

Public Document Pack



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday 1 December 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue Virtual meeting

Membership

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman) Councillor Tom Wallis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mike Bishop

Councillor Phil Chapman

Councillor Chris Heath

Councillor Shaida Hussain

Councillor Tony Mephram

Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillor Perran Moon

Councillor Les Sibley

Councillor Douglas Webb

Councillor Bryn Williams

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip. Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes (Pages 7 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020.

4. Chairman's Announcements

To receive communications from the Chairman.

5. **Urgent Business**

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

6. **(Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire** (Pages 11 - 34)

Report of Assistant Director – Growth and Economy

Purpose of report

This report introduces a first draft of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire (attached as Appendix One). It explains the purpose of this unique approach, the scope and content of the Vision and the timeline for the current engagement and finalising the Vision which the Oxfordshire Growth Board is undertaking. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to provide input to the report so that it can be considered by the Executive.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Provide views on the Oxfordshire's Growth Board (Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire and these will be reported to the Executive at its meeting on 7 December

7. **Community Nature Plan 2020-2022 - A natural environment for people and wildlife** (Pages 35 - 62)

Report of Assistant Director – Wellbeing

Purpose of report

To seek endorsement for the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty, ahead of its consideration by Executive on 4 January 2021. The report also highlights the resource implications of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity and seeks recognition for the vital role of the Council's key biodiversity partners in delivering the Plan.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty
- 1.2 To instruct officers to investigate the resource implications of the provisions of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity and develop recommendations
- 1.3 To recognise the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan

8. **Safeguarding**

Verbal Update.

The Assistant Director – Wellbeing will give a verbal update relating to Safeguarding

9. **Constitution Review** (Pages 63 - 80)

Report of Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer

Purpose of report

This report presents the recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group on the 'areas for further consideration' for this Committee to determine what recommendations for constitutional change to make to Full Council to consider on 14 December.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to consider the recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group on each of the 'areas for further consideration' (outlined more fully at Appendix 1) and make recommendations to Full Council accordingly:

Rules of debate:

- 1.1 to make no changes to the current process as regards the order of speakers in a debate but to clarify that the seconder can speak at any point if they have reserved their right and that this does not mean they must be the penultimate speaker;
- 1.2 to make no change to the existing rule that once the proposer of a motion or amendments begins summing up, no further speakers will be heard

Length of speeches (including all committees):

- 1.3 to reduce the length of speeches for proposers to and proposers of amendments to five minutes (from current 10 minute)
- 1.4 to reduce the length of speeches for seconder, and seconder of amendments and all other speakers to three minutes (from current 5 minutes);

Deadlines for submitting amendments to motions

- 1.5 to make no changes to the existing deadlines (5pm, two working days before the meeting)
- 1.6 to increase the word limit for amendment to motions to 350 (from current 250) words

Process for dealing with motions with budgetary implications

- 1.7 to encourage members to submit motions early and discuss with officers to enable a review in the light of budgetary implications, with the introduction of a threshold of "£10,000 or more" to inform what "significant" means in terms of the current budget or capital expenditure
- 1.8 to allow amendments to motions deferred for budgetary reasons to be amended when resubmitted to Council

Motions without notice/procedural motions:

- 1.9 to make no changes to the current arrangement that a procedural motion, once proposed and seconded, requires only a simple majority to succeed

Recorded vote:

- 1.10 to make no changes to the current arrangement that a request for a recorded vote needs only a proposer and seconder to succeed

Public addresses (not Planning Committee)

- 1.11 to make no changes to current arrangements for
- i) public speakers to register by noon on the working day before the meeting
 - ii) five minutes per public speaker
 - iii) no time limit on the number of public speakers or the time allowed for the public address item

Order of business/finish time for Full Council

- 1.12 to make no changes to the existing order of business for Full Council
- 1.13 not to introduce a finish time/cut off time for Full Council

Planning Committee

- 1.14 to allow remote tools (drones) in facilitating site visits but to be clear that this should complement other evidence, not replace site visits and any such usage should ensure impartiality
- 1.15 to retain current arrangements whereby
- i) there is no separate slot for councillor questions of clarification to the officer after a presentation of a planning application
 - ii) County councillors are allowed to speak as members of the public (i.e. no separate right to speak)
- 1.16 to introduce a ten-minute time limit for non-committee ward members in addressing the Committee

Terminology and glossary

- 1.15 to introduce a glossary to the Constitution to bring clarity to members of the public, officers and councillors
- 1.16 to achieve consistency within the Constitution by using the following words:
- i) Executive (not Cabinet)
 - ii) Chairman of a meeting (with the proviso that a person chairing a committee may call themselves by whichever term e.g. Chair)
 - iii) Resident (rather than citizen)
- 1.17 to continue to use the following terms but provide contextual clarity (and explanation in the glossary) for the use of each:
- i) Councillor and member
 - ii) Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
 - iii) Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer

Annual Review of the Constitution

- 1.18 to introduce an annual review of the Constitution whereby
- i) At its October/December meeting, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will consider and make recommendations to Full Council to agree in December
 - ii) Such a review to include a notice of any changes made in year under officer delegations to reflect legislation and transfers of functions

- iii) Any significant changes would be submitted to Full Council as necessary for consideration

10. Work Programme 2020/2021 (Pages 81 - 86)

Democratic and Elections Officers will give an update on progress regarding subjects raised at previous Committee meetings (appendix 1, attached).

The Committee to consider the indicative work programme (appendix 2, attached).

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221953 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.

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 Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221953

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 23 November 2020

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held as a Virtual meeting, on 7 October 2020 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Tom Wallis (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Bryn Williams

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood - Leader of the Council
Councillor Ian Corkin - Lead Member – Customers and Transformation

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Tony Mepham

Officers:

Steve Jorden, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader
Robin Rogers, Head of Strategy
Samantha Shepherd, Policy Team Leader
Glenn Watson, Principal Governance Officer
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

17 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

18 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman in due course.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

20 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance and the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes which detailed the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring position as at the end of the first quarter of 2020/2021.

The report showed that performance had maintained a relatively stable position in light of the covid-19 situation.

With regard to the four indicators reporting as red – number of affordable homes delivered; maintaining a 5-year land supply; percentage of business rates collected; and percentage of non-major applications overturned at appeal - the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes advised the Committee that all four had improved during the course of quarter two.

Resolved

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report for July 2020 be noted

22 **Including Everyone - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework**

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development which gave details of a proposed new inclusion framework.

In introducing the report, the Lead Member for Customers and Transformation explained that a partnership approach had been undertaken with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to draft the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion framework 'Including Everyone'.

A number of engagement sessions had been held with staff at both Cherwell District Council (CDC) and OCC, with information gathered relating to

experiences of inequality. Further staff sessions had then been held during August, to discuss the draft framework and seek feedback, which would shape the final policy.

The policy would be accompanied by individual action plans for CDC and OCC to take account of the unique circumstances and actions needed in each council.

The Executive were due to consider the draft Framework and the associated Action Plan at their meeting in November.

The Committee congratulated officers for the work that had been undertaken, and supported the draft framework.

With regards to suggestions for the CDC action plan, the Committee commented that not all residents had access to IT equipment or the internet at home, and in some areas of Banbury Polish speaking residents accounted for a large proportion of the electorate. It was therefore requested that digital inclusivity and community integration of non-English speakers be included.

The Committee also requested that consideration be given to anonymised job applications during the recruitment process.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft policy document be noted.
- (2) That digital inclusivity and community integration of non-English speakers be included in the associated action plan, which will be considered by the Executive at their meeting of 2 November 2020.

23

Constitution Review

The Committee considered a report from the Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment that detailed potential 'areas for further consideration' in relation to a review of the Council's Constitution.

Feedback from members, officers and the wider review of local authority constitutions, supported by Bevan Brittan, had identified the potential for positive change in several areas. Full Council would consider the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the establishment of a cross-party Member working group, at its meeting later in October.

In considering the areas for review, Members of the Committee expressed concerns relating to the proposed review of the time limit for public addresses and the possible introduction of a limit on the total number of public speakers permitted to register per item. It was felt that these could be seen as ways of restricting public input into the democratic process.

The Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment assured the Committee that all areas for review would be discussed in full by the working group who would make proposals for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee before final consideration by Full Council.

Resolved

That full Council be recommended to agree:

- (1) the areas for further consideration outlined in paragraph 3 of the report (annexe to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book).
- (2) the establishment of a politically balanced, informal cross-party working group to review proposed changes.

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Work Programme 2020/2021

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2020/2021.

Democratic and Elections Officers advised the Committee that an update on the Constitution Review would be scheduled for the December 2020 meeting, along with an update on the action plan relating to the Community Nature Plan.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to the inclusion of a Constitution Review update and Community Nature Plan at the December 2020 meeting, the indicative work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Scrutiny Committee

1 December 2020

(Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire

Report of Assistant Director – Growth and Economy

This report is public

Purpose of report

This report introduces a first draft of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire (attached as Appendix One¹). It explains the purpose of this unique approach, the scope and content of the Vision and the timeline for the current engagement and finalising the Vision which the Oxfordshire Growth Board is undertaking. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to provide input to the report so that it can be considered by the Executive.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Provide views on the Oxfordshire's Growth Board (Draft) Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire and these will be reported to the Executive at its meeting on 7 December

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Oxfordshire Growth Board ('the Board') was established in 2014 as a Joint Committee² of the six councils of Oxfordshire, together with key strategic partners. Following a recent review, the Board's aim is to help coordinate economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits. The Board's establishment was premised on strengthening partnership arrangements across Oxfordshire for pragmatic working on key strategic issues. It has successfully done this by overseeing the delivery of cross-county projects that the councils of Oxfordshire were seeking to deliver in a

¹ Referred to in the report, variously as, (Draft) Strategic Vision or Strategic Vision or Vision – for avoidance of doubt, the Vision remains in draft form until formally adopted by the Oxfordshire Growth Board at its meeting in March 2021.

² Under s101 (5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) and s9EB Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000) and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

collaborative way – between local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership and wider partners and stakeholders³.

3.0 Report Details

3.1 Oxfordshire has considerable and diverse strengths. It is also facing significant change, but with change comes the opportunity for progress based on new ways of thinking. Conversations between Growth Board partners and the public, and innovative work on economic inclusivity, have shown that there is a desire to see a different approach to place-shaping in Oxfordshire. For example, the public's responses to the consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Regulation 18 document gave a clear steer that there is an appetite for an approach that:

- is ambitious, radical, innovative and creative
- is Oxfordshire-specific and reflects the views of local people
- prioritises climate change
- focusses on social, economic and environmental wellbeing, not solely on a narrow definition of growth.

3.2 Through the Growth Board, the councils have collectively expressed their desire for plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities for Oxfordshire to be ambition-led and outcome-focussed. Achieving these ambitions will require all those who make future decisions about investment, and those planning for and delivering place-making across Oxfordshire, to maximise impact by working together based on shared strategic priorities and by embracing innovation to develop solutions. Developing a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire is a unique opportunity to respond to this challenge, through the Growth Board, on behalf of local councils and partners.

3.3 Establishing a clear and coherent vision for Oxfordshire setting out what the partners are seeking to achieve and their strategic priorities, also plays an important role in helping manage some of the risks to the Oxfordshire Plan at Examination.

What is the purpose and status of the Draft Strategic Vision?

3.4 Building on the success of recent engagements and consultations, the Growth Board partnership wishes to consider in a positive, open and transparent way what the ambition for Oxfordshire should look like and how it can be achieved by drawing on new ways of thinking about sustainable development. The Draft Vision is intended to be the start of a conversation with our communities to build consensus around a common set of goals for Oxfordshire, strengthening and improving the Vision.

3.5 In doing so, the Strategic Vision is not intended to replace or set the specific vision for any of our individual communities or partner organisations. It is crucial to not lose sight of the rich variety of places that make up Oxfordshire and all that is valued about the character of our city, towns and villages and our natural and historic environments. It is recognised that delivering the Strategic Vision will require place-focussed responses to specific challenges and opportunities that reflect particular circumstances. That happens best through a detailed

³ As a Joint Committee, the Board may discharge executive functions if delegated to it by each constituent local authority, but each constituent authority retains the ability to exercise all executive and non-executive functions generally and specifically in relation to economic development including where applicable provision of housing, strategic spatial planning and strategic transport planning.

understanding of places and communities to arrive at solutions that work for them. Delivering the Vision will require long-term collective commitment and investment by the partners that make up the Growth Board but also, crucially, by a wider set of strategic stakeholders and partnerships.

- 3.6 The Strategic Vision is part of the existing portfolio approach to plan and strategy development in Oxfordshire. The Vision has a specific role and a clearly defined non-statutory status. While it is similarly looking to 2050 and is intended to support the development of the Oxfordshire Plan indirectly, it is not part of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 itself. It explicitly does not deal with the quantum of housing or economic growth for Oxfordshire, nor direct where it should go. Those are matters more appropriately dealt with through other plans (Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Local Plans). The Vision can however play an important role in seeking to drive improvements to environmental, social and economic well-being which may be reflected in emerging plans, strategies and programmes.
- 3.7 The Oxfordshire Plan will deliver parts of the Vision, but not all the ambitions and outcomes are within its sphere of influence. The Strategic Vision cuts across many sectors and is designed to inform a range of plans, strategies and programmes. Local plans, infrastructure plans, economic strategies and associated plans and programmes will all have important roles to play. For example, having a set of long-term, strategic, economic, infrastructure and environment investment priorities aligned to shared outcomes will help ensure Oxfordshire is investing in the right infrastructure and other assets in a timely way, maximising the benefits of that investment, avoiding unnecessary expenditure and helping ensure it is better placed to influence the priorities of other relevant organisations. Having a 'whole system' agreed vision of where we are heading, and our expected outcomes would go a very long way to help align our work and our infrastructure programmes.
- 3.8 The Vision should also be read by partners beyond Oxfordshire as a statement of intent by the partnership that has prepared it. Of particular significance is the Government's announcement in March 2020 of its backing for a spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. Oxfordshire can help achieve its collective ambition by looking to influence any framework for the Arc based on its Strategic Vision.

What is the scope of the (Draft) Strategic Vision?

