

Public Document Pack



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 30 November 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman)

Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Matt Hodgson
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Perran Moon
Councillor Les Sibley

Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Sandy Dallimore
Councillor Simon Holland
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Adam Nell
Councillor Bryn Williams

Substitutes Any member of the relevant political group, excluding Executive members

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 - 12)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2021.

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. Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring (Pages 13 - 50)

Report of Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

Purpose of Report

This report summarises the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of September 2021/Quarter 2. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the performance aspects of the report.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report
- 1.2 To note the Quarter 2 Climate Action Plan and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action plan progress updates

7. Climate Action Programme Update (Pages 51 - 66)

Report of Director for Environment and Place

Purpose of report

To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress in delivering the Climate Action Programme and the reduction in the council's greenhouse gas emissions in 2020/21.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the progress and next steps in the Climate Action Programme.
- 1.2 To note the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2020/21 (Appendix 1).

8. 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress Update (Pages 67 - 108)

Report of Assistant Director – Wellbeing

Purpose of report

To provide a progress update for the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan progress report and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty
- 1.2 To recognise the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan
- 1.3 To note that the development of the 2022-2024 Community Nature Plan (CNP) will include an all-member seminar in 2022 involving planners, as requested by O&S in December 2020. The implications of the provisions of the Environment Act will be taken into account in this next iteration of the CNP

9. Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Presentation from the Assistant Director – Wellbeing on the Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit for 2021.

10. Work Programme 2021-2022 (Pages 109 - 128)

There are five documents for the Committee to consider:

- Appendix 1 – Parish Working Group scoping document (Terms of Reference for the review)
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Terms of Reference for the Constitution Review Working Group
- Appendix 3 – Work Programme for 2021-2022
- Appendix 4 – Topic list update
- Appendix 5 – Update on items previously submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the Parish Working Group scoping document (appendix 1).
- 1.2 To approve the Constitution Review Working Group terms of Reference (appendix 2).
- 1.3 To note the work programme update (appendix 3).

- 1.4 To note the update on topics previously suggested for review (appendix 4).
- 1.5 To note the update on items previously submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or 01295 221953 / 01295 221591 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.

Evacuation Procedure

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

Access to Meetings

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

Watching Meetings

Please note that Council meetings are currently taking place in person (not virtually) with social distancing at the meeting. Meetings will continue to be webcast and individuals who wish to view meetings are strongly encouraged to watch the webcast to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection.

Places to watch meetings in person are very limited due to social distancing requirements. If you wish to attend the meeting in person, you must contact the Democratic and Elections Team democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk who will advise if your request can be accommodated and of the detailed COVID-19 safety requirements for all attendees.

Please note that in line with Government guidance, all meeting attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of 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 / Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections
democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221953 / 01295 221591

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 22 November 2021

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 19 October 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

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

Substitute Members:

Councillor George Reynolds (In place of Councillor David Hughes)

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence:

Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Adam Nell

Officers:

Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes
Tom Gubbins, Sport & Physical Activity Manager
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

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Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21 **Minutes**

Resolved

- (1) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments (in italics):

Minute 18, Constitution Review 2021

The reason for the Labour Group's decision was because the 2020 review process had resulted in *one third of* recommendations that had cross-party agreement at the working group stage, when considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resulting in different recommendations going forward to Full Council *and unless the working group was changed would not take part.*

22 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

23 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

24 **Teenage Mental Health Services within Cherwell**

The Chairman welcomed the Sport and Physical Activity Manager to the meeting, to give a presentation explaining the work of the Wellbeing and Physical Activity Team in relation to mental health wellbeing.

The Sport and Physical Activity Manager explained that whilst the team was not directly responsible for delivering mental health provision, physical activity had been shown to have a positive impact on mental health.

Cherwell District Council had contributed to the mental health prevention framework, which was delivered through the mental health concordat.

Part of the work of the concordat included a mental wellbeing needs assessment, that looks at the current situation with adults and children across Cherwell.

During 2020 the assessment showed that 1 in 6 people had a probable mental health disorder, an increase from 1 in 9 people in 2019. The assessment also showed an increasing percentage of year 7 to year 13 students who reported they often struggled to sleep.

The assessment had also shown that mental wellbeing of girls was lower compared to boys of the same age, and as a direct result of this the wellbeing team had been working with 'This Girl Can' as well as other campaigns aimed at girls.

The Sport and Physical Activity Manager explained that the team had attended mental health first aid training, as well as accessing information from organisations such as MIND to help provide advice and guidance to communities.

The FAST (Families Active Sporting Together) programme currently had 7000 individuals on the programme across 2500 families, and through information gathered it showed that 20% of young people on the programme had highlighted a mental health concern. The programme was being used to highlight activities and techniques to help young people and their families improve their mental health.

The main work of the team had involved developing a physical activity and mental health programme in partnership with Oxfordshire MIND, that had been delivered in primary schools.

The youth activators had delivered the programme in schools during the pandemic, to year 6 children. Year 6 had been highlighted as an important age group due to the imminent transition to secondary school, and an age group most impacted by the effects of the pandemic.

A 6-week programme had been developed that covered six different themes: Introduction to mental wellbeing; stress and anxiety; anger; goal setting; resilience; and self-esteem. Hour long sessions had covered physical activity and mental wellbeing.

The programme had been delivered by youth activators and Oxfordshire Mind initially, with youth activators being trained by MIND to deliver the mental health aspect. Resource and guidance packs were also provided to the schools, to continue work once the initial 6-week programme had ended.

The programme had been delivered to 424 children across 16 schools, with 48% of those who had attended rating their wellbeing as 'much better'.

The programme was being adapted for roll out to secondary schools from 1 November, starting with year 7 and 8 pupils.

The Committee thanked the Sport and Physical Activity Manager for the presentation, and commended the work being undertaken by the team.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Sport and Physical Activity Manager explained that the age groups being selected to receive the programme in secondary schools was based on need identified by the schools. It was therefore possible that years 10 and 11 would be the next age groups to benefit from the programme.

Councillor Moon commented on the importance of the Council as a whole increasing the focus and building on the work of the youth activators, as there was an increasing need for more assistance to be offered to 13 to 19 year olds across the district.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation be noted.
- (2) That the work being undertaken be commended.
- (3) That officers be requested to provide additional information on the Mental Health support provided by the County and/or MIND for adolescents (13 – 19 year olds) in the district.

