assistance and advocacy is rising due to increasingly complex needs of applicants.

d) Emergency Temporary Accommodation placements

Emergency placements have decreased over the past 3 years.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Emergency TA Placements	87	84	62

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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