- 3.9 The (Draft) Strategic Vision is high-level, overarching and long-term. It is positive, optimistic and aims high in its ambition for Oxfordshire. The Vision sets out how the plans, strategies and programmes for Oxfordshire, including the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, can be ambition-led and outcome focussed, facilitating a step-change in the approach to delivering sustainable development in Oxfordshire. In much the same way that local councils adopt corporate plans to guide their work, the Vision will help guide the approach to joint working and joint programmes between those councils and their partners.
- 3.10 The Strategic Vision is centred on people's wellbeing, with Oxfordshire a place where current and future generations thrive. Wellbeing of individuals is important, but the Strategic Vision also addresses wellbeing in the round in ways that make important connections because there are well-recognised intrinsic links between the environmental, social and economic dimensions of wellbeing and how these need to be underpinned by improved resilience. The ambition is to utilise the unique

opportunities and assets in Oxfordshire to shape healthy, sustainable, resilient communities.

- 3.11 The Strategic Vision defines the ambition for Oxfordshire as a set of outcomes, which if we are successful, will have been achieved by 2050. To help achieve the ambition the Vision defines what is meant by 'good growth', with the approach based on improvements in quality and circumstances for individuals and society. The aim is that growth in Oxfordshire will be inclusive, focussing on progress in improving health and wellbeing, transitioning to a low carbon future, addressing inequalities and prioritising the natural environment, alongside greater resilience to climate and economic change. The Vision also includes a set of Guiding Principles (or interrelated ground rules) which together articulate how Oxfordshire will change as a place over the next 30 years.
- 3.12 Delivery against a 30-year vision will require pragmatism and realism as the tools of our innovation and ambition develop. However, the Strategic Vision recognises that decisions, actions and investments are required now to place Oxfordshire on the pathway to delivery by 2050.
- 3.13 It is very likely that achieving the final, agreed outcomes by 2050 will require some trends to be reversed, while for some other trends, where progress is already being made, there will need to be an increase in the pace of change, making the most of the vital role place-making plays in delivering positive outcomes. Measuring progress, so that we know what responses are needed, will be an important part of the approach to delivering the Strategic Vision. It also provides a robust basis on which Oxfordshire's communities and stakeholders may hold the Growth Board to account. At this stage we have not attempted to define or agree targets or the indicators for monitoring delivery. Development of a robust framework for monitoring progress and continual improvement will form a key part of the next phase of work on the Strategic Vision, drawing on public and stakeholder engagement.

What are the timescales and next steps?

- 3.14 Work on the Strategic Vision is time-critical. It is intended to indirectly support the development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, as well as the Government's planned spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. Work on a spatial framework is now gathering momentum and is expected to progress at pace; having an agreed Strategic Vision in place will provide Oxfordshire with a firm basis to influence any framework for the Arc.
- 3.15 Preparation of the (Draft) Strategic Vision is the beginning of a process. Because the Growth Board wants to be open about what it is trying to achieve, it is carrying out bespoke and wide public and stakeholder engagement, providing an early opportunity for people to share and shape its thinking through public discussion and debate. The programme of public and stakeholder engagement will run from 16 November 2020 to 3 January 2021.
- 3.16 Due to COVID-19, the Growth Board is using the Oxfordshire Open Thought digital engagement platform which has already proved very helpful in engaging on wide-ranging topics and long-term thinking. Engagement on the Strategic Vision will

respond to that earlier conversation, and use Open Thought to seek support, build consensus and make improvements.

- 3.17 The Growth Board partners have important linkages with communities and grassroots networks in Oxfordshire. The views of the Growth Board partners will therefore be crucial in shaping the Strategic Vision as it evolves. The more consensus that can be built, the more it will be possible to develop and implement effective plans and programmes for Oxfordshire. The Growth Board is therefore asking that the Strategic Vision is considered by each local authority's Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet during the engagement period.
- 3.18 The Growth Board is aiming for all partners to endorse the Strategic Vision at its meeting in March 2020. The dates of the various meetings of the partners committees are listed in the Table One below:

Table One: Committee dates for Growth Board local authorities

Scrutiny (Economic and Social): West	19/11/2020
Scrutiny: Vale	23/11/2020
Scrutiny: South	30/11/2020
Scrutiny: Cherwell	01/12/2020
Scrutiny: Oxford City	01/12/2020
Cabinet: South	03/12/2020
Cabinet: Vale	04/12/2020
Executive: Cherwell	07/12/2020
OxLEP Board meeting (provisional)	09/12/2020
Cabinet: Oxford City	09/12/2020
Cabinet: Oxfordshire County	15/12/2020
Cabinet: West	16/12/2020

- 3.19 The Vision will be refined by the Growth Board taking account of the engagement and further work (informal sustainability advice for example). Early, pre-engagement comments made through the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel and Growth Board process will be picked up as part of the post-engagement re-drafting.
- 3.20 Subject to the feedback received and support generated, the Growth Board will seek endorsement of a revised Strategic Vision at its meeting scheduled for 23 March 2021.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The development of a Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire, which encompasses the shared ambitions of local councils and key organisations, provides a unique opportunity to bring together a clear and unambiguous statement about what it is we want to achieve in Oxfordshire. This bold and striving approach is being developed as part of a wider engagement process with Growth Board partners, councillors and residents. The recommendation is for the Executive to provide feedback on the draft Strategic Vision, and delegate responsibility to agree the final

wording of a response to Assistant Director for Growth and Economy in consultation with the Leader before 3 January 2021.

5.0 Consultation

A programme of public and stakeholder engagement will run from 16 November 2020 to 3 January 2021

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: Do nothing

This was rejected as the (Draft) Strategic Vision is a unique opportunity to respond to the emerging strategic direction of the District and the Council is actively engaged in the Strategic Vision preparation. By not responding to the offer to comment on the Draft Strategic Vision, it could limit the impact of the partnership approach.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The preparation and development of the Strategic Vision will be covered within existing budget and resource allocations. No additional financial commitments are required as part of this report.

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director - Finance 01295 221845

michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire has a clearly defined non-statutory status. Nevertheless, it may be prudent to seek legal advice following engagement but prior to agreement of the Vision, to ensure the agreed language of the Vision moving forward is helpful to, rather than in conflict with, the emerging next stage of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-contentious 01295 221695

richard.hawtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.3 There is a risk that by not responding to the Draft Strategic Vision, the Council's views and comments would not be included in shaping the long-term ambitions for the district and wider county. This will be managed as part of the Board's risk register and escalated, as and when necessary, to the Leadership Risk Register.

Comments checked by:

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes 01295 221786
louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equality and Diversity

- 7.4 The proposed public engagement has the potential to reach out to include a wide and diverse audience in a positive way that involves communities in determining the future of their area. Gathering the views from a diverse range of stakeholders and the wider community will better inform the approach to inclusive growth.

Comments checked by:

Sam Shepherd, Policy Team Leader, samantha.shepherd@oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision – N/A as not an Executive Report

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The work contributes to all four strategic priorities within the Council's 2020-21 Business Plan.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix One Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

Robert Jolley Assistant Director for Growth and Economy and SRO for the Cherwell elements of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, 01295 221688
robert.jolley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Appendix 1: Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development - Engagement Draft

Our Vision Statement for Oxfordshire

Enhanced well-being sits at the heart of our ambition.

We want Oxfordshire to thrive so that the lives of current and future generations are improved. To achieve this will require bold, innovative, collaborative and inclusive thinking with decisions and actions that deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance well-being.

To be well, we need the right environmental, social and economic conditions, underpinned by improved resilience, and built on a clear understanding that the different dimensions of well-being are intrinsically linked. By resilience we mean de-carbonisation, tackling climate change and mitigating its impacts, securing a biodiverse natural environment, building community connectedness, better health, and improved educational attainment and skills that will support the jobs of the future. Our ambition is to utilise the unique opportunities and assets in Oxfordshire to accommodate growth sustainably, and shape healthy, resilient communities in which it is possible for all residents to thrive.

If we are successful, these are the outcomes that will have been achieved in Oxfordshire by 2050:

- We will be the first generation to leave Oxfordshire's natural environment in a better state than that in which we found it. The natural environment will be more biodiverse, supporting social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.*
- Oxfordshire will already be carbon neutral, and will be moving towards a carbon negative future, in which the County is removing more carbon than it emits each year.*
- The population will be healthier and happier, inequalities will have been reduced, young people will feel excited about their future and the overall well-being of the population will have improved.*
- The economy of Oxfordshire will be successful and sustainable, making the most of all our people and with quality places where people want to live and work.*
- We will have energy efficient, well-designed homes, sufficient in numbers, location, type, size, tenure and affordability to meet the needs of our residents.*
- Movement around Oxfordshire will be transformed, with greater connectivity and mobility in and between places in ways that enhance environmental, social and economic well-being.*
- Our communities will be rooted and flourishing, with enhanced and lasting connectedness driven by individual and community action.*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oxfordshire has considerable and diverse strengths. Its beautiful countryside, from the Chilterns to the Cotswolds, with high quality landscapes and areas important for nature conservation, its rich and diverse built and historic environment formed from the fabric of its market towns and villages and the vibrant, diverse cultural offer and urban environment in the City of Oxford, and its proximity and connections with other places, are key reasons why people choose to live, work, visit and invest here. These strengths have formed the foundation of Oxfordshire's economic success. But there are also challenges. Oxfordshire is one of the fastest growing economies in the country, but it is also among the least equal, with significant and stubborn economic and social inequalities. And there are problems linked to congestion, housing affordability and the well-being of the natural and built environments. All these impact on Oxfordshire's residents and businesses.
- 1.2 Oxfordshire is facing significant changes. Some of these – such as climate change and the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – are the result of trends that are being experienced by the global community. Other changes reflect Oxfordshire's status as an international centre of pioneering research and innovation based on a hive of knowledge-intensive economic activity at the universities and science, technology and business parks. Changes are being influenced by Oxfordshire's links with neighbouring areas such as the Thames Valley and Swindon, and more widely with the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which is now a key national economic priority for the Government.
- 1.3 Change is inevitable, but change is not inevitably detrimental. With change comes the opportunity for progress based on new ways of thinking. We have seen an important increase in emphasis on climate change internationally, nationally and locally, with legislation in 2019 to eradicate the UK contribution to climate change by 2050, and with climate change emergencies declared by all the Oxfordshire Councils. We now have a better understanding that every decision made as a result of emerging plans and strategies for Oxfordshire has the potential to, and very probably will, impact (positively or negatively) on local, national and global emissions in the short, medium and long-term, to way beyond plan end dates.
- 1.4 Most recently, the COVID-19 crisis has generated considerable uncertainty and brought into sharp focus important, complex and sometimes uncomfortable questions about the impact of the pandemic. But we have also seen how, although physically apart, people have come together to give care, support and friendship within their communities. It has also given us a glimpse of a world less dependent on personal travel and more reliant on digital connectivity. How can we capture the positive aspects of these changes as we move forward? The pandemic has forced us to think about how we should frame our choices as the country moves towards recovery, what our priorities should be and how to deliver positive outcomes.
- 1.5 We need to be pragmatic in responding to current circumstances, whilst recognising the importance of taking this opportunity to think strategically about how best to tackle long-term problems as we re-build and secure the future of our local economies. Others have referred to this process as 'building back better', in which traditional models of growth are re-thought, re-set and replaced with a more balanced approach based on a broader range of objectives. We should not avoid tackling issues now, but it is also important to establish a pathway for long-term change.

- 1.6 We know that within Oxfordshire there is a desire to see a different approach to place-shaping. Early in 2019 the partnership preparing the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 started a formal conversation with the public and stakeholders about planning for Oxfordshire's long-term future. The public's response to that consultation gave us a very clear steer that there is an appetite for an approach that:
- is more ambitious, radical, innovative and creative
 - is more Oxfordshire-specific and reflective of local people's views
 - prioritises climate change, and
 - focusses on social, economic and environmental well-being, and not solely on a narrow definition of growth.
- 1.7 Similar thoughts were also reflected in the One Planet Living Oxfordshire Shared Vision¹. Developed for a broadly-based Oxfordshire partnership, and drawing on input from some 100 stakeholders from across Oxfordshire, the One Planet approach sets out the sorts of big thinking and action that is required to achieve sustainable living based on a happier, healthier, greener future. And, the Oxfordshire Growth Board's Open Thought initiative² has added to the debate and pool of ideas by tapping into the wealth of knowledge to help find solutions to accommodate changes in how we will live and work, how we will connect with each other and how we will manage and respond to climate change.
- 1.8 Our bold economic ambitions³ have been brought to life in an investment plan⁴. We can see from this how Oxfordshire is uniquely placed to embrace the dynamic potential of world-leading innovation and research and development to support economic recovery and growth for the benefit of local residents.
- 1.9 Innovative work on inclusive growth⁵ has brought relevance and visibility to a need for us to actively recognise and address the inequalities in our success. It has highlighted a wide range of issues, including the need to tackle deprivation and disadvantage in Oxford and our other urban areas, improve educational attainment and to develop the skills required to access new employment opportunities and to improve physical and digital connectivity in our rural areas. If we are to deliver our vision and ambitions, these inequalities will need to be addressed so that growth is genuinely inclusive.
- 1.10 These conversations and thinking have shown that if we frame our ambition based on what is demonstrably achievable over the next thirty years, we could fall well short of what those who have contributed are looking to achieve. That would be a missed opportunity that fails to capitalise on Oxfordshire's scope for innovation over the longer-term. We therefore wish to determine in a positive, open and transparent way what our ambition for Oxfordshire should look like and how we can achieve it by drawing on new ways of thinking about sustainable development.
- 1.11 In doing so, we should not lose sight of the rich variety of places that make up Oxfordshire. We value the character of these different settings – our city, towns and villages and our natural and historic environments – and recognise that delivering our shared Strategic Vision will require place-focussed responses to specific challenges and opportunities that reflect particular circumstances. For example, activity to achieve ambitions for zero carbon and increased biodiversity will need different design solutions

¹ One Planet Oxfordshire: Our Shared Vision, Bioregional, 2019

² See: <https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org>

³ Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy, 2019

⁴ Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy Investment Plan, 2020

⁵ Led by Oxfordshire's Local Enterprise Partnership under Oxfordshire's 'Social Contract' and by the City of Oxford

in the high-density environments of the city and urban areas than in rural settings. This happens best through inclusive processes and a detailed understanding of places and communities to arrive at solutions that work for them.

- 1.12 We also recognise that positive change will evolve and take time: it is not linear and not smooth. This Vision sets our ambition high: while we are realistic in understanding this will evolve over time and must be couched against dynamic economic, political and social forces beyond our direct control, we want to challenge the norm and the lowest common denominator to provide the best possible future for our residents.