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Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position at the end of July 2021.

In introducing the report, the Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes explained that 23 of the 28 performance measures and key performance indicators were reporting green, with four reporting amber. The amber indicators were related to homeless prevention; average time taken to process housing benefit changes; develop the country parks to support good lifestyle choices; and percentage of council tax collected and council tax base.

Indicators that had performed well for July included the percentage of NNDR collected, which had recovered well from the position in June; develop a recover and prosperity strategy; and reduce fuel consumption used by the council fleet.

With regard to indicator BP2.2.2, decrease in fuel consumption, the Committee asked how the council was able to reduce consumption. Queries were also raised regarding the changes to the green waste collection service, and how this might impact on routes and efficiency if rural properties don't sign up to the chargeable scheme. The Head of Insight and Corporate Performance agreed to circulate responses from relevant officers after the meeting.

The Head of Insight and Corporate Performance also agreed to gather responses to the following questions, for circulation after the meeting:

- Indicator BP 2.2.1, percentage of waste recycled and composted, how much was genuinely recycled and how much ends up in landfill.
- With regard to paragraph 3.11 of the report, reviewing the findings of zero carbon Oxfordshire report, the Committee asked how long this was anticipated to take?

- In relation to paragraph 3.9 of the report, the percentage of Business Rates collected, the Committee asked if there were any long-term historic debts as a result of covid and if so how much they totalled.
- With regard to the 'Service in Focus' section at paragraph 3.12 of the report, a query was raised as to whether the 14 families that had been settled in the district were Afghan families.

Resolved

- (1) That the performance elements of the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position for July 2021 be noted.

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Work Programme 2021-22

The Committee considered its work programme for 2021-22, received an update from officers on potential topics for review and also considered a draft scoping document relating to the Members Education and Training Review.

Further to the presentation that had been given earlier in the meeting regarding Teenage Mental Health, Councillor Moon confirmed that he would like further information to be provided regarding contacts for 13 to 19 years olds experiencing mental health issues.

In relation to the proposed review on the district council relationship with parishes, the Democratic and Elections Officer advised that Councillor Hughes had expressed an interest in joining the working group. A scoping document had been drafted and would be circulated to all Members for information, before being considered by the Committee at the 30 November meeting.

With regard to the Members Education and Training working group, a draft scoping document had been published with the agenda. Councillor Dallimore summarised the document, which sought to review the induction programme that had taken place after the May 2021 elections, with recommendations being made as to potential amendments and improvements to the May 2022 induction programme.

In relation to the Constitution Annual Review, the Director of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer reported that individual meetings had been held with group leaders, and feedback would be given to each group. A further update would be given at the November meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal updates regarding suggested topics for scrutiny be noted.

- (2) That the scoping document for the Members Education and Training review group be approved.
- (3) That the update on items previously submitted to Overview and Scrutiny be noted.
- (4) That the indicative work programme for 2021-2022 be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 November 2021

Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report

Report of: Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

This report is public.

Purpose of report

This report summarises the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of September 2021/Quarter 2. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the performance aspects of the report.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1** To note the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report
- 1.2** To note the Quarter 2 Climate Action Plan and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action plan progress updates

2.0 Introduction




- 2.1** The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.
- 2.2** This report provides an update on progress made during September 2021, to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position. The quarter two updates for the Climate Action and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plan updates are also included in this report.
- 2.3** The Council's performance management framework sets out the key actions, projects and programmes of work that contribute to the delivery of the 2021-22 business plan and the priorities of the Council. These measures and key performance indicators are reported on a monthly basis to highlight progress, identify areas of good performance and actions that have been taken to address underperformance or delays.

- 2.4** As part of monthly reporting, the Insight Team provides the Senior Management Team with a corporate complaints report. Complaints received during the month are closely monitored and analysed. The mandatory lessons learned data continues to be implemented and we are starting to see a decrease in the number of upheld complaints. Lessons learned are reported to CEDR (Chief Executive Direct Reports) and progress is monitored to ensure actions are implemented to avoid the same complaint being reported.
- 2.5** The Council maintains a Leadership Risk Register that is reviewed on a monthly basis. The latest available version of the risk register (at the date this report is published) is included in this report (Appendix 1). The Leadership Risk Register and strategy are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the budget and business planning process, reflecting on the priorities of the council for the forthcoming year. The Leadership Risks reflected in this report have been thoroughly reviewed by CEDR and will continue to be updated on a monthly basis.
- 2.6** The main report details section is split into three parts:
- Performance Update
 - Leadership Risk Register Update
 - Finance Update
- 2.7** There are two appendices to this report:
- Appendix 1 – 2021/22 Business Plan
 - Appendix 2 – Monthly Performance Report – September

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1** The Council's performance management framework sets out key actions, projects and programmes of work that contribute to deliver the refreshed 2021-22 business plan (see Appendix 1) and the priorities of the Council.
- 3.2** The 2021-22 business plan sets out four strategic priorities:
- Housing that meets your needs
 - Leading on environmental sustainability
 - An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres
 - Healthy, resilient and engaged communities
- 3.3** This report provides a summary of the Council's performance in delivering against each strategic priority. To measure performance a 'traffic light' system is used. Where performance is on or ahead of target it is rated green, where performance is slightly behind the target it is rated amber. A red rating indicated performance is off target.

3.4 As part of our commitment to tackle climate change the Quarter two update is included. Also, the Quarter two Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan update is attached show progress towards our commitment to inclusion and equality, and the agreed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Including Everyone.

Colour	Symbol	Tolerances for Business Plan Measures	Tolerances for Key Performance
Red		Significantly behind schedule	Worse than target by more than 10%.
Amber		Slightly behind schedule	Worse than target by up to 10%.
Green		Delivering to plan / Ahead of target	Delivering to target or ahead of it.

Priority: Housing that meets your needs

3.4 The Council is committed to deliver affordable housing, raising the standard of rented housing and find new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness. Also, to promote innovative housing schemes, deliver the local plan and supporting the most vulnerable people in the District.

3.5 Overview of our performance against this strategic priority:

Homeless Prevention reported Amber for September and for year to date due to demands on the Housing Team; those presenting in crisis have hampered our ability to focus on 'upstream' prevention work. Resources are being assessed to create more work capacity with households, at an earlier stage, to improve prevention outcomes.



Homes improved through enforcement action reported Green for September and year to date (25 against target of 9 homes). A tremendous improvement from the previous month, achieved through interventions.

Maintain 5-year Land Supply reported Amber for September and year to date, there was no change to the previous quarter's position (4.7 years against target of 5 years).

Net Additional Housing completions reported Green for September and Amber for year to date (311 against target of 285). The provisional housing completions expected for Quarter two exceeded the quarterly target.



Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims reported Green for September and year to date (14.04 against target of 15 days). Another improvement from the previous month.

Major applications overturned at appeal reported Red for September and for year to date (16.67% against a target of 10%). One Major Planning Appeal was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate during September 2021.

Priority: Leading on environmental sustainability

3.6 The Council is committed to deliver on sustainability and in the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030, promotes the Green Economy and increases recycling across the district.

This priority includes the protection of our natural environment and our built heritage, working in partnerships to improve air quality in the district and the reduction of environmental crime.

3.7 Overview of our performance against this strategic priority:



Reduction of fuel consumption used by fleet reported Amber for September and year to date (41,932 against target of 39,878). Slight increase, from last year, however, as per previous months, more vehicles are being used compared to the same period last year.

% of Waste Recycled & Composted reported Green for September and year to date (59.01% against a target of 56%). The dry recycling is still performing at record levels with the contamination rate starting to fall.



Development of Country Parks to support life choices reported Amber for September and year to date. The project is running behind schedule, but with expectations to get back on track as a new Project Manager is to be recruited imminently.

Work with partners to deliver initiatives to improve air quality in the District reported green for September with two portable monitors loaned by Oxfordshire County Council. The monitors, which measure nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), sulphur dioxide and ozone and have been set up to provide live data for these pollutants. Also, we were awarded a grant of £17,300 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) towards projects for raising awareness of air quality. The grant money will be used for promotional material and to purchase two portable air



quality monitors that can be moved around schools in the district to show the changes in air pollution levels at peak times (drop off and pick up times).

Priority: An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres

3.8 The Council is committed to support business retention and growth, developing skills and generating enterprise; also, securing infrastructure to support growth in the district and securing investment in our town centres. This priority also contributes towards making communities thrive and businesses grow promoting the district as a visitor destination, committing to work with businesses to ensure compliance and promote best practice.

3.9 Overview of our performance against this strategic priority:

Council Tax collected, increase Council Tax Base Reported Green for September and Amber for year to date (9.11% against target of 8.50%), due to the amount of Council Tax to be collected, which has risen by nearly £1.6m, since the 01st April 2021, to just over £116.9m. Whilst the in-month collection & year-to-date figures are both slightly short of target, recovery action remains ongoing. Reminder notices continue to be issued, and those in arrears are being pursued through court action.



Business Rates collected, increasing NNDR reported Green for September and Red for year to date (11.01% against a target of 9.50%). The amount of business rates to be collected in 2021/22, stands at £80.8m, reduced collection due to multiple assessments of rateable value reductions. The team continues to formally recover arrears by issuing reminder notices and taking court action, where appropriate.

Promote the district as a visitor destination reported Green for September and year to date. The district's hospitality venues and visitor attractions have been welcoming domestic visitors since the lifting of social restrictions. International visitor numbers remain low due to travel restrictions. Still, Experience Oxfordshire launched a new digital countywide Hospitality Guide with significant Cherwell content.



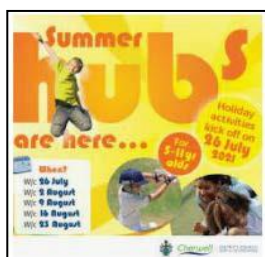
Establish new Building Regulations partnership reported Amber for September and year to date. A draft report has been prepared to consider the options for providing Building Control services in the future, particularly a potential partnership with another local authority. The aim is to achieve a resilient service for the future that benefits from economies of scale and maximises opportunities for income generation.

Priority: Healthy, resilient and engaged communities

3.10 The Council is committed to enabling all residents to lead an active life, improving and developing the quality of local sports and leisure facilities and promoting health and wellbeing in our communities. Also, supporting community and cultural development, working with our partners to address the causes of health inequalities and deprivation, and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.11 Overview of our performance against this strategic priority:

Number of visits / usages of District Leisure Centres reported Red for September and Green for year to date (110,527 against target of 150,000). The usage figures for three of the main Leisure Centres showed an increase against the August figures. However, one centre showed a decrease on the previous month, which was not unexpected, due to the change in seasonal programming for the outdoor swimming pool.



Promote Health and Wellbeing is Reporting Green for September and year to date, with Youth Activators restarting school sessions and, the adherence of 55 people to the Move Together pathway - a specific programme for residents who had been asked to shield during the first phases of the pandemic, encouraging them to become more socially and physically active.

Summary of Performance

3.12 The Council reports monthly on performance against 38 (27 monthly / 38 quarterly) Business Plan Measures, with 21 Programme Measures and 17 Key Performance Indicators. Full details, including commentary against each measure and key performance indicator can be found in Appendix 2.

Programme Measures and Key Performance Indicators (38)

Status	Description	Q2/ September	%	YTD	%
Green	On target	31	82%	29	77%
Amber	Slightly off target	5	13%	7	18%
Red	Off target	2	5%	2	5%

3.13 Climate Action Programme – Quarter two update

This report updates on the delivery of the 21 Cherwell District Council and joint (with Oxfordshire County Council) priority actions set by the Climate Action Programme Board for 2021/22. By the end of Quarter two, actions were rated:

Status	Description	Quarter 2	Quarter 2%	YTD	YTD %
Green	On target	13	62%	14	66%
Amber	Slightly off target	7	33%	6	29%
Red	Off target	1	5%	1	5%

Performance highlights:

- Delivery of heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects funded by £6m grant from Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme proceeding in leisure centres and corporate buildings. Deadline extended to March 2022 to accommodate nationwide supply chain issues.
- Fleet audits completed to inform a fleet replacement programme and assess charging infrastructure needs.
- £3m bid submitted to the Sustainable Warmth Fund to increase the energy efficiency of homes in fuel poverty.
- Cherwell Local Plan Review Options Paper under consultation.
- Local businesses engaged in COP26 Zero Carbon Tour, part of the council's COP26 comms campaign.