2. Purpose & Status of the Strategic Vision

- 2.1 This Strategic Vision has been prepared by the collective leadership of the Oxfordshire Growth Board. The Growth Board comprises the six councils of Oxfordshire⁶ and key strategic partners⁷. It facilitates collaborative working on economic development, strategic planning and growth, and oversees the projects agreed in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal, seeking agreement on local priorities.
- 2.2 The Strategic Vision cuts across many sectors and is designed to inform a range of strategies, plans and programmes. It represents our common and shared ambition but is not intended to replace or set the vision for any of our communities or partner organisations.
- 2.3 Not all the ambitions and outcomes will be within the sphere of influence of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. That plan will deliver parts of the Vision, but as a statutory planning document, it cannot address all aspects involved in delivering this Vision. Local plans, infrastructure plans, economic strategies and associated plans and programmes will also have important roles to play. There is also a role for the individual to help deliver our ambitions, as our own actions can support or detract from delivering the Vision.
- 2.4 We want our plans, strategies and programmes, including the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, to be ambition-led and outcome focussed. Our Strategic Vision will be transformative, centred on people's well-being, addressing climate change, as well as on the health and quality of our natural environment. The Strategic Vision is intended to facilitate a step-change in our approach to planning for and delivering sustainable development for Oxfordshire.
- 2.5 The Strategic Vision is high-level, overarching and long-term. While the outcomes and priorities are unlikely to alter over the short to medium-term, our approach needs to be resilient to change over time. Our Strategic Vision is positive and optimistic. It recognises that although there is a high level of uncertainty over a 30-year period, particularly around external factors including climate and technological change, new opportunities to balance environmental, social and economic needs to deliver sustainable development in different and better ways will emerge. This will position Oxfordshire to challenge and capitalise on the scope for innovation over the longer-term.
- 2.6 Delivery against a 30-year vision will require pragmatism and realism as the tools of our innovation and ambition develop. However, this pragmatism should be seen to support delivery against our vision and not as an excuse to under-perform.

⁶ Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

⁷ Oxfordshire LEP, Oxfordshire Skills Board, Oxford Brookes University, University of Oxford, Homes England, DEFRA, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Environment Agency, Network Rail and Highways England

- 2.7 Our Vision should be read by partners within and beyond Oxfordshire as a statement of intent by the partnership that has prepared it. Of particular significance is the Government's announcement in March 2020 of its backing for a spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. Oxfordshire will look to influence any framework for the Arc based on this Strategic Vision to help achieve our collective ambition.
- 2.8 The Strategic Vision forms part of the informal interface between national and local policy, helping to deliver national objectives such as those for 'clean growth' which aim to make the most of low carbon opportunities locally while meeting national and international commitments to tackle climate change⁸. It also supports delivery of national health priorities⁹. These identify the importance of prevention and reducing health inequalities and recognise that embedding healthy place-shaping principles within plans ensures that future developments are designed to support prevention and physical and mental well-being.
- 2.9 This Strategic Vision is part of the existing portfolio approach to plan and strategy development in Oxfordshire. Its role is to establish an overarching ambition that informs the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 amongst other relevant plans, strategies and programmes that reflect wider considerations such as health and well-being and infrastructure that impact on place-making in Oxfordshire. By providing clear strategic leadership and direction, we aim to increase confidence in the delivery of long-term spatial priorities.
- 2.10 This is the beginning of a process. We want to be open about what we are trying to achieve so we are carrying out bespoke public and stakeholder engagement providing an early opportunity for people to share and shape our thinking through public discussion and debate.

3. Oxfordshire's Challenges & Opportunities

- 3.1 The starting point for developing ambition-led plans and strategies is agreement about what they are seeking to achieve or change and what strategic challenges will need to be addressed. We have identified six key strategic challenges facing Oxfordshire:
- Health & Social Inequalities
 - Our Natural & Built Environment
 - Climate Change & Energy
 - Housing Affordability & Access to Affordable Housing
 - Economic Growth
 - Transport & Digital Connectivity.
- 3.2 Many factors impact on our lives and well-being, and there are strong and complex relationships between these challenges: from the links between the well-being of the natural and built environments and the well-being of individuals, communities and the economy; to the relationships between social and economic inequalities and health; to the linkages between connectivity and climate change, the natural environment, economic productivity, physical and mental health, and community connectedness.

⁸ The Clean Growth Strategy – Leading the way to a low carbon future, HM Government, 2018

⁹ NHS Long Term Plan, 2019

4. Strategic Influencers

- 4.1 A key role for this Strategic Vision will be to help align long-term spatial, economic and infrastructure investment priorities across Oxfordshire. There are already other plans, strategies, policies and investment programmes (in existence or emerging), as well as legislative requirements, that will influence place-shaping in Oxfordshire, including where development in Oxfordshire should take place and where investment should be focussed. Oxfordshire will be shaped by these 'strategic influencers' to varying degrees over the next 30 years. We have 'mapped' the main strategic influencers and summarised their key messages for Oxfordshire. This information is set out in [Annex 1](#).
- 4.2 The strategic influencers will continue to evolve – some will change, and other new influencers will emerge as plans and strategies for Oxfordshire are developed, national policy changes and sub-national frameworks take shape. Some parts of this evolving context of strategic influencers will be more within the control of the partnership organisations than others. But in most cases, the relationship is a two, rather than one-way, process and there is an opportunity to influence and shape the priorities, plans, strategies and investment decisions of others, particularly in the longer-term – a means of 'influencing the influencers'. Our Strategic Vision can help maximise the benefits of decisions made by others, as well as helping to mitigate the impact of decisions outside the partnership's control.

5. Defining Our Ambition

- 5.1 Enhanced well-being sits at the heart of our ambition. We want Oxfordshire to thrive so that the lives of current and future generations are improved. To achieve this will require bold, innovative, collaborative and inclusive thinking with decisions and actions that deliver real and lasting change in ways that build resilience and enhance well-being.
- 5.2 The well-being of individuals is important, and the actions we take to address our own well-being are key to cumulative and collective success. But we have also taken the opportunity to think about well-being in the round and in ways that make important connections, recognising that different dimensions of well-being are intrinsically linked. To be well physically and mentally, we need the right environmental, social and economic conditions underpinned by improved resilience. By resilience we mean de-carbonisation, tackling climate change and mitigating its impacts, securing a biodiverse natural environment, building community connectedness, better health, and improved educational attainment and skills that will support the jobs of the future. Our ambition is to **utilise the unique opportunities and assets in Oxfordshire** to shape healthy, sustainable, resilient communities in which it is possible for all residents to thrive.
- 5.3 If we are successful, these are the **outcomes** that will have been achieved in Oxfordshire by 2050 – this is what better will look like. Although the outcomes are long-term, decisions, actions and investment are required now to place Oxfordshire on the pathway to delivery by 2050.

Outcomes for Oxfordshire

- We will be the first generation to leave Oxfordshire's natural environment in a better state than that in which we found it. The natural environment will be more biodiverse, supporting social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.
- Oxfordshire will already be carbon neutral, and will be moving towards a carbon negative future, in which the County is removing more carbon than it emits each year.
- The population will be healthier and happier, inequalities will have been reduced, young people will feel excited about their future and the overall well-being of the population will have improved.
- The economy of Oxfordshire will be successful and sustainable, making the most of all our people and with quality places where people want to live and work.
- We will have energy efficient, well-designed homes, sufficient in numbers, location, type, size, tenure and affordability to meet the needs of our residents.
- Movement around Oxfordshire will be transformed, with greater connectivity and mobility in and between places in ways that enhance environmental, social and economic well-being.
- Our communities will be rooted and flourishing, with enhanced and lasting connectedness driven by individual and community action.

6. Achieving our Ambition

6.1 Our Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire's future is driven by improvements to people's well-being. This is reflected in our definition of what 'good growth' will look like in Oxfordshire.

6.2 National planning policies require Oxfordshire to plan positively for growth in ways that achieve the three overarching objectives of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Growth can be defined narrowly in terms of expansion in numbers of homes and jobs and economic output. But growth can also encompass progress based on improvements in quality and circumstances for individuals and society.

6.3 We think this is a better approach to achieving transformative and long-term sustainable development. This is how Oxfordshire will approach growth. It will be inclusive, focussing on progress in improving health and well-being, transitioning to a low carbon future, addressing inequalities and prioritising our natural environment, alongside greater resilience to climate and economic change.

We want current and future generations in Oxfordshire to share in: improvements in health and well-being; better access to truly affordable and high-quality housing; cleaner air and water; better jobs and access to education and training; enhanced green space; and protection from extreme weather and other impacts of climate change.

'Good growth' in Oxfordshire will:

- Be **sustainable**, focusing development in ways that enhance quality of place and at locations which enable people to live and work nearby, avoiding unnecessary travel in the first instance, but using opportunities to increase movement by sustainable and active modes of travel when needed.
- Be **healthy and inclusive**, with all development addressing inequalities and contributing positively to the overall health and well-being of Oxfordshire's communities, environment and economy.
- Be **clean and green**, placing the County at the leading edge of UK and global de-carbonisation efforts by maximising all opportunities to significantly reduce Oxfordshire's carbon footprint, and increasing natural capital across the County.
- Embrace **innovation** based on our technology sectors and knowledge-intensive activity, and develop new innovative solutions for working, learning, mobility, health care, energy, sustainable design and improved public services.
- Facilitate **efficient** use of Oxfordshire's natural resources and land, with priority given to supporting a high-productivity economy.
- Build **resilience** to change, with growth planned in a way that can accommodate changes in technology, and in the way that people live and work, changing demographics, and global impacts, particularly climate and economic changes.
- Expect **high-quality** development which will have a positive impact on communities in terms of design, energy efficiency and public realm, utilises low impact building and construction methods and materials, and is properly supported by the necessary infrastructure. Everything we build or design in Oxfordshire will be fit for purpose in the world of 2050.

- 6.4 Our definition of 'good growth' forms the basis for a set of **Guiding Principles**. Taken together, our outcomes, the definition of 'good growth' and the guiding principles, form the foundation for our overarching approach to sustainable development for Oxfordshire, and for developing our plans, strategies and programmes.

Guiding Principle 1: We will reduce the impacts of climate change

We will reduce the impacts of climate change by making climate action a top priority in our decisions. We will maximise opportunities through our plans, strategies and programmes, to build long-lasting resilience to climate change, demonstrating leadership in carbon reduction and supporting emerging transformative technologies and sectors. Our aim is that Oxfordshire will be carbon neutral by 2040, or earlier if possible, and by 2050 will be moving towards a carbon negative future.

Guiding Principle 2: We will improve our overall health and well-being and reduce inequalities

We will place overall health and physical and mental well-being at the forefront of our decision-making. We will seek to deliver a net increase in the health and well-being of our communities in all our place-shaping decisions and activities, reducing inequalities and helping to enhance the overall quality of life, health and happiness of existing and future residents. This will include providing homes to meet people's needs, jobs to support livelihoods, enhanced access to green spaces, better access to sustainable, inclusive and resilient active and low carbon transport and improvements in air quality. We have access to some of the greatest health care facilities and minds in the world in Oxfordshire and through working closely with the universities and health organisations, we will ensure we are leading on prevention and healthy place-shaping.

Guiding Principle 3: We will enhance our natural capital assets

We will enhance our natural capital assets through our plans, strategies and programmes, recognising the significant contribution natural capital makes to our quality of place, the health and well-being of our communities, and their value in building resilience to climate change, reducing flood risk, increasing biodiversity and boosting economic productivity. We will value Oxfordshire's countryside, our parks and open spaces, the River Thames and our other rivers, canals, reservoirs, lakes, ponds and wetlands. We will protect where necessary, and seek new opportunities to add to and enhance our highly valued countryside, landscape and the greenspaces and environmental assets within the urban areas that provide valued recreation space and vital green lungs. Natural capital is a key reason why many people choose to live here, many businesses choose to locate here, and tourists choose to visit here.

Guiding Principle 4: We will reflect our distinctive and diverse qualities

We will ensure that our plans, strategies and programmes reflect the unique and distinctive qualities of places within Oxfordshire, maximising opportunities to deliver the development needed, embracing innovation whilst enhancing our valuable assets and recognising the diversity of our city, towns and villages, the quality of the historic, natural and built environment and the importance of local identity. While we are the most rural county in the South East, the vast majority of our population lives in our city, towns and villages. The diversity of our settlements, the synergy between urban and rural and the benefits both bring are critical to our success.

Guiding Principle 5: We will deliver homes that meet the needs of current and future generations

New homes will add to the vitality and vibrancy of our communities whilst positively contributing to our collective well-being. We will tackle the significant challenge of housing affordability in Oxfordshire by delivering more truly affordable homes. And we will deliver homes that allow people to live healthily, happily and independently in their old age. The emphasis will be on place-shaping: new homes will be high quality and low carbon, resilient to the impacts of climate change, meet people's needs, form part of connected communities and improve the local environment.

Guiding Principle 6: We will embrace technological changes

We will ensure that our plans, strategies and programmes are sufficiently flexible to embrace the potential offered from new and evolving technology in creating better opportunities and outcomes for people, in addressing inequalities, and in its impact on mobility, communications, energy and water supply, models of construction and increasing economic productivity.

Guiding Principle 7: We will create the conditions to support an inclusive, successful and sustainable economy based on world-leading innovation

We will work collaboratively with economic partners to ensure that our spatial priorities and economic priorities are aligned to deliver good, inclusive economic growth that supports people's health and well-being. We will ensure there is improved physical and digital connectivity, and that the right type of premises, land and infrastructure are provided to facilitate a high productivity economy and to meet the needs of our priority sectors. Inequalities in employment opportunities, and in access to education, skills and training will be addressed, building a skilled population with better opportunities for all.

Guiding Principle 8: We will expect high-quality development

We will expect all new development to be of the highest quality and design standards, with particular support given to innovative building solutions and sustainable construction methods, and development that improves the overall built environment and promotes good physical and mental health.

Guiding Principle 9: We will maximise the benefits of strong collaboration

We will build stronger collaboration with our partners to secure a plan-led approach to good growth, delivering strategic development opportunities that are aligned with our shared ambition and long-term investment priorities, particularly where these provide opportunities to enhance our strategic connectivity. And, we will create the conditions where people feel involved and empowered, embedding a culture of meaningful involvement and enabling communities to inform and shape local decisions.

Guiding Principle 10: We will help people to help each other by supporting communities and individuals to achieve positive change for themselves

We will help communities to be more cohesive and better able to adapt to change, based on accessible and quality key services and infrastructure, good digital connectivity and strong community networks. Communities will be supported and empowered to do the things that matter to improve their health and well-being.