Additionally, delivery of the council's climate action commitments is being supported by the following initiatives:

- Three teams have now requested to take part in the Carbon Literacy peer-to-peer training course, after a successful pilot with the Leisure Services in July.
- Staff joined a Climate Café in September to learn about the new requirement to include Equalities and Climate Impact Assessments in reports to CEDR and Exec proposing a new policy, procedure, service change, service planning or programme.



3.14 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan – Quarter two update

This is the second quarter summary report of the Including Everyone action plan. There are 32 actions in total, spread across the three areas of activity: Inclusive Workforce, Inclusive Communities and Inclusive Service Delivery.

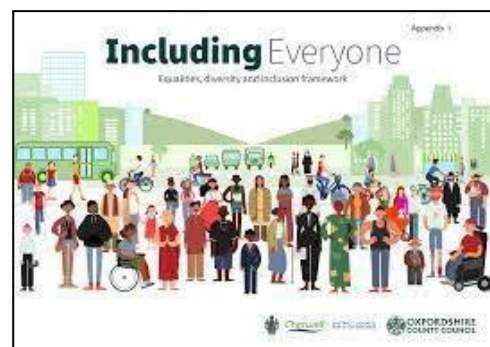
Status	Description	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 %	YTD	YTD %
Green	On target	21	66%	22	67%
Amber	Slightly off target	11	34%	10	33%
Red	Off target	0	0%	0	0%

Performance highlights:

- Stakeholder engagement workshops have helped to shape our first draft of the Recovery and Prosperity Strategy for Cherwell and further consultation will be held during October and November.
- The 'Mentoring for Diversity' programme has been extended for an additional three months as feedback continues to be positive. All of the mentors involved in the scheme have said that it has been beneficial both for the organisation and on an individual basis.
- A final draft of the Social Value Policy has been developed which will embed both climate action and equalities considerations into our procurement practices.

It has become clear that a number of actions will need to be re-designed as part of developing the new action plan in January 2022. This will include:

- Developing more detailed actions that link to a project to re-design our digital presence
- Understanding how we can improve the links between addressing climate change and tackling health inequalities
- Ensuring that we embed key learning from Covid into actions to address inequality



3.15 Service in Focus - Place and Growth /Growth and Economy

The work of the Growth and Economy section falls into four areas: the Bicester Delivery Team; Strategic Transport; Economic Growth and the Build! Team.

The Bicester Delivery Team has continued to progress the Bicester Garden Town Programme infrastructure projects which are needed to facilitate the new housing growth, including in April the construction of the rail under bridges to the north west of the town. The work undertaken by the Bicester Town Centre Task Group has also been further developed with a project progressing to procure a Business Plan for the revitalisation of the town centre.

Cherwell's Strategic Transport interests have been represented at a number of significant groups, including the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Collaboration Forum; the A34 Improvements Steering Group; East West Rail; and the Oxfordshire Strategic Transport Forum.

The Economic Growth team has worked with colleagues in Finance and CSN Resources on the disbursement of HM Government's COVID-19 business grants. The Council has successfully participated in a number of the Government-funded COVID-19 recovery schemes, including the 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire' project which brings vacant retail units back into use. To promote investment in the district, the team exhibited with partners at the September OxProp Fest event at Bicester Motion,

liaising directly with commercial property agents and business leaders. A new ten-year economic strategy, the Recovery and Prosperity Strategy for Cherwell, is under preparation.

The Build! Team completed the construction of three two-bedroomed accessible bungalows in Middleton Stoney at the start of May, with two being let for affordable rent and the third being a shared ownership sale. Two of the team’s projects have been selected as finalists for housing awards – the best development under £5 million, for the Admiral Holland development in Banbury; and a community regeneration award for Banbury’s Bretch Hill development.

Risk Update

- 3.16 The Council maintains a Leadership Risk Register that is reviewed on a monthly basis. The latest available version of the risk register at the date this report is published is included in this report.
- 3.17 The heat map below shows the overall position of all risks contained within the Leadership Risk Register.

Risk Scorecard – Residual Risks

Probability		1 - Remote	2 - Unlikely	3 - Possible	4 - Probable	5 - Highly Probable
Impact	5 - Catastrophic					
	4 - Major		L06- L08 - L15	L03 - L04 - L05 - L10	L01 - L16	
	3 - Moderate		L09 -	L02 - L11 - L13 - L17- L18	L14	L12
	2 - Minor					
	1 - Insignificant					

3.18 The table below provides an overview of the Leadership Risk Register 21/22

Leadership Risk	Score	Direction of travel	Latest Update
L01 Financial Resilience	16 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed - 04/10/21 Mitigations and Comments updated
L02 Statutory functions	9 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed - 13/10/21 Mitigating actions and comments updated
L03 CDC Local Plan	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed - 14/10/21 - Comments updated
L04 Business Continuity	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk Reviewed 11/10/21 - Comments and mitigating actions updated
L05 Emergency Planning	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk Reviewed 11/10/21 - Mitigating actions updated
L06 Health & Safety	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 01/10/21 - No changes
L07 Cyber Security	15 Medium Risk	↔	Risk Reviewed 11/10/21 - No changes
L08 Safeguarding the Vulnerable	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 04/10/21 - Mitigations updated
L09 Sustainability of Council owned companies and delivery of planned financial and other objectives.	6 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 13/10/21 - No changes
L10 Financial sustainability of third-party suppliers and contractors	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 04/10/2021 - No changes
L11 Corporate Governance	9 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 13/10/2021 - Comments updated
L12 Oxfordshire Growth Deal	15 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 08/10/21 - No changes.
L13 Joint Working	9 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 14/10/2021 - Comments updated
L14 Legacy Shared Services Partnership – West Northamptonshire Council	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 14/10/2021 - Comments updated
L15 Workforce Strategy	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 20/10/21 - Mitigating actions and comments updated
L16 COVID-19 Community and Customers	16 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 01/10/2021 - No changes
L17 COVID-19 Business Continuity	9 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 13/10/2021 – Mitigating actions updated
L18 Post COVID-19 Recovery	9 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed 13/10/2021 - Controls, mitigating actions and comments updated

There were no score changes to the Leadership Risk Register during September.

Finance Update

3.19 The Council's forecast position for 2021/22 at the end of September shows a £0.810m overspend as shown in Table 1. This is made up of potential non-delivery of savings targets of £0.666m and an overspend of £0.144m on business-as-usual costs as shown in Table 2.

3.20 Report Details

Table 1: Forecast Year End Position

Forecast overview - September 2021						August Forecast Over / (Under)	Change since August (better) / worse
	Original Budget	Current Budget	Year End Position at September	September Variance (Under) / Over	% Variance to current budget		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Environment and Place	6.699	10.018	11.176	1.158	11.6%	1.171	(0.013)
Customers, Org. Dev. And Resources	5.682	6.399	6.808	0.409	6.4%	0.554	(0.145)
Adults and Housing Services	1.844	2.700	2.690	(0.010)	-0.4%	0.015	(0.025)
Public Health and Wellbeing	1.816	2.969	3.129	0.160	5.4%	0.160	0.000
Comm. Dev. Assets and Inv.	0.076	0.185	1.539	1.354	731.9%	0.987	0.367
Subtotal Directorates	16.117	22.271	25.342	3.071	13.8%	2.887	0.184
Executive Matters	2.769	(3.613)	(4.072)	(0.459)	-12.7%	(0.457)	(0.002)
Policy Contingency	3.487	3.715	1.913	(1.802)	-48.5%	(1.628)	(0.174)
Total	22.373	22.373	23.183	0.810	3.6%	0.802	0.008
FUNDING	(22.373)	(22.373)	(22.373)	0.000	0.0%	0.000	0.000
(Surplus)/Deficit	0.000	0.000	0.810	0.810		0.802	0.008

Table 2: Analysis of Forecast Variance – September

Breakdown of current month forecast	Forecast Variance	Forecast Base Budget Over/ (Under)	Mitigations	Savings Non-Delivery
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Environment and Place	1.158	0.754	0.000	0.404
Customers, Org. Dev. And Resources	0.409	0.316	0.000	0.093
Adults and Housing Services	(0.010)	(0.020)	(0.030)	0.040
Public Health and Wellbeing	0.160	0.131	0.000	0.029
Comm. Dev. Assets and Inv.	1.354	1.302	(0.048)	0.100
Subtotal Directorates	3.071	2.483	(0.078)	0.666
Executive Matters	(0.459)	(0.459)	0	0.000
Policy Contingency	(1.802)	(1.802)	0	0.000
Total	0.810	0.222	(0.078)	0.666
FUNDING	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
(Surplus)/Deficit	0.810	0.222	(0.078)	0.666

3.21 Of the £0.666m savings not expected to be delivered in 2021/22, £0.507m of this is also not expected to be delivered in future years. The Council is working on ways to address this, including reviewing whether budget is available within Policy Contingency to mitigate some of the non-delivery in year.

3.22 The Council has incurred costs and lost income during 2021/22 in relation to Covid-19 across all areas of the Council. As the Covid-19 restrictions have eased additional costs linked to Covid-19 are reducing. However, there are some areas where there may be a prolonged change in behaviour. In particular lost income is forecast until the end of the financial year in car parking.

3.23 When the Council set its budget for 2021/22 the likely financial impact of Covid-19 was taken into consideration and budget provisions were made accordingly. The policy contingency budget of £3.715m includes funding for anticipated lost income and additional costs of Covid-19 in the 2021/22 financial year. In addition, the Council received £0.720m in Covid-19 grant and expects to claim £0.095m from the Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme which is open until the end of June. The forecast financial costs and loss of income associated with Covid-19 continue to be recorded and are shown in Table 3 as a memorandum item. These impacts are assumed within the overall forecast.

Table 3: Covid Impacts included in the 2021/22 Outturn Forecast

Covid Costs 2021/22	£m
Environment and Place	0.430
Customers, Org. Dev. And Resources	0.004
Adults and Housing Services	0.000
Public Health and Wellbeing	0.199
Comm. Dev. Assets and Inv.	2.006
Subtotal Directorates	2.639
Executive Matters	(0.815)
Policy Contingency	0.000
Total	1.824

Note: Executive Matters holds the General Covid funding received.

3.24 Report Details

Environment and Place

Environment and Place have forecast an overspend of £1.158m against a budget of £10.018m (11.6%). This forecast overspend includes £0.754m expected base budget costs and £0.404m in potential savings non-delivery

Environment and Waste	The forecast variance for Environmental Services for September is due to continued pressure within Car Parks, £0.752m reduction in anticipated car parks income, (of which £0.358m is due to the impact of Covid-19). There is also a £0.107m increase in national non-domestic rates.
Variation £1.016m overspend	
Variance to last month's forecast £0.045m	A new pressure has risen within Waste and Recycling regarding a possible delay to the food and garden waste roll out. The collection start date is uncertain due to supply problems with the vehicles. That issue should be resolved imminently, and a start date confirmed.
	The anticipated income is expected to see a £0.472m reduction, this is part off set by (£0.387m) saving in employee costs due to non-recruitment to

		posts, refuse disposal charges and reductions in gate fees plus other small variances across the service of £0.072m.
Planning & Development		Planning and Development are forecasting a £0.037m overspend due to minor variances across the service.
Variation		
£0.037m		
overspend		
Variance to last month's forecast		
£0.022m		
Growth & Economy		Growth and Economy are forecasting £0.105m overspend which is made up of £0.025m consultancy costs, £0.025m relocation costs of tenants of Town Centre House and £0.055m corporate costs in relation to Oxford to Cambridge ARC and the annual Growth board contribution
Variation		
£0.105m		
overspend		
Variance to last month's forecast		
£0.010m		

Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

Customers & Organisational Development have forecast an overspend of £0.409m against a budget of £6.399m (6.4%). This forecast overspend includes £0.316m base budget costs and savings of £0.093m at risk of delivery.