Guiding Principle 11: We will proactively and positively engage and collaborate beyond Oxfordshire

We will foster links with neighbouring areas to facilitate the delivery of good growth through mutually beneficial relationships. Key to this will be ensuring that the Oxfordshire Plan's strategic priorities are fully aligned and integrated with regional and sub-regional priorities including the emerging Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

- 6.5 All the Guiding Principles articulate how Oxfordshire will change as a place over the next 30 years and all will shape our overarching approach. Individual Guiding Principles have not been weighted. Rather, because we are seeking to drive improvements to environmental, social and economic well-being in ways which build resilience, and because most of our Guiding Principles are relevant to more than one of our goals, the Guiding Principles form an inter-related set of equally important ground rules.

7. Next Steps – Delivering the Strategic Vision

- 7.1 This Strategic Vision has been prepared by the collective leadership of the Oxfordshire Growth Board which is ultimately responsible for it. Delivering the Vision will require long-term collective commitment and investment by the partners that make up the Growth Board but also, crucially, by a wider set of strategic stakeholders and partnerships.
- 7.2 As a first step in delivering the Strategic Vision, it is proposed several work streams are taken forward:
- Engaging with partners and communities
 - Measuring what matters
 - Developing plans & strategies and investment priorities.

Engaging with Partners & Communities

- 7.3 Because we want to be open about what we are trying to achieve, one of the first actions will be to carry out bespoke public and stakeholder engagement late in 2020. This will provide partners and our communities with an early opportunity to challenge and shape the thinking we have done on our ambition, principles and shared outcomes. This engagement does not form part of any statutory process and is additional to consultations on other plans, strategies and programmes.

Measuring What Matters

- 7.4 The ambition, outcomes and priorities set out in the Strategic Vision have been explicitly designed for the long-term. They are unlikely to change over the short to medium-term and it is not anticipated that there will be a need for frequent reviews. To achieve the outcomes we have identified by 2050 will require some trends to be reversed, while for some other trends, where progress is already being made, there will need to be an increase in the pace of change. And, we will need to make the most of the vital role place-making plays in delivering positive outcomes.
- 7.5 Measuring progress, so that we know what responses are needed, will be an important part of our approach to delivering the Strategic Vision. It also provides a robust basis on which Oxfordshire's communities and stakeholders may hold the Growth Board to account. We will measure what matters, based on the strategic outcomes and the definition of Good Growth set out in the Strategic Vision. At this stage we have not attempted to define or agree targets or the indicators for monitoring delivery. Development of a robust monitoring framework, with agreed targets and indicators, will form a key part of the next phase of work on the Strategic Vision, drawing on the public and stakeholder engagement we will be carrying out.

Developing Plans, Strategies and Investment Priorities

- 7.6 Our well-being goals are ambitious. Achieving them will require all those who make future decisions about investment, and those planning for and delivering place-making across Oxfordshire, to maximise impact by working collaboratively based on shared strategic priorities and by embracing innovation to develop solutions.
- 7.7 The Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire will be delivered by a wide range of plans, strategies and programmes. The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is one important example, but there are many others. At an Oxfordshire-wide level they include the Joint Health & Well-Being Strategy, the Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS), the Local Industrial Strategy, and the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, while sub-nationally the spatial framework for the

Oxford-Cambridge Arc and England's Economic Heartland's Transport Strategy will have important roles to play.

- 7.8 It is vital that we have an agreed set of long-term, strategic economic, infrastructure and environment investment priorities aligned to the outcomes we are committed to. This will help us to ensure that we are investing in the right infrastructure and other assets in a timely way, maximising the benefits of that investment, and avoiding unnecessary expenditure. It will also better position Oxfordshire to influence the priorities of other relevant organisations.
- 7.9 Oxfordshire's Growth Board will seek that those preparing relevant strategic-level plans, strategies and programmes consider how their policies, proposals and investment decisions deliver against this Strategic Vision, and future responses to these plans, strategies and programmes from the Growth Board will take these into account.

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Annex 1: Strategic Influencers

A1.1 The following graphic 'maps' the main strategic influencers. Most have been, or are being, developed at an Oxfordshire-wide level, or relate to sub-national geographic areas, or are UK-wide. Many have a direct relationship with government policy or legislative requirements. We have not attempted to present an exhaustive set of influencers. Rather, we have captured those which we consider to be the most significant and most relevant at the strategic level, whilst acknowledging that some of these will have a greater impact than others.

A1.2 The key messages from the strategic influencers are summarised in the following table.

Key Messages	Strategic Influencers
There is a commitment to maximise the potential of existing urban areas to 2031 to deliver 100,000 new homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing & Growth Deal ▪ Local Plans ▪ National Planning Policy Framework (2019) ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
Development should enhance the natural environment, improve access to the countryside and increase its natural capital, recognising its valuable role in supporting clean growth and improvements to health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green Future: 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment ▪ Local Plans ▪ Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government Ambition ▪ Oxfordshire's Draft Nature Recovery Network ▪ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Joint Health & Well-Being Strategy
Strategic transport investment priorities should aim to enhance Oxfordshire's strategic connectivity value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy 2050 ▪ Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government Ambition ▪ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
Long-term strategic investment decisions should be responsive to climate, demographic and technological change, building resilience in the economy, transport infrastructure and the physical and natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean Growth Strategy ▪ England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy 2050 ▪ Oxfordshire Joint Health & Well-Being Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan ▪ UK Industrial Strategy

Key Messages	Strategic Influencers
<p>The priority is to invest in strategic infrastructure that supports economic growth, particularly in the areas that have potential to support a transition to a low carbon economy, facilitate mobility changes away from the private car and where there is potential to support key sectors (especially in the science, technology and innovation sectors).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government Ambition ▪ England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy 2050 ▪ Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan ▪ UK Industrial Strategy
<p>Economic growth should be driven by innovation and higher productivity, should be 'clean', should focus on supporting clusters and corridors of economic activity and should reflect Oxfordshire's national and international role and profile. Economic growth should be more inclusive, with the benefits shared more equitably so that they reach all communities, including socially disadvantaged groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford-Cambridge Arc: Government Ambition ▪ England's Economic Heartland Transport Strategy 2050 ▪ Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan ▪ UK Industrial Strategy
<p>Improvements to health and well-being should be at the heart of all decisions around place-making and infrastructure investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Plans ▪ Oxfordshire Joint Health & Well-Being Strategy ▪ Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
<p>Delivering the right type of housing, which is built to a high quality and design and is affordable, is as important as increasing overall supply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local Plans ▪ Oxfordshire Joint Health & Well-Being Strategy



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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

01 December 2020

Community Nature Plan 2020-2022 – A natural environment for people and wildlife

Report of the Assistant Director - Wellbeing

This report is public

Purpose of report

To seek endorsement for the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty, ahead of its consideration by Executive on 4 January 2021. The report also highlights the resource implications of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity and seeks recognition for the vital role of the Council's key biodiversity partners in delivering the Plan.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To endorse the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty
- 1.2 To instruct officers to investigate the resource implications of the provisions of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity and develop recommendations
- 1.3 To recognise the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The key purpose of the Community Nature Plan is to demonstrate the Council's fulfilment of its statutory biodiversity duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a duty that will be strengthened by the Environment Bill. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 states that - "Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity". Biodiversity is a term used to describe the variety of life including all plants, animals, their habitats and the natural systems that support them.

2.2 The Community Nature Plan sets out aims, actions and targets relating to a number of themes:

- A key function of the Council in terms of the biodiversity duty is its role as a local planning authority. The Council has legal obligations relating to important wildlife sites, habitats and species; and requirements under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relating to conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- The importance of the natural environment for community health and wellbeing, specifically access to green space and connection with nature
- The value of land (natural capital) and the services it delivers (ecosystem services) for people and the local economy
- The contribution of the management of land and buildings to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- The important role of natural carbon management for climate change adaptation and resilience

3.0 Report Details

3.1 The Community Nature Plan's vision is 'To work with partners to protect and enhance Cherwell's natural environment for its intrinsic value, the services it provides, the health and wellbeing of people; its contribution to climate change adaptation and resilience, and the economic prosperity that it brings'. Contributions to the delivery of these multiple benefits are made by a wide range of Council services and workstreams including Planning Policy and Development Management, the Wellbeing team, the Bicester Garden Town Programme, the Healthy Place Shaping Programme, the 2020 Climate Change Action Framework and the Street Scene and Landscape Services team. Of particular note currently is the importance of access to green spaces and connection with nature, for physical and mental health and resilience, which has been starkly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2 The key purpose of the Community Nature Plan is to demonstrate the Council's fulfilment of its statutory biodiversity duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a duty that will be strengthened by the Environment Bill. Part 6 of the Bill (nature and biodiversity) is just one of several sections that will apply directly to local government and includes provisions to:

- Strengthen the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Publication of biodiversity reports will be required to review the actions taken by the local authority to comply with its duties for nature and biodiversity
- Make it mandatory for housing and development to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity, a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development

- Require local authorities to support better spatial planning for nature through the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRs). The DEFRA 25-Year Environment Plan highlights six key areas for action, one being to establish a Nature Recovery Network. This will protect and restore wildlife, as well as providing greater public enjoyment of the countryside; increased carbon capture; and improvements in water quality and flood management

In October 2019, Executive endorsed seeking a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain through engagement with the planning process; and approved biodiversity net gain guidance (produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and other related professional bodies). Confirmation of this approach has been beneficial as it is informing the consideration of planning applications and enabling the Council to follow a clear, consistent, measurable and defensible process and provide some clarity for developers. It will also inform the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040.

The Environment Bill provisions relating to nature and biodiversity will require additional approaches and increased ecological advisory capacity, the resource implications of which will require further consideration and investigation.

3.3 The delivery of the Community Nature Plan would not be possible without close partnership working with key organisations as well as the contribution of a network of local conservation and community groups:

- [The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre](#) (TVERC) supplies high quality, up to date habitat, species and site data that is required as an evidence base for the Local Plan process and for the ecological assessment of planning applications.
- [Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust](#) (BBOWT) provides land management advice to Local Wildlife Site (LWS) owners/managers, sites that are protected by planning policy. The advice helps to improve site value and maintain the robustness of the LWS designation. BBOWT also leads on the well-established Wild Banbury Project (- <https://www.bbowl.org.uk/wildlife/living-landscapes/wild-banbury>) and more recently launched Wild Bicester Project which are all about enhancing habitats for wildlife and bringing people into contact with nature.
- [Wild Oxfordshire](#) supports community wildlife groups and activities as well as citizen science projects and events. It also leads on partnership work to focus on the maintenance and improvement of the District's Conservation Target Areas which are used as a planning focus for wildlife improvement; and to develop an Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network and Strategy.
- [RSPB](#) owns, manages and encourages access to the flagship Otmoor Nature Reserve which includes national priority habitat and other habitats supporting birds and other wildlife which are national priority species.
- [Warriner School Farm](#) delivers a programme of primary school and youth group visits about the importance of the natural environment as a food source, for its health benefits and for its intrinsic value.

- **OPFA** (Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association) engages with local community organisations to promote and support the provision, retention and viability of community outdoor recreation space which meets local needs, including opportunities for habitat improvements
- Local conservation projects and community groups play an important role in protecting and enhancing the District's natural environment and providing access to nature. For example, with the help of local people throughout the District, the **Cherwell Swift Conservation Project** successfully continues to find, monitor and create new nest sites with the help of local people and enlightened developers such as Cherwell Build; and **Muddy Feet Training** is enabling young people to access, connect with and learn from their natural environment

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Restoring and enhancing the natural environment and green spaces for the benefit of people and wildlife is a crucial element of important development and economic decisions. Failure to recognise and assess the multiple benefits of the natural environment will affect community health and wellbeing, important habitats and species and future economic growth. This report seeks approval for recommendations which support plans and organisations that will assist the Council to protect and improve the District's natural environment and ensure that it remains healthy for people and wildlife.

5.0 Consultation

The following CDC Officers have been consulted about the Community Nature Plan (CNP):

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing
CNP approved

David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development
Comments received and being addressed

Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Officer: Planning Policy, Conservation and Design
Minor editing required which has been included in the CNP

Sarah Stevens, Interim Senior Manager: Development Management
Awaiting comments

Charlotte Watkins, Ecology Officer: Development Management
CNP approved

Rosie Rowe, Healthy Place Shaping Lead: Wellbeing Directorate
Highlighted issues of new developments and the importance of integrating green infrastructure/protection of biodiversity/supporting climate resilience; and the inequality of access. Additional text included in the CNP

Dean Fischer, Interim Bicester Delivery Manager: Bicester Team
Awaiting comments

Paul Almond, Manager: Street Scene and Landscape Services
Minor editing required which has been included in the CNP

Sam Thomas, Sustainability Project Officer: Bicester Delivery Team
Minor editing required which has been included in the CNP

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 reject the Community Nature Plan 2020-22 and the recommendations in the report.

This is not proposed as, without the Plan, the Council would not be able to clearly demonstrate that it is meeting its NERC Act biodiversity duty and complying with its obligations relating to important wildlife sites, habitats and species under European and national legislation as well as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Option 2: To amend the Community Nature Plan 2020-22 and the recommendations in the report

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The Community Nature Plan 2020-2022 can be delivered within existing budget but it must be noted that this report does recommend an investigation into future resources in relation to the provision of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity.

Comments checked by:

Kelly Wheeler, Finance Business Partner, 01295 221570, kelly.wheeler@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are statutory requirements that the Council must meet and which are set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and related legislation, including a duty under Part 3 of the 2006 Act to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A Community Nature Plan should enable the Council to demonstrate that these requirements are being met. Failure to do so will leave the Council open to challenge.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-contentious, Email: richard.hawtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk; Tel 01295 221695

Risk Implications

- 7.3 Community Nature Plan progress and delivery will be affected should insufficient resources, both financial and professional, be available. These risks will be managed as part of the operational risk register and escalated as and when necessary to the leadership risk register.

Comments checked by:

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes 01295 221786
Louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive Report

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

All wards

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The Council's Business Plan 2020/2021 includes the strategic priorities 'leading on environmental sustainability' (a key component being the protection of our natural environment and delivery of our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030); healthy resilient and engaged communities (the importance of access to green spaces and connection with nature for physical and mental health and resilience has been starkly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic); an enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres (a healthy and stable natural environment is vitally important to economic prosperity and the District's desirability as a place to live, work and visit).