HR/IT/Comms/Cultural Services		There is a forecast overspend of £0.117m within IT due to a pressure on the delivery of savings required of £0.093m and small overspends across the service of £0.024m.
Variation		A full review is underway to identify in-year mitigations including a review of joint working costs and potential savings through working with OCC, and the legacy costs associated with delivery of service to what was South Northants Council.
£0.112m		
overspend		
Variance to last month's forecast (£0.038m)		Customer and Cultural Services are largely on target, apart from a forecast overspend on salaries of £0.020m.
		HR are forecasting an underspend of (£0.025m) due to having Health & Safety within their service, 0.035m overspend due joint working income no longer being received this is partly offset by an

	underspend in Computer software. (£0.060m) underspend in due to vacant post
Finance	
Variation £0.297m overspend	There is a forecast overspend for Revenue and Benefits due to £0.174m recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit subsidy by the Department of Works and Pensions.
Variance to last month's forecast (£0.107m)	The one off project and recruitment costs relating to the establishment of the new Revenues and Benefits team has been offset by additional government grants. There is a forecast £0.070m overspend on insurance premiums, a £0.027m forecast overspend on personnel costs in Finance and £0.026m overspend on software support contracts.

Adults and Housing Services

Adults and Housing Services have forecast an underspend of (£0.010m) against a budget of £2.700m, (0.4%). This forecast underspend includes (£0.020m) base budget savings and £0.040m in potential savings non-delivery

Housing & Social Care	The forecast outturn for Housing is expected to be largely on track with (£0.010m) underspends across the service.
Variation (£0.010m) overspend	
Variance to last month's forecast (£0.025m)	

Public Health & Wellbeing

Public Health & Wellbeing forecast an overspend of £0.160m against a budget of £2.969m (5.4%). This forecast overspend includes £0.131m within the base budget and £0.029m in potential savings non-delivery

Wellbeing	Wellbeing is forecasting an overspend of £0.199m which relates to loss of benchmarking income in relation to the leisure contract as a direct impact of Covid and (£0.039m) underspend across the department.
Variation £0.160m overspend	
Variance to last month's forecast (£0.000m)	
Healthy Place	Healthy Place Shaping are currently projecting to

Shaping	be on target.
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Variation £0.000m

Variance to last month's forecast £0.000m

Commercial Development, Assets and Investments

The Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £1.354m against a budget of £0.185m (731.9%). This forecast overspend includes £1.302m base budget costs and £0.100m in potential savings non-delivery

Property	Broadly in line with expectations, Castle Quay is anticipating a net reduction in income of £1.700m. This is a deterioration of £0.302m compared to August's forecast.
Variation £1.350m overspend	

Variance to last month's forecast £0.322m	Of the net reduction in income £2.165m is due to reduction in commercial income alongside additional void costs for empty units associated with the impact of Covid-19. Partially mitigating this are potential savings of (£0.465m) on other costs. Income levels for the current year are 64% of pre pandemic levels and are anticipated to rise to 91% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022/23.
---	--

The Council has set aside a contingency of up to £1.603m for these costs, which will be brought into the accounts once the final outturn is known. Taking into account Policy Contingency there is a net overspend of £0.097m forecast for Castle Quay.

The rest of the Property service area is forecasting an underspend of (£0.350m). This is as a result of improved commercial income of (£0.170m), staff savings of (£0.130m) and (£0.050m) various underspends across the department.

Procurement	Procurement is forecasting on track with budget.
-------------	--

Variation (£0.000m) underspend

Variance to last month's forecast £0.00m
--

<p>Law and Governance</p> <p>Variation £0.102m overspend</p> <p>Variance to last month's forecast £0.050m</p>	<p>There is a pressure within legal of £0.100m due to an under recovery of income - steps are being taken to put into place income generation milestones.</p>
<p>Growth and Commercial</p> <p>Variation (£0.048m) underspend</p> <p>Variance to last month's forecast £0.000m</p>	<p>The underspend forecast is due to savings on a vacant post.</p>
<p>Regulatory Services</p> <p>Variation (£0.050m) underspend</p> <p>Variance to last month's forecast (£0.005m)</p>	<p>The Regulatory Services forecast underspend is due to (£0.115m) underspend on staff costs and vacant posts offset by £0.065m forecast loss of licensing income plus other minor savings across the service.</p>

Executive Matters

Executive Matters forecast is an underspend of (£0.459m) against the budget of (£3.613m) (12.7%).

<p>Interest</p> <p>Variation (£0.434m) underspend</p> <p>Variance to last month's forecast (£0.002m)</p>	<p>There is an underspend forecast against the budget of (£0.434m) for 2021/22 mostly as a result of lower interest rate on borrowings.</p>
<p>Corporate</p> <p>Variation</p>	<p>The council is forecasting receipt of £0.095m Covid-19 funding as 75% compensation for lost Sales Fees and Charges Income from the</p>

(£0.095m)
underspend

Government for the period to 30 June 2021

Variance to last
month's forecast
£0.000m

External Audit
Fees

External Audit fees are anticipated to be £0.070m more than budgeted due to higher-than-expected final 2019/20 audit fees and an increase in forecast for this year's audit.

Variation
£0.070m
overspend

Variance to last
month's forecast
£0.000m

Policy Contingency

Policy contingency is planned to meet the reduction in commercial income in Commercial Development, Assets and Investments and is forecasting an underspend of (£1.603m), in addition (£0.199m) is forecast for the Leisure Contract benchmarking payments. There remains £0.974m unallocated after these assumptions are taken into account.

3.25 Forecast Earmarked Reserves and General Balances at September 2021

The table below is a summary of the level of reserves the council holds.

Reserves	Balance 1 April 2021	Original Budgeted use/ (contribution)	Changes agreed since budget setting	Changes proposed September 2021	Forecast Balance 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Balance	(£5.087)	£0.000	£0.000	£0.000	(£5.087)
Earmarked	(£21.328)	(£0.577)	£0.984	£0.065	(£20.856)
Ringfenced Grant	(£31.556)	£22.073	£4.934	£0.000	(£4.549)
Subtotal Revenue	(£57.971)	£21.496	£5.918	£0.065	(£30.492)
Capital	(£0.676)	£0.000	£0.020	£0.000	(£0.656)
Total	(£58.647)	£21.496	£5.938	£0.065	(£31.148)

3.26 Government Grants

Grant funding received by the Council this month of £0.025m in relation to Covid Test and Trace.