The adopted Cherwell Local Plan (2011-2031) (Part 1) includes policies specifically relating to Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and the Natural Environment (ESD 10), Conservation Target Areas (ESD 11) and Green Infrastructure (ESD 18). Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment are also key strands of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review-Oxford's Unmet Housing Need.

The Wellbeing Team Service Development Plan 2020-2021 includes key themes relating to healthy places (develop Wellbeing service strategies and plans to link into healthy place shaping, the Local Plan, Oxfordshire 2050 plan) and partnerships (working with partners to improve the services we provide for our residents and communities).

The Healthy Place Shaping Service Development Plan 2020-2021 includes the following priorities: continue to increase internal awareness, understanding and action to embed healthy place shaping into delivery of CDC services; sustain healthy place shaping in Bicester; deliver the *K5 Better Together* healthy place shaping programme in Kidlington and surrounding villages; commence healthy place shaping in Banbury.

The 2020 Climate Action Framework recognises the importance of natural carbon management in its commitment to be net carbon neutral from its operations and activities by 2030

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 Community Nature Plan 2020-2022 – A natural environment for people and wildlife

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

Sue Marchand, Community Nature Officer
01295 221707 sue.marchand@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Community Nature Plan 2020–2022

A natural environment
for people and wildlife



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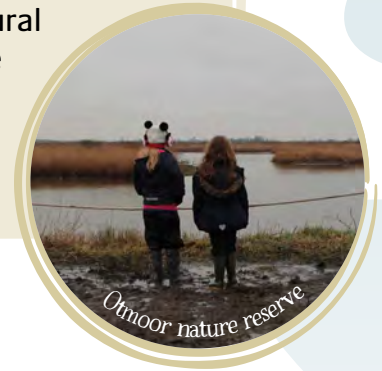


1. Introduction



Vision

To work with partners to protect and enhance Cherwell’s natural environment for its intrinsic value; the services it provides; the health and wellbeing of people; its contribution to climate change adaptation and resilience; and the economic prosperity that it brings.



Purpose

The key purpose of the Community Nature Plan is to demonstrate the council’s fulfilment of its **statutory biodiversity duty** under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a duty that will be strengthened by the Environment Bill. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 states that - *“Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”*. Biodiversity is a term used to describe the variety of life including all plants, animals, their habitats and the natural systems that support them.

The Community Nature Plan also sets out aims, actions and targets relating to key themes:

- A key function of the council in terms of the biodiversity duty is its role as a local planning authority. The council has legal obligations relating to important wildlife sites, habitats and species; and requirements under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relating to conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- The importance of the natural environment for community health and wellbeing, specifically access to green space and connection with nature
- The value of land (natural capital) and the services it delivers (ecosystem services) for people and the local economy
- The contribution of the management of land and buildings to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- The important role of natural carbon management for climate change adaptation and resilience



Multiple benefits

The multiple benefits of the natural environment are reflected in three of the strategic priorities of the council's **Business Plan 2020-2021**:

- **Leading on environmental sustainability** – key components of this priority are the protection of our natural environment and delivery of our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030
- **An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres** – a healthy and stable natural environment is vitally important to economic prosperity and the District's desirability as a place to live, work and visit
- **Healthy resilient and engaged communities** – the importance of access to green spaces and connection with nature for physical and mental health and resilience has been starkly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic

Contributions to the delivery of these **multiple benefits** are made by a wide range of council services and workstreams including Planning Policy and Development Management, the Wellbeing team, the Bicester Garden Town Programme, the Healthy Place Shaping Programme, the 2020 Climate Change Action Framework and the Street Scene and Landscape Services team.

Working in Partnership

The delivery of the Community Nature Plan would not be possible without close partnership working with key organisations as well as the contribution of a network of local conservation and community groups.

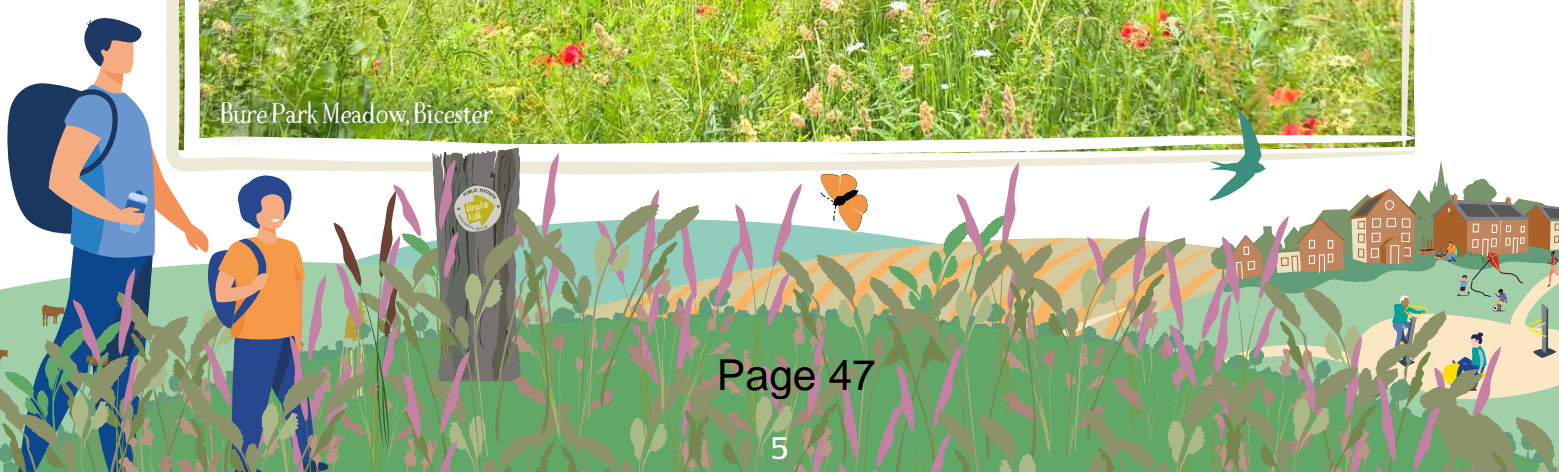


2. Cherwell's natural environment

The Cherwell District contains many areas of high ecological value including sites of international and national importance. The District is also home to many legally protected species as well as priority species and habitats. Much of this biodiversity resource is mapped by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre so that it can be used as an information source by local authorities and conservation organisations.



Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are sites of substantive nature conservation value at a County level which are protected through the planning system. They form an important network of habitats for animals and plants, both within Oxfordshire and beyond, and are vital to sustaining wildlife populations. Appropriate land management is often essential to enable this wildlife to survive and flourish. Within the Cherwell District there are also District Wildlife Sites (DWSs), the value of which is not considered sufficient to meet County LWS criteria but is deemed significant at the District level. Some of these sites already have local group or conservation organisation involvement such as Stratfield Brake in Kidlington which is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust. In some cases, with appropriate management, a DWS may attain LWS quality. The Council's biodiversity partners, TVERC and BBOWT, offer surveys and land management advice to owners of these local sites.



The District has four Local Nature Reserves (statutory designation of sites with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally) – Kirtlington Quarry, Bure Park in Bicester, Adderbury Lakes and The Slade in Bloxham; numerous Reserves owned and managed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust; Woodland Trust sites such as Stratfield Brake, Piddington Wood and Daeda’s Wood just north of Deddington; sites managed by the Banbury Ornithological Society (BOS) such as the Bicester Wetland Reserve; and Parish and Town Council land which is owned and/or managed for wildlife and people.

The council owns and manages land which contributes to the District’s biodiversity resource. The most notable and largest sites are Banbury Country Park and the proposed Burnehyll Community Woodland on the edge of Bicester which offer many opportunities for biodiversity and access improvements.

Oxfordshire’s Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) identify some of the most important areas for biodiversity in the District and provide a focus for coordinated action. This focus is now being integrated with a Nature Recovery Network approach which identifies opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity. The council’s biodiversity partner, Wild Oxfordshire, co-ordinates both the CTA and NRN projects.

Cherwell’s biodiversity resource is also part of its Green Infrastructure. Green Infrastructure (GI) defines the network of accessible multifunctional green space in both urban and rural settings and delivers environmental, social and economic benefits. Such benefits include conserving and enhancing habitat connectivity, improving community health and wellbeing and economic prosperity through attracting investment into the area. Conservation Target Areas together with Oxfordshire and District Wildlife Sites form important components of the green infrastructure network of the District. Securing adequate green infrastructure is crucial to achieving sustainable communities.



3. Planning and sustainable development

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment is integral to sustainable development. Biodiversity is an important consideration in the planning process and must be integrated from an early stage into the design of any scheme. Development can have negative impacts on biodiversity (net loss) which can be significant and lead to the decline of important habitats and species in the District. Development can also have positive impacts for biodiversity (net gain), especially for sites where there is little wildlife, by integrating new habitats into buildings and adjacent spaces.

The **Environment Bill** has been introduced to support the UK's departure from the European Union, the delivery of the 25 Year Environment Plan (which sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health) and the National Resources and Waste Strategy. Its progress through Parliament has been delayed by Covid-19 but there are several sections of the Bill that will apply directly to local government when passed, including Part 6, Nature and Biodiversity.

This section of the Bill includes provisions to:

- Strengthen the duty on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Publication of biodiversity reports will be required to review the actions taken by the local authority to comply with its duties for nature and biodiversity
- Make it mandatory for housing and development to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity, a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development
- Require local authorities to support better spatial planning for nature through the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs). The DEFRA 25-Year Environment Plan highlights six key areas for action, one being to establish a Nature Recovery Network. This will protect and restore wildlife, as well as providing greater public enjoyment of the countryside; increased carbon capture; and improvements in water quality and flood management

A revised **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) was published in February 2019 and Chapter 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) strengthens the importance and protection of the natural environment in the planning process. A requirement for biodiversity net gain is included in the NPPF but a number or percentage for the gain is not specified. However, the Environment Bill, when passed, will mandate a 10% net gain in value.



The **Planning for the Future white paper** (August 2020), which sets out the Government’s proposals for reform of England’s planning system, proposes to amend the NPPF to ensure *“that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits”*. Consultation responses to date have expressed concerns in terms of the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and it is not yet clear how proposals will align with the provisions of the Environment Bill.

The adopted **Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)** sets the broad planning framework for meeting the future needs of the District. It includes strategic biodiversity, conservation target area and green infrastructure policies that contribute to, and help ensure, sustainable development. In terms of biodiversity net gain, it says “In considering proposals for development, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought by protecting, managing, enhancing and extending existing resources, and by creating new resources” Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment are also key strands of the **Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review-Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need** adopted in September 2020 (providing for new development to meet the council’s share of Oxford’s unmet housing need) in which biodiversity impact assessments and biodiversity improvement and management plans are planning application requirements for all development sites.

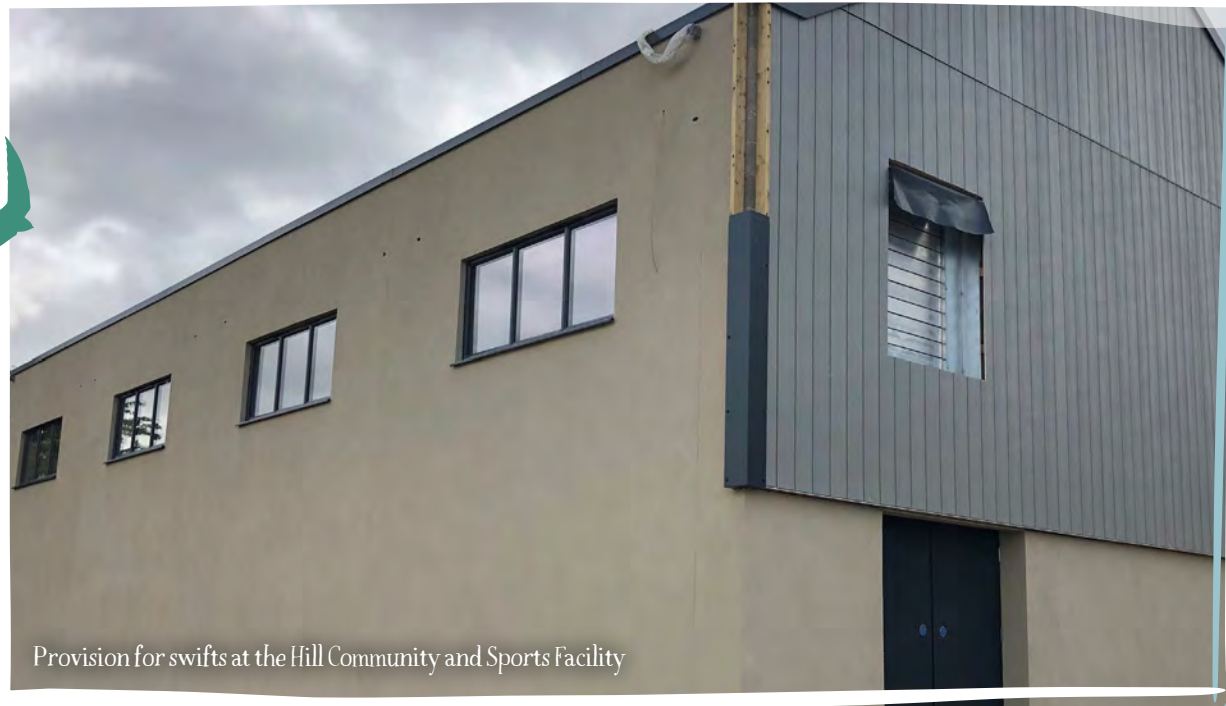
Adopted Local Plan policy ESD 10 (protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment) supports securing net biodiversity gain on development sites as well as requiring the protection of important wildlife and geological sites, habitats and species. The Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides additional information about how policy ESD10 should be applied and how biodiversity impact should be assessed; and more detailed guidance has been approved by the council’s Executive (produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and other professional bodies).

The Cherwell Local Plan Review has commenced with the publication of a Community Engagement Paper in July of this year. The review will consider whether the existing plan policies need to be amended or new policies included in the plan. The consultation paper identified several issues relating to biodiversity and the natural environment and indicated how these issues could be addressed by the plan, including biodiversity net gain.

The council endorsed the Wildlife Trusts’ guidance “Homes for people, homes for wildlife” in July 2018. The guidance states that a good nature-rich housing development provides:

- Connectivity between wild places – enabling both wildlife and people to move through the landscape, and for natural processes to operate effectively
- Real, measurable gains for wildlife, as all new developments make a demonstrable, positive contribution to nature’s recovery
- Improved health, wellbeing and quality of life for people living and working nearby
- Easy access to high quality, wildlife-rich, natural green space for everyone, providing daily opportunities to experience wildlife
- Effective water management, pollution and climate control provided by green spaces and water courses, sustainable urban drainage, green roofs, trees, woodlands, wetlands and other natural features





Provision for swifts at the Hill Community and Sports Facility

The **Oxfordshire Plan 2050** (OP2050) is progressing and its emerging spatial strategy is being influenced by the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network (NRN). The concept of a NRN is simple in that it should extend and link existing sites of wildlife value. Building on mapped Conservation Target Areas, the NRN has been prepared by a partnership of three of the council's biodiversity partners (BBOWT, TVERC and Wild Oxfordshire) who have secured extensive buy in across the County's environmental sector through a broader Working Group, consultation events in 2019 as well as validation from the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Advisory Group. A potential policy approach has also been submitted to the OP2050 team including ensuring that the NRN is given significant weight in planning decisions. The NRN will also help inform the Cherwell Local Plan Review, guide key policies like biodiversity net gain and develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This Strategy, which will be required by the Environment Bill, can use the NRN to map out important habitats and opportunities for the local environment to be improved, linking communities' knowledge/priorities with national environmental objectives. In August 2020 Natural England announced funding to develop five pilot NRN/LNRS areas indicating that Oxfordshire's progress to date is noteworthy.

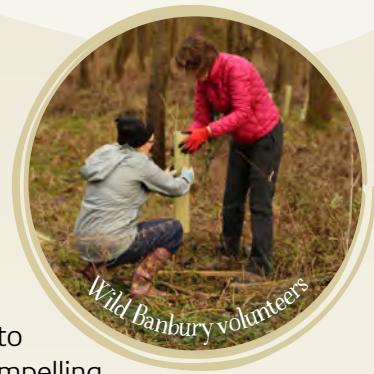
The continuation of this vital work will be locally led by a responsible authority yet to be decided but likely to be at a County level and involving a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) or its equivalent. Oxfordshire does not currently have a LNP but significant progress is being made towards establishing one with the support of funding from the Growth Board. The ambition for LNPs is that they will help their local area to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy. To do this effectively they will need to be self-sustaining strategic partnerships of a broad range of local organisations, businesses and people with the credibility to work with, and influence, other local strategic decision makers.



4. Community value

(i) Community health and wellbeing

The natural environment is increasingly being recognised as an important asset for supporting health and wellbeing. The importance of access to green spaces and connection with nature for physical and mental health and resilience has been starkly highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Green space has a key role to play in the drive to increase levels of physical activity and there is a wealth of compelling evidence that time spent in green environments promotes a positive outlook on life and enhances our ability to cope with, and recover from, stress, illness and injury (Public Health England, Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020).



A recent Natural England report has reviewed the evidence for the health and wellbeing benefits of green infrastructure and sets out the sizeable body of research that underlines the importance of creating more, bigger, better and joined-up green spaces, especially near to where people live, and to address inequalities. It also identifies the beneficial role of social interventions such as media campaigns to increase awareness of green spaces and holding community events in a natural environment; and reviews the wider health and wellbeing role of green infrastructure, for example in nature recovery, addressing climate change and mitigating noise and air pollution (Natural England, A rapid scoping of health and wellbeing evidence for the Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards (NEER015), September 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted not just the importance of access to the natural environment for both physical and mental health but also that there is significant inequality of access to green space (*The grass isn't greener for everyone: why access to green space matters* Ramblers Association 2020 and *England's Green Space Gap* Friends of the Earth 2020). These reports provide evidence that people on a low income and people from a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) background are less likely to have good access to green space. If we are to create healthy places and resilient communities it is important to improve access to green spaces in these communities in order to reduce health inequalities.

The following are examples of key projects that contribute to the health and wellbeing of the District's residents and are supported by the council's funding of its biodiversity partners. Many have been impacted by Covid-19 in 2020 but are now functioning again.

- The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) leads on, and provides expertise for, the 'Wild Banbury' project and a new 'Wild Bicester' project which has recently been launched and joint funded by the Bicester, Healthy Placeshaping and Wellbeing teams. Both Wild Projects provide opportunities for conservation volunteering, connecting with nature as well as benefits for wildlife habitat
- Wild Oxfordshire supports local community projects with ecological advice. Following on from organising a successful 'Green Zone' at the 2019 Kidlington Gala Day, the community ecologist is currently involved in developing a green space project in Kidlington led by the council's healthy placeshaping team
- RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) manages the Otmoor Nature Reserve which is a haven for wildlife in the District with visitor trails, bird hides and a wetland watch lookout building



- Warriner School Farm has been unable to provide its usual programme of primary school and youth group visits in 2020 but has been actively supporting socially distanced community events with family packs of nature-based activities
- Muddy Feet Training delivers forest school and outdoor learning sessions to schools and groups in the District. It is currently working with special needs children at Bardwell School in Bicester and young people at the Hill Community Centre in Banbury, both funded by the council. The council also provided funding for Muddy Feet to develop a resource pack for teachers and parents 'Transitioning back to school during the corona virus pandemic'



(ii) Natural capital

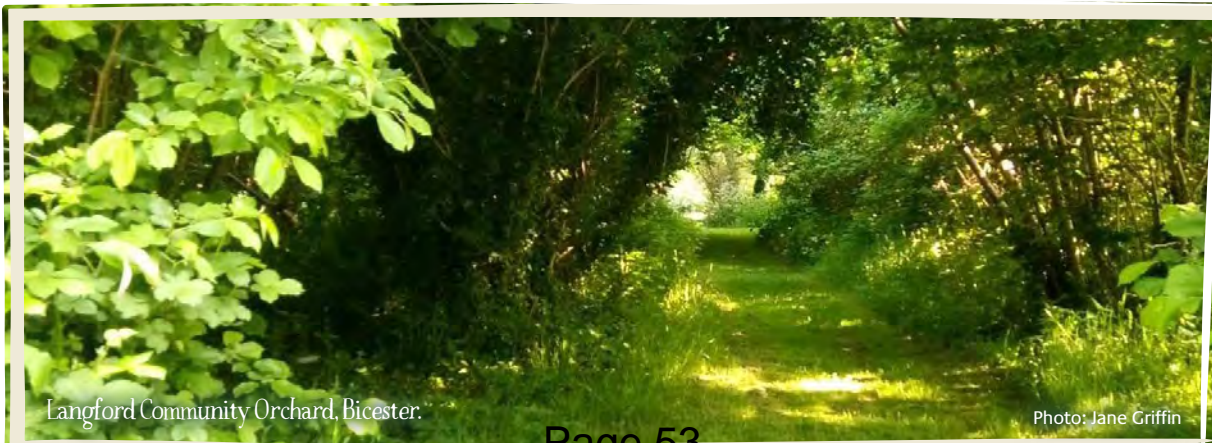
Current understanding of the value of nature in society is embodied in the concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services:

Natural capital – elements of nature that produce **value for people**. These include ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions.

Ecosystems services – delivered by natural capital, they underpin human health and wellbeing (eg food production, water supply, carbon storage).

DEFRA published natural capital guidance in January 2020 - 'Enabling a Natural Capital Approach'. This guidance brings together and makes accessible a wide range of tools, data and case studies to enable decision-makers and appraisers to better value and account for natural capital in their local areas.

Oxfordshire's natural capital has been mapped by the University of Oxford working with stakeholders to produce an evidence base to feed into development of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. This work was supported by the council and will inform the Cherwell Local Plan Review going forward. The mapping was carried out in terms of the County's ability to deliver 18 different ecosystem services and will help to identify areas of high value natural capital that should be protected from inappropriate development; low scoring areas that represent opportunities to improve provision; and strategic networks of high value green infrastructure which are important for wildlife and active travel routes for people. The mapping can be combined with other layers of information, such as flood zones and transport infrastructure, to help with decision making for site allocation and natural capital investment.



Langford Community Orchard, Bicester.

Photo: Jane Griffin

5. Climate action



The climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked. The creation, protection and sustainable management of habitats which have carbon removal and storage functions play a key role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Tree planting is just one of the carbon capture options together with healthy soils, grasslands and wetlands which can remove and store vast amounts of carbon.

Working with nature, urban solutions such as street trees, green roofs and walls and the development of integrated and connected green infrastructure projects can help urban areas adapt to climate change impacts, such as flooding events and heatwaves, as well as tackling socio-environmental challenges such as poor air quality, biodiversity loss and human health and wellbeing.

The council's 2020 Climate Action Framework recognises the importance of natural carbon management in its commitment to be net carbon neutral from its operations and activities by 2030. It states that through council policy and partnerships, natural carbon management will be improved by protecting and enhancing natural capital assets which capture and store carbon; and the ambition to double tree cover in Oxfordshire with 'the right tree in the right place' will be supported.

The Framework also includes plans to support existing Nature Recovery Strategy work in the county (through the inclusion of biodiversity net gain targets in planning policy) and to work with a wide range of partners to develop a tree strategy for Oxfordshire.

The Council has committed, as far as possible, to double tree cover within the District by 2045, to identify and secure funding opportunities in furtherance of the commitment and to require developers to demonstrate how they will be improving biodiversity (specifically through the planting of more trees).



6. Working in partnership

The delivery of the Community Nature Plan would not be possible without close partnership working with key organisations as well as the contribution of a network of local conservation and community groups. The council supports six key organisations with annual funding in accordance with service level agreements.

The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) supplies high quality, up to date habitat, species and site data that is required as an evidence base for the Local Plan process and for the ecological assessment of planning applications. TVERC's service involves intensive mapping work to assess habitat condition. TVERC also reports on Local Plan indicators, information which is required for the Council's Annual Monitoring Report; and provides the survey element of the Local Wildlife Site Project. Local communities use TVERC data for neighbourhood planning and volunteer recording groups are supported by the organisation.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) provides land management advice to Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and some District Wildlife Site (DWS) owners/managers. The advice helps to improve site value and maintain the robustness of the LWS designation. BBOWT also leads on the well-established Wild Banbury Project and more recent Wild Bicester Project which are all about enhancing habitats for wildlife and bringing people into contact with nature. It also supports a North Oxfordshire volunteer group which monitors a number of bat box projects that the council has initiated and helped to fund.

Wild Oxfordshire supports community wildlife groups and activities as well as citizen science projects and events. It also leads on partnership work to focus on the maintenance and improvement of the District's Conservation Target Areas which are used as a planning focus for wildlife improvement; and to develop an Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network and Strategy.

RSPB owns and manages the flagship Otmoor Nature Reserve. Floodplain grazing marsh, which is a national priority habitat, and other habitats support birds and other wildlife which are national priority species. The RSPB encourages access along its visitor trails and to its bird hides. It also supports volunteer training and facilitates projects involving volunteers and landowners.

Warriner School Farm delivers a programme of primary school and youth group visits about the importance of the natural environment as a food source, for its health benefits and for its intrinsic value.

OPFA (Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association) engages with local community organisations to promote and support the provision, retention and viability of community outdoor recreation space which meets local needs, including opportunities for habitat improvements.

Local projects and community groups also play an important role in protecting and enhancing the District's natural environment and providing access to nature. For example, with the help of local people throughout the District, the **Cherwell Swift Conservation Project** successfully continues to find, monitor and create new nest sites with the help of local people and enlightened developers such as Cherwell Build; and Muddy Feet Training is enabling young people to access, connect with and learn from their natural environment.



7. Community nature plan aims, actions and targets

Theme 1: Planning and sustainable development

- The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) includes strategic policies relating to biodiversity and the natural environment, green infrastructure and conservation target areas that will contribute to, and help ensure, sustainable development
- The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need includes a connected green infrastructure policy. It also has development brief requirements for biodiversity net gain and planning application requirements for Biodiversity Impact Assessments and Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plans
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019 strengthens the importance and protection of the natural environment in the planning process and includes a requirement for biodiversity net gain. It also recognises the importance of good evidence and data for decision-making
- The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (OP2050) is progressing and the central plan team is working with the Oxfordshire District local authorities to develop strong policies relating to nature and biodiversity
- Connectivity between natural features and easy access to high quality wildlife-rich natural green space are key principles of the BBOWT guidance ‘Homes for people, homes for wildlife’ which was endorsed by the council in July 2018

Aim 1: Planning policy

- Ensure strong policies relating to nature and biodiversity are included in all relevant Local Plan documents in accordance with relevant legislation, the NPPF, the provisions of the Environment Bill and the emerging OP2050

Actions

- ➔ Include and amend policies, proposals and guidance as necessary relating to biodiversity, green infrastructure (GI) conservation target areas (CTAs), the nature recovery network and natural capital in the preparation of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
- ➔ Support the OP2050 team to develop strong policies relating to nature and biodiversity
- ➔ Support the provision of high quality, up to date biodiversity information and evidence required by the Oxfordshire and Cherwell Local Plan process through funding biodiversity partners

Targets

- Review policies relating to protection and enhancement of biodiversity, green infrastructure and conservation target areas in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
- Include policies relating to biodiversity net gain and offsetting, nature recovery network and natural capital as appropriate in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
- Contribute to OP2050’s policy development relating to nature and biodiversity through planning and natural environment workstreams
- Continue to fund TVERC to collate, analyse and supply data associated with the Local Plan process, Annual Monitoring Report and constraint GIS layers required for planning projects and site assessments
- Continue to fund TVERC to deliver the District Wildlife Site (DWS) Project through site surveys and in accordance with approved self-certification



Aim 2: Development management

- Ensure legislation and policies relating to nature and biodiversity are adhered to through the development management process

Actions

- ➔ Continue to deliver the requirements of all nature and biodiversity policies in the implementation of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1)
- ➔ Ensure adherence to green infrastructure policy and development brief/planning application requirements in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review
- ➔ Support the provision of high quality, up to date biodiversity information and evidence required by the Development Management process through funding biodiversity partners

Targets

- 🕒 Screen all planning applications in terms of their impact on important sites, habitats and species in line with relevant legislation and policy
- 🕒 Assess those that impact upon important sites, habitats and species in line with relevant biodiversity legislation and policy
- 🕒 Require planning applications for all Partial Review sites to include biodiversity impact assessments and biodiversity improvement and management plans
- 🕒 Seek a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity when considering proposals for development
- 🕒 Produce guidance relating to biodiversity impact assessment, net gain and offsetting
- 🕒 Continue to fund TVERC to collate, analyse and supply data associated with screening and assessment of planning applications



Aim 3: Green and blue infrastructure

- Support the establishment and development of green and blue infrastructure networks and ecological connectivity throughout the District for wildlife and people.