3.27 Aged Debt

As at 30 September the Council had outstanding debt of £4.167m, of which £0.960m is current and £3.208 is in recovery. Of the £3.208m in recovery, £2.811 is over 120 days old. A review of debt will be carried out within the next quarter.

3.28 Capital

There is a forecast in-year underspend of £4.062m, of which £3.678m is anticipated to be reprofiled in future years. There is an overall forecast decrease in the total cost of schemes of £0.384m.

Forecast Capital Spend 2021/22

Directorate	Budget £m	Forecast Spend 2021/22 £m	Re-profiled beyond 2021/22 £m	Variance to Budget £m	Prior Month Variance £m
Housing Total	1.244	0.806	0.063	(0.375)	(0.375)
Comm Dev Assets total	28.577	26.417	2.059	(0.101)	(0.054)
Customers, Org Dev & Resources Total	1.269	1.044	0.225	(0.000)	(0.045)
Environment and Place Total	9.308	8.119	1.331	0.142	0.142
Public Health Wellbeing Total	0.561	0.557	0.000	(0.004)	(0.004)
Total	40.959	36.943	3.678	(0.339)	(0.337)

3.29 Forecast Variances

Housing:

Housing is forecasting an underspend of (£0.375m) due to reduced activity in delivering Disabled Facilities Grant works during the pandemic. It is expected that the capital programme will increase by £1.240m due to the 2021/22 Better Care Allocation once approval has been given by Full Council until this has happened, we are only forecasting spend against existing budget.

Commercial Development, Assets & Investments:

Property is forecasting to spend £26.417m across various capital schemes. It is anticipated that there will be a saving of (£0.101m) across a few capital projects but with most schemes still anticipating full utilisation of budget by the end of the year. Although there is the possibility that some projects may need to be reprofiled to 2022/23 depending on progress made. This is to be reviewed as part of Q3 forecasting. Regulatory Services are forecasting to spend £0.015m this year to enable agile working.

Customers Organisational Development & Resources:

ICT are currently forecasting a £0.033m overspend against the Land and Property Harmonisation Scheme. However, they will be applying to repurpose some of the budget relating to one of the other schemes. If this is agreed the net effect will be zero.

Finance is forecasting as on target. The remaining £0.045k budget has been vired under delegated approvals.

Environment and Place:

Forecasting to spend £5.320m by year end. This is an overspend of £0.142m of which £0.078m relates to retention payments due next year.

Environmental Services are forecasting no variances for 2021/22.

Public Health & Wellbeing:

Wellbeing are forecasting spend of £0.559m which is £0.010m over budget in relation to Community grants. The scheme reported a (£0.025m) underspend in 20-21 as the commitment due to a project being cancelled in error. The works are however going ahead in this financial year, resulting in the reported overspend.

3.30 Re-profile beyond 2021/22

Housing

£0.063m Discretionary grants - This budget supports a number of discretionary grants, all of which are reactive/demand led. Landlords Home Improvement Grants (which secure nomination-rights over improved private rented accommodation for otherwise homeless households) are responsible for the largest spend, but we are currently experiencing lower demand at this stage of the year than expected.

Commercial Development, Assets & Investments:

£1.859m Castle Quay Waterside - reprofiling of the budget beyond 21/22 is necessary because retention payments will be due following the 12 month defect period from September 2021. Also delays to the project have been incurred due to reduced productivity to maintain social distancing.

£0.100m Housing & IT Asset system (joint with OCC) - The IT spend will only happen once the restructure of the joint team comes to that stage that we can start procuring our joint system called 'Single View of Assets'. This is likely to happen next financial year.

£0.100m Feasibility of utilisation of proper space.

Environment and Place:

Growth and Economy

£0.160m BUILD! Essential Repairs & Improvement (Town Centre Affordable Rent roof repairs) - A new structural engineer consultant has been appointed and further survey work is required to establish the specification for the tender documents. It is still anticipated that the insurance or warranty will cover the cost.

£0.017m Phase 2 - Bullmarsh Close formally completed early May 2021 and therefore retention payment is due 12 months later in May 2022.

£0.525m Phase 1b - Admiral Holland formally completed September 2020 and retention payment is due September 2022 (£0.061m). Bicester Library received planning consent at September's Planning Committee, as a result 70% of the budget has been reprofiled beyond 2021/22. This will be continually reviewed in line with the project programme.

Customers, Org Dev & Resources:

£0.075m IT Council Website & Digital Service - the programme of work is currently expected to complete in June 2022

£0.150m IT Shared Services - the programme of work is to extend into 2022/23 Financial Year. The supplier payment will be aligned with timeline.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 This report sets out performance, risk and budgetary information for the sixth month of this financial year and as such no formal consultation on the content or recommendations is required.

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: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2021-22 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 Financial implications are detailed within section 3.19 to 3.30 of this report.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director Finance, 07393 001218, lorna.baxter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal Implications

7.2 There are no legal implications from this report.

Comments checked by:

Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
Sukdave.Ghuman@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

7.3 This report contains a full update with regards to the Council's risk position at the end of September 2021. A revised and refreshed risk management strategy is in place and the Leadership risk register has been fully reviewed.

Comments checked by:

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

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

All

Lead Councillor

Councillor Richard Mould – Lead member for Performance Management

Councillor Tony Ilott – Lead member for Finance and Governance

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 – 2021/22 Business Plan
- Appendix 2 – Monthly Performance Report – September

Background papers

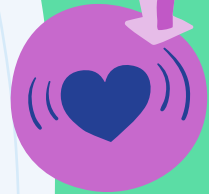
None

Report Author and contact details

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Cherwell District Business Plan 2021-2022



As we work to address the challenges of the pandemic and continue our journey to zero carbon, a clear vision of what we want to achieve has never been more important.

In local government, we need to be good at dealing with change in order to excel. That doesn't just mean reacting to external factors, it means being willing to grow as an organisation, and able to transform the way we work to meet our residents' needs.

A lot has happened in the year since our last business plan was published. But our underlying vision for Cherwell has not. This plan underscores our commitment to working with communities to shape a district where it is easier to lead an active, happy lifestyle, and one where it is easier to find professional fulfilment without a long commute.