Action

- ➔ Support partners and deliver projects that can help protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure as well as access to high quality green space.

Targets

- 🕒 Deliver the Kidlington wayfinding project to encourage walking for wellbeing in the parish through the establishment of signed health routes which link green spaces and natural features
- 🕒 Work in partnership with Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (OPFA) to support the provision, retention and viability of high quality, accessible community green space
- 🕒 Continue to fund Wild Oxfordshire to facilitate the Conservation Target Area (CTA) Project
- 🕒 Support Wild Oxfordshire to progress the development of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network and Strategy
- 🕒 Support and participate in the catchment partnership work in the District led by BBOWT



Theme 2: Community value

- There is a wealth of evidence that the natural environment, its wildlife and green spaces are vital for community and economic health and wellbeing
- Natural Capital means elements of nature that produce value for people and underpin human health and wellbeing. Through identification of the wider values of land, the natural capital mapping of Oxfordshire will help inform future investment decisions that are required to maintain and improve natural benefits for all who live and work in the District

Aim 1: Health and wellbeing

- Support and promote initiatives to encourage involvement in the natural environment and to improve public understanding of, and connection with, nature



Actions

- ➔ Support organisations, projects and sites involving important habitats and species and community engagement opportunities
- ➔ Support community events through the provision of nature-based activities
- ➔ Promote funding opportunities for local wildlife and access projects and provide support for community project development
- ➔ Signpost individuals and groups to wildlife engagement opportunities

Targets

- Continue to fund BBOWT's Wild Banbury and Wild Bicester Projects; Wild Oxfordshire's work with local groups and community sites; RSPB's volunteer/landowner events; Warriner School Farm's programme of visits and outreach for young people; TVERC's work with, and training of, volunteer wildlife recorders; and OPFA's community engagement work
- Promote BBOWT's Wild Parishes online resources and webinars which support parish councillors, clerks and volunteers to improve their patch for wildlife and people
- Support the Cherwell Swift Conservation Project with advice and promotion
- Contribute nature-based activities to community events such as fundays, school projects and local greenspace activities
- Work with the Grants Officer, Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to assess and deliver local wildlife, green space and access projects
- Protect, improve and promote urban green spaces in Bicester and Kidlington through Healthy New Town and Healthy Placeshaping initiatives
- Produce and promote a public facing document to encourage taking action for wildlife and discovering local green spaces and the District's natural environment
- Explore opportunities for local community projects relating to habitats and species eg road verges, hedgehogs, bees



Aim 2: Natural capital

- Engage with strategic partnership work relating to valuing the natural environment

Actions

- ➔ Support the further development of the Oxfordshire natural capital mapping resource as a decision-making tool for site allocation and natural capital investment

Targets

- 🎯 Participate in strategic and local debate as the natural capital mapping work progresses
- 🎯 Explore using a natural capital approach to inform strategic site allocations as part of the Cherwell Plan Review 2040



Theme 3: Land and buildings management

- The council has responsibilities for maintaining and enhancing land and property for people and wildlife on its own estate and on sites that it manages
- The Council can also influence the management of land and property throughout the District by supporting key partner organisations
- Parish and Town Councils as well as local groups have an important role to play in land management throughout the District

Aim 1: Council land and buildings

- Secure improved management of parks, open spaces, buildings and associated external environments for people and wildlife on the council's estate and sites that it manages

Actions

- ➔ Encourage important habitats and species at appropriate council owned/managed sites
- ➔ Deliver biodiversity and access improvements relating to Burnehyll Community Woodland and Banbury Country Park
- ➔ Consider opportunities for protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the built environment

Targets

- 🎯 Work in partnership with BBOWT to improve Enslow Marsh and Trow Pool Local Wildlife Sites
- 🎯 Liaise with partners to plan biodiversity and access improvements within Burnehyll Community Woodland through regular working group meetings
- 🎯 Deliver biodiversity and access improvements within Banbury Country Park
- 🎯 Continue to include biodiversity protection and enhancement measures within Cherwell Build projects
- 🎯 Promote 'Biodiversity in the Built Environment Good Practice Guide: Preservation of existing nesting sites and provision of artificial nesting sites'



Aim 2: Cherwell District

- Support environmental organisations that manage, or provide advice on the management of, land in the District
- Support local communities and groups to fulfil their biodiversity obligations and to improve management of land and buildings for habitats and species



Actions

- Continue to fund the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) towards its management of the Otmoor Nature Reserve
- Continue to fund the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) towards the Local Wildlife Sites Project and the Wild Banbury and Bicester Projects
- Support conservation projects in the active Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) of the District, particularly the Ray and Cherwell Valleys
- Continue to fund Wild Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (OPFA) to support local projects that involve land/building management for important habitats and species

Targets

- RSPB and BBOWT to provide reports to demonstrate delivery in accordance with funding agreements
- Any funded projects in the CTAs to provide reports to demonstrate delivery of objectives
- Wild Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (OPFA) to provide reports to demonstrate delivery of local projects in accordance with funding agreements
- Promote BBOWT's Wild Parishes online resources and webinars which support parish councillors, clerks and volunteers to improve their patch for wildlife and people



Theme 4: Climate action

- The council's 2020 Climate Action Framework recognises the importance of natural carbon management in its commitment to be net carbon neutral from its operations and activities by 2030
- The creation, protection and sustainable management of habitats which have carbon removal and storage functions play a key role in climate change adaptation and mitigation

Aim: Natural carbon management

- Improve natural carbon management through policy and partnerships

Actions

- ➔ Include natural carbon management in the review/formulation of policy relating to climate mitigation and adaptation in the preparation of the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040 and the Oxfordshire Plan 2050
- ➔ Work in partnership to deliver projects that will provide biodiversity and carbon offsets



Targets

- Include policies relating to biodiversity net gain and offsetting, nature recovery network and natural capital as appropriate in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
- Contribute to OP2050's policy development relating to nature, biodiversity and natural carbon management through planning, natural environment and climate change workstreams
- Support key biodiversity partners to protect, manage and enhance habitats which have carbon removal and storage functions
- Work with partners to develop an Oxfordshire Tree Strategy
- Work with partners to explore the delivery of biodiversity and carbon offset projects



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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1 December 2020

Constitution Review

Report of Corporate Director – Commercial Development, Assets and Investment & (Interim) Monitoring Officer

This report is public.

Purpose of report

This report presents the recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group on the 'areas for further consideration' for this Committee to determine what recommendations for constitutional change to make to Full Council to consider on 14 December.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to consider the recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group on each of the 'areas for further consideration' (outlined more fully at Appendix 1) and make recommendations to Full Council accordingly:

Rules of debate:

- 1.1 to make no changes to the current process as regards the order of speakers in a debate but to clarify that the seconder can speak at any point if they have reserved their right and that this does not mean they must be the penultimate speaker;
- 1.2 to make no change to the existing rule that once the proposer of a motion or amendments begins summing up, no further speakers will be heard

Length of speeches (including all committees):

- 1.3 to reduce the length of speeches for proposers to and proposers of amendments to five minutes (from current 10 minute)
- 1.4 to reduce the length of speeches for seconder, and seconder of amendments and all other speakers to three minutes (from current 5 minutes);

Deadlines for submitting amendments to motions

- 1.5 to make no changes to the existing deadlines (5pm, two working days before the meeting)
- 1.6 to increase the word limit for amendment to motions to 350 (from current 250) words

Process for dealing with motions with budgetary implications

- 1.7 to encourage members to submit motions early and discuss with officers to enable a review in the light of budgetary implications, with the introduction of a threshold of

“£10,000 or more” to inform what “significant” means in terms of the current budget or capital expenditure

- 1.8 to allow amendments to motions deferred for budgetary reasons to be amended when resubmitted to Council

Motions without notice/procedural motions:

- 1.9 to make no changes to the current arrangement that a procedural motion, once proposed and seconded, requires only a simple majority to succeed

Recorded vote:

- 1.10 to make no changes to the current arrangement that a request for a recorded vote needs only a proposer and seconder to succeed

Public addresses (not Planning Committee)

- 1.11 to make no changes to current arrangements for
- i) public speakers to register by noon on the working day before the meeting
 - ii) five minutes per public speaker
 - iii) no time limit on the number of public speakers or the time allowed for the public address item

Order of business/finish time for Full Council

- 1.12 to make no changes to the existing order of business for Full Council
- 1.13 not to introduce a finish time/cut off time for Full Council

Planning Committee

- 1.14 to allow remote tools (drones) in facilitating site visits but to be clear that this should complement other evidence, not replace site visits and any such usage should ensure impartiality
- 1.15 to retain current arrangements whereby
- i) there is no separate slot for councillor questions of clarification to the officer after a presentation of a planning application
 - ii) County councillors are allowed to speak as members of the public (i.e. no separate right to speak)
- 1.16 to introduce a ten-minute time limit for non-committee ward members in addressing the Committee

Terminology and glossary

- 1.15 to introduce a glossary to the Constitution to bring clarity to members of the public, officers and councillors
- 1.16 to achieve consistency within the Constitution by using the following words:
- i) Executive (not Cabinet)
 - ii) Chairman of a meeting (with the proviso that a person chairing a committee may call themselves by whichever term e.g. Chair)
 - iii) Resident (rather than citizen)
- 1.17 to continue to use the following terms but provide contextual clarity (and explanation in the glossary) for the use of each:
- i) Councillor and member
 - ii) Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
 - iii) Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer

Annual Review of the Constitution

- 1.18 to introduce an annual review of the Constitution whereby

- i) At its October/December meeting, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will consider and make recommendations to Full Council to agree in December
- ii) Such a review to include a notice of any changes made in year under officer delegations to reflect legislation and transfers of functions
- iii) Any significant changes would be submitted to Full Council as necessary for consideration

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 At its last meeting, this Committee recommended to Council that a cross-party Working Group be established to undertake a focused review of the Constitution. Following the agreement of Council, the Working Group was constituted and has met to frame recommendations to this Committee.
- 2.2 It was agreed by Council that this Committee would consider the proposals of the Working Group and finalise recommendations for Council's consideration. The areas of focus for the review were set by Council on the recommendation of this Committee: these are listed in the first column of Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The previous reports to this Committee and Full Council are available at the following links:

[Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7 October 2020](#)
[Council 19 October 2020](#)
- 2.4 The review was carried out as Council recognised that the Constitution should be reviewed from time to time, so that it remains fit for purpose. This includes giving clarity to the public, to Members and to officers about who can make decisions and how business is conducted.
- 2.5 Prior to the Working Group being commissioned, a survey of councillor views had been undertaken. Bevan Brittan had also been asked to provide a view on the Council's current Constitution, in the context of other approaches across the country. Both of these sources were considered and informed the Working Group discussion. .
- 2.6 In addition to the matters addressed by the Working Group, officers are reviewing the Constitution administratively to bring greater clarity to its structure making it more user friendly and to ensure it reflects up to date legislation and officer structures. Appendix 2 gives an outline of the revised structure.
- 2.7 The Working Group comprised the following councillors who met twice on 4 and 12 November 2020:

Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman)
Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Conrad Copeland
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Shaida Hussain
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Les Sibley

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 At its first meeting the Working Group considered the 'areas for consideration' and agreed a number of aspects they would discuss with their political Groups. At its second meeting. Working Group members reported on the comments and feedback of their political groups and agreed the recommendations that have been submitted to this Committee for consideration.
- 3.2. The majority of the recommendations were reached by the Working Group through consensus, unanimously. The following were carried by a vote after the consideration of several options: Appendix 1 outlines the minority view in each case.
- a) Length of speeches to be reduced (1.3 and 1.4 above)
 - b) Retaining deadline for submission of amendments (1.5)
 - c) Increase word limit for amended motions (1.6)
 - d) Public addresses retaining 5 minutes per speaker (1.11(ii))
 - e) Retain existing order of business at Full Council (1.12)
 - f) Retain no set finishing time for Full Council (1.13)
 - g) Retain no questions of clarification at Planning Committee (1.15(i))
- 3.3 The following sections of the Constitution are being reviewed administratively to ensure that they are up-to-date and reflect current legislation, best practice and arrangements:
- Introduction
 - 2.2: Executive Procedure Rules
 - 2.3: Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules
 - 2.4 Appeals Panel Procedure Rules
 - 2.5: Licensing Committee Procedure Rules
 - 2.7: Roles and Appointments
 - 3.3: Respective Roles of Members and Officers and Dealing with Conflicts of Interest
 - 3.4: Conventions for the Management of Council Business and a Protocol on Member-Officer relations
 - 3.5: Members' Planning Code of Conduct
 - 3.6: Bias and Predetermination – A Guidance Note for Members
- 3.4 The recommendations as framed by the Working Group are in line with the best practice recommendations of Bevan Brittan. As regards recommendation 1.7 (motions with budgetary implications), while not specifically recommended by Bevan Brittan, this is consistent with the practice of Oxfordshire County Council and will provide clarity for Members and officers when considering such motions.
- 3.5 The next steps in the process are:

- a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed changes and recommends their adoption by Full Council
- b) Full Council considers the recommendations on 14 December 2020

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 It is essential to review the Constitution to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Using feedback from Members and national best practice has identified areas for change which would potentially improve the business of council meetings and the experience of them for members and the public. A cross-party Working Group has brought a further, detailed elected member perspective.
- 4.2 It is considered that these proposals would give greater clarity of expectation for everyone on their rights of participation, whether as a councillor or a member of the public. It's suggested that, together, these relatively modest changes will have positive impact on the productivity of the meetings and the pre-meeting preparations.

5.0 Consultation

All Cherwell District Councillors and political groups
Senior managers – members of CEDR (Chief Executive's Direct Reports)
Democratic and Elections Team
Monitoring Officer
Bevan Brittan, experts in local government constitutions

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: Do not make any changes – this is not recommended as, currently, there are impracticalities and confusions that cause a disproportionately negative effect on the productivity of the Council's decision making

Option 2: Align the Constitution to that of the Council's partner, Oxfordshire County Council – while it is appropriate to harmonise where possible (and several of the areas for further consideration above are already in place for Oxfordshire County Council) it is important that this Council's Constitution reflects the democratic decision-making culture of this Council

Option 3: Align the Constitution to the 'model constitution' circulated nationally – this is not recommended as the national model is several years' old now and it is important that this Council's Constitution reflects the democratic decision-making culture of this Council

7.0 Implications

There are no financial or resource implications consequent on these recommendations.

Comments checked by: Michael Furness
Assistant Director – Finance
michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221845

Legal Implications

- 7.2 The Council is required to have and to publish a Constitution and to keep it under review.

Comments checked by:
Richard Hawtin, Team Leader – Non-Contentious
richard.hawtin@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221695

Risk Implications

- 7.3 The risk of not making changes is that the decision-making of the authority, and its reputation as a business-like and transparent organisation suffers through a lack of challenge and development.

Comments checked by: Louise Tustian
Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk 01295 221786

Implications for equality and diversity

- 7.4 The Constitution will be reviewed generally to ensure that the format is easily accessible. This is an important step in ensuring that access to the democratic process is equitable. However, the inclusivity of opportunity to engage with the authority – as members or members of the public – is enhanced by the clarity of expectation represented by the recommendations. Of course, officers and the councillors chairing committees will consider the specific requirements of individuals and will make reasonable adjustments where necessary within the Constitution to ensure that no councillor or member of the public is unfairly discriminated against. Sufficient flexibility will be retained after any changes to ensure that this will remain the case. The report does not otherwise raise any implications for equality and diversity.

Comments checked by: Robin Rogers
Head of Strategy
robin.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
07789 923206

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision – N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

All aspects as the Constitution sets out how the Council operates

Document Information**Appendix number and title**

- 1. Recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Group on the areas of focus set by Council
- 2. Outline contents of proposed new Constitution

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

Glenn Watson, Principal Governance Officer 07776 997946
glenn.watson@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Constitution Review: Recommendations from the Working Group following discussion of proposals with their Groups

Working Group Members: Councillor Lucinda Wing (Chairman), Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Conrad Copeland, Councillor Tom Wallis, Councillor Barry Richards, Councillor Les Sibley, Councillor Shaida Hussain, Councillor David Hughes

At the Constitution Review Working Group meeting held on 4 November 2020, the Working Group reviewed the areas for further consideration that had been agreed by Council on 14 October 2020.

The Working Group agreed to discuss the proposals with their Groups to inform the discussion and formulation of recommendations to be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their 1 December meeting. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will consider and make recommendations to the 14 December Full Council meeting.

Constitution Section 2: Meeting Procedure Rules (and 2a: Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules)

- Rules of Debate
 - Clarity on order of speaking and seconder “reserving right to speak”

Proposal (NB. No changes proposed)	Working Group recommendation	Comments
No change to current process but ensure the Constitution is clear that the seconder can speak at any point in the debate if they have reserved their right and that this right does not mean they must be the penultimate speaker before the proposer sums up	No change	Unanimous decision
Once the proposer (of a motion or amendment) begins summing up, no further speakers will be heard	No change	Unanimous decision

- Length of speeches (NB. This will apply for the length of speeches – proposing, seconding and speaking on an item - at all committees and meetings. This includes consideration of reports at these meetings as well as motions at Full Council, unless a meeting agrees to suspend standing orders.)

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Reduce the length of speeches for proposers and proposers of amendments to 7 minutes (currently 10 minutes) or to 5 minutes	Reduce the length of speeches for proposers and proposers of amendments to 5 minutes	Majority decision (5 votes for reduction to 5 minutes, 4 votes for reduction to 7 minutes)
Retain the length of speeches for the seconder, seconder of amendments and all other speakers at 5 minutes or reduce it to 3 minutes	Reduce the length of speeches for seconder, seconder of amendments and all other speakers to 3 minutes	Majority decision 5 votes for reduction to 3 minutes, 4 votes to retain 5 minutes

- Deadline for the submission of amendments to motions

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Retain the deadline for the submission of amendments to motions (5pm, two working days before the meeting)	Retain existing deadline	Majority decision (6 members voted to support retaining deadline, 3 members voted to support no deadline)
Increase the word limit for amended motions to 300 words	Increase word limit for amendments to motions to 350 words	Majority decision (4 members voted to support retaining 250 word limit, 5 members voted to support increasing the limit to 350 words)

- Process for dealing with motions with budgetary implications
(NB. this is a motion that would require a significant increase in the current budget of the Council, or would involve capital expenditure. It is immediately adjourned to the next meeting once proposed and seconded to allow for Executive/Statutory Officer review of the implications)

Proposal	Working Group recommendations	Comments
Encourage Members to submit motions early and discuss with officers to enable review in light of budgetary implications	Support proposal and that a threshold be included to inform what “significant” is – agree this should be £10k increase in current budget or involve capital expenditure	Unanimous decision
If a motion is deferred due to having budgetary implications, allow for the wording to be amended in light of the review by the relevant committee / statutory officer before it goes back to Council to be debated	Allow amendments to motions deferred for budgetary reasons to be amended when resubmitted to Council	Unanimous decision

- Motions without Notice / Procedural Motions (please see below for further info on these motions)

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
When a procedural motion is proposed and seconded and put to the vote, require two-thirds of those present in the meeting to vote in favour for the procedural motion to be carried (currently simple majority)	Retain agreement by simple majority	Unanimous decision

- Recorded Vote

Proposal (NB. No changes proposed)	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Retain the current requirement only for a proposer and seconder to call for a recorded vote	Retain requirement for a proposer and seconder to call for a recorded vote	Unanimous decision

- Public Addresses (excluding Planning Committee)

Proposal (NB. No changes proposed)	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Retain the existing deadline to register (noon on the working day before the meeting)	Retain deadline for public speakers to register by noon on the working day before the meeting	Unanimous decision
Retain the 5 minute limit per speaker	Retain 5 minutes time limit per public speakers	Majority decision (8 members voted to retain 5 minutes, 1 member voted to reduce to 3 minutes)
No restrictions on the numbers of public participants at a meeting (i.e. on an item or maximum time for public addresses)	Retain existing arrangement with no limits (number or time) on number of public addresses	Unanimous decision

- **Constitution Section 2.1 – Council Procedure Rules**

- Order of Council business and finish time for Full Council

Proposal (NB. No changes proposed)	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Retain the existing order of business (questions/motions, then reports)	Retain existing order of business	Majority decision (7 members voted to retain existing order of business, 2 members voted to amend order of business to questions, reports, motions) Noted that the Constitution allows the Chairman to amend the order of business
Do not introduce a time limit / finish time for Full Council meetings	Do not introduce a finish time / cut off time for Full Council	Majority decision (6 members voted to retain no time limit, 3 members voted to set a time limit (with Chairman's discretion to continue))

- **Constitution Section 2.6: Planning Committee Procedure Rules**

- Site visits: add the use of remote tools to view sites

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Allow the use of remote tools, i.e. drones, to view sites, subject to Planning Officers directing to ensure impartiality	Allow the use of remote tools but stress that it should complement other evidence, not	Unanimous decision The Constitution needs to stress that this is one tool among many

	replace site visits and impartiality should be ensured	– need to ensure impartiality and should complement other evidence and not replace physical site visits
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○ Member Debate at Planning Committee

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Allow for questions of clarification to the officer after presentation of a planning application and before public speakers and debate	Retain existing arrangements whereby no questions of clarity are permitted	Majority decision (5 members voted to retain the existing arrangement, 1 member voted to support questions of clarification after the Planning Officer presentation and before public speaking 3 members voted to support allowing questions of clarification after public speakers and before debate)

○ Public Participation at Planning Committee

Proposal	Working Group recommendation	Comments
Retain the existing arrangement whereby county councillors can register to speak as a member of the public, rather than allowing a separate county councillor speaking slot	Retain the existing arrangement and do not introduce a county councillor speaking category	Unanimous decision

Introduce a 10 minute time limit for non-Committee ward Members addressing the meeting on an application in their ward	Introduce a 10 minute time limit for non-committee Ward Members addressing Planning Committee	Unanimous decision
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- **Terminology – proposals / comments in italics**

Bevan Britten advise a review provides an opportunity to consider the language used:

- Councillor v Member
 - *the terms are interchangeable and should be used as required to ensure the particular section of the Constitution makes sense. In the glossary (new addition to the Constitution), explain the terms are interchangeable*
- Executive v Cabinet
 - *Executive*
- Citizen v resident / member of the public / service user
 - *Resident*
- Chief Executive or Head of Paid Service
 - *Acknowledge the terms are not are always interchangeable and provide better clarification in the Constitution and glossary*
- Chair v Chairman
 - *Throughout the Constitution use “Chairman” for consistency but stress that a Chair of a Committee should be able to determine how they would like to be addressed*
 - *Majority decision – 5 members voted to use “Chairman”, 4 members voted to use “Chair”*
- Chief Finance Officer v S151 Officer or both
 - *Use both titles but provide better clarification in the Constitution and glossary*
- *The working group agreed that a glossary of key terms be included with the Constitution*

- **Future Review – the Working Group unanimously supported the introduction of an annual review of the Constitution**

- Annual Review –
 - At its October/December meeting, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider and recommend to Full Council to agree in December
 - To include notice of any changes brought about by legislation / transfer of functions made under Chief Executive / MO delegation
- Any significant changes would be submitted to Full Council as necessary for consideration (as was the case for virtual meetings)

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Appendix 2

Constitution Contents List

Part 1 – Introduction

Part 2 – Committee Terms of Reference

Part 3 – Officer Scheme of Delegation

Part 4 – Meeting Procedure Rules

Part 5 – Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules

Part 6 – Council Procedure Rules

Part 7 - Executive Procedure Rules

Part 8 – Overview and Scrutiny procedure Rules

Part 9 - Appeals Panel Procedure Rules

Part 10 – Licensing Committee Procedure Rules

Part 11 – Planning Committee Procedure Rules

Part 12 - Roles and Appointments

Part 13 – Members’ Code of Conduct

Part 14 – Members’ Planning Code of Conduct

Part 15 – Bias and Predeterminations – A Guidance Note for Members

Part 16 – Conventions for the Management of Council Business and Protocol on Member Officer Relations

Part 17 – The Respective Roles of Members and Officers and Dealing with Conflicts of Interest

Part 18 – Cherwell District Council Partnership Protocol

Part 19 – An Advice Note for Elected Members Serving on Outside Organisations

Part 20 - Officer Employment Procedure Rules

Part 21 – CDC Financial Procedure Rules

Part 22 – CDC Contract Procedure Rules

Glossary

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Topic and suggested by	Update	Status / Proposed action
<p>Planning Policy for the District, including the Growth Deal.</p> <p>Raised by Councillors Ian Middleton, Mike Bishop, Chris Heath and Phil Chapman</p>	<p>As previously reported, officers from Planning Policy have agreed to attend a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss this subject.</p>	<p>Attendance will be scheduled when appropriate.</p>
<p>Digital Infrastructure/5G (to be considered at the same time as the Cherwell Industrial Strategy due to the synergies between the items)</p> <p>Raised by Councillors Tom Wallis, Bryn Williams and Former Councillor Sandra Rhodes</p>	<p>The timetable for the Cherwell Industrial Strategy is being reviewed as the focus of the Economic Development Team has been on focussed on work arising as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>The Assistant Director – Growth and Economy has therefore requested that this item be moved from December 2020 or January 2021 to the ‘items to be allocated’ section of the work programme.</p>	<p>Item moved as requested.</p>
<p>Management companies managing new housing developments – is the use of management companies rather than adoption by the Council on the rise, if so, what is the cause of this?</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Lucinda Wing</p>	<p>All available information circulated to Committee members in late 2019.</p> <p>No information has yet been received from the Member who suggested this topic.</p>	<p>Committee to decide next steps.</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Coronavirus (Covid-19)</p> <p>Raised by the whole Committee</p>	<p>Chief Executive Yvonne Rees and Corporate Directors attended the September 2020 meeting and gave a comprehensive presentation that included arrangements for dealing with the pandemic in Oxfordshire, Local Outbreak Control Plan, support to local businesses and supporting economic recovery.</p>	<p>Further update to be scheduled for January 2021 meeting.</p>
<p>Constitutional Working Group</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Ian Middleton</p>	<p>The report of the Constitutional Working Group, and recommendations to Council are being considered at the December 2020 meeting.</p>	<p>Remove the topic from the list after the December 2020 meeting of the Committee.</p>

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21

Item	Description	Contact Officer
12 January 2021		
2020/21 November Performance, Risk & Finance Monitoring Report	Performance Monitoring: Full quarterly Performance report	Louise Tustian – Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Verbal Update - Business Plan 2021	Policy development: To receive a verbal update on the Business Plan	Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Climate Change Action Plan – Update	Policy Review: To receive update on progress against the Climate Change Action Plan which was agreed by Executive in October 2020	Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
Covid-19 Update	Following a comprehensive presentation at the September meeting, to receive a further update.	Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive
Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026	Policy development & pre-decision scrutiny: To consider and comment on the draft Homelessness Strategy prior to Executive consideration	Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director Social Care Commissioning and Housing
Work Programme	Standing item: Updates on topics suggested for consideration and review of work programme	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections
16 March 2021		
2020/21 Quarter 3 Performance, Risk & Finance Monitoring Report, and Performance Management Framework 2021 update	Performance Monitoring: Full quarterly Performance report and update regarding the performance management framework supporting the business plan 2021	Louise Tustian – Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

Item	Description	Contact Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21	The Constitution requires that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submit an annual report to Council. This is an opportunity for the Committee to review the draft Annual Report	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections
Work Programme	Standing item: Updates on topics suggested for consideration and review of work programme	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections
Items to be allocated		
Cherwell Industrial Strategy / Digital Infrastructure & 5G	Policy development: To consider and contribute to the development of the Cherwell Industrial Strategy	Robert Jolley – Assistant Director Growth and Economy
Local Plan Update	Following queries raised by the Committee – this will be scheduled at the appropriate time	David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning and Development
Management Companies Managing New Housing Developments	Query raised by the Committee about use of management companies rather than tow/parish councils taking on responsibility for green spaces. Presentation to be scheduled to advise the Committee of the council's policy	Ed Potter – Assistant Director Environmental Services / Paul Almond, Street Scene and Landscape Manager

Remaining Meeting Dates 2020/21 (All Tuesday, 6.30pm unless indicated)

12 January 2021; 16 March 2021

Work Programme Items:

Members are reminded of the five roles of scrutiny when considering items for the work programme:

Updated: 20 November 2020

- Performance Monitoring
- Policy Development
- Policy Review
- Holding the Executive to Account
- External Scrutiny

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