This year we have seen the impact that COVID-19 has had on local communities and we recognise that this impact has been felt differently. The Black Lives Matter movement was a standout feature of last year, and it was a reminder for public bodies everywhere of the need to renew their commitment to reflecting local communities and celebrating their diversity. Following a listening exercise last year, we are continuing our work to ensure this is reflected in everything we do, for all the communities and residents we serve.

The climate crisis is another issue that will not go away simply because of our focus necessarily being on coronavirus. So, this business plan renews our commitment to becoming carbon

neutral by 2030, which includes an increase in the number of people walking and cycling, protecting, conserving and enhancing carbon capture and storage through our natural environments, and thinking differently about planning for local, renewable generation.

The changing nature of funding for local councils is also an area of activity we have needed to focus closely on. Uncertainties about the future of important funding streams such as New Homes Bonus and Business Rates, and the loss of income caused by the COVID measures, have forced us to make some very difficult decisions, which for the first time will affect some of our frontline services.

We continue to listen to you, our residents, and to prioritise our resources where we know they will have the greatest impact. By making responsible choices now and putting ourselves on a sustainable footing, we can keep supporting the district's recovery from COVID-19 and continue our work to make Cherwell a healthier and more prosperous place to live and work.



Councillor Barry Wood
Leader of Cherwell District Council



Our priorities:

Housing that meets your needs



- Deliver affordable housing
 Raise standards in rented housing;
 Support our most vulnerable residents;
- Promote innovative housing schemes;
 - Deliver the Local Plan;
 - Support vulnerable people.



Leading on environmental sustainability



- Deliver on our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030;
- Promote the Green Economy;
- Increase recycling across the district;
- Protect our natural environment and our built heritage;
- Work with partners to improve air quality in the district;
- Reduce environmental crime.

An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres



- Support business retention and growth;
- Develop skills and generate enterprise;
- Secure infrastructure to support growth in the district;
- Secure investment in our town centres;
- Promote the district as a visitor destination;
- Work with businesses to ensure compliance and promote best practice.



Healthy, resilient and engaged communities



- Provide opportunities to support active lifestyles;
- Improve and develop the quality of local sport and leisure facilities;
- Promote health and wellbeing in our communities to help create a more inclusive 'Including Everyone' community and workplace;
- Support community and cultural development;
- Work with partners to address the causes of health inequality and deprivation;
- Work with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.



Delivery themes:

Customers

Deliver high quality, accessible and convenient services that are right first time.



Healthy Places

Work collaboratively to create sustainable, thriving communities that support good lifestyle choices.



Climate Action

Transform our organisation to deliver its carbon neutral commitments.



Continuous Improvement

Make the best use of our resources and focus on improvement, innovation and staff development to maintain and enhance services.



Partnerships

Work with partners to improve the services we provide for our residents and communities.



Covid-19 Recovery

Work with partners in the health and voluntary sectors to help our local business and residents respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and support our communities to recover from the longer term social and economic impacts.



Including Everyone

Our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion framework outlines how we plan to create an inclusive community and workplace in Cherwell, through fair and equitable services.

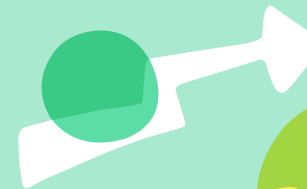


Performance Management Framework

Cherwell District Council's performance management framework sets out the key actions, projects and programmes of work that contribute to the delivery of the 2021 business plan and the priorities of the council. These targets, measures and key performance indicators are reported on a monthly basis to highlight progress, identify areas of good performance and actions that have been taken to address underperformance or delay.

To measure performance a 'traffic light' system is used. Where performance is on, or ahead of target it is rated green, where performance is slightly behind the target it is rated amber. A red rating indicates performance is off target.

The monthly performance cycle also includes the management and reporting of risk and financial information; providing an holistic overview of the councils' progress against it's strategic priorities and delivery themes as set out earlier in this business plan.



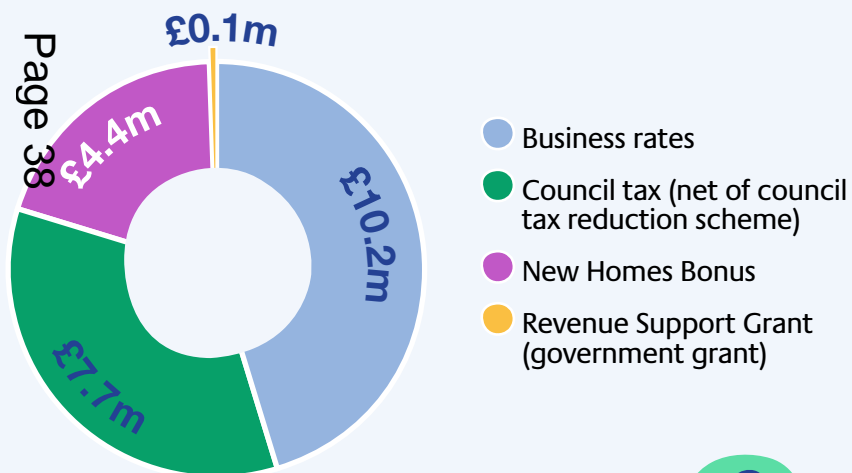
Council funding



Where our money comes from

Thirty-four per cent of our funding for services comes directly from council tax, with the rest coming from, New Homes Bonus Scheme, business rates and government grants.

2021/22 funding sources



How we generate income

We generate income by asking people and organisations to pay fees and charges for some of our services such as for planning, car parking and for licences. We also receive rental income from properties the council owns such as Castle Quay and Pioneer Square.



Contact us



Get in touch

Did you know you can access council information and services around the clock at www.cherwell.gov.uk

Email: customer.services@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Find and email your ward councillor here: www.cherwell.gov.uk/find-member

Phone: 01295 227001

Write:

Cherwell District Council
Customer Services
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA






Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 2 - Performance Report

September 2021

Includes:

- Programme Measures
- Key Performance Measures (KPIs)

Colour	Symbol	Tolerances for Business Plan Measures	Tolerances for Key Performance Measures (KPIs)
Red		Significantly behind schedule	Worse than target by more than 10%.
Amber		Slightly behind schedule	Worse than target by up to 10%.
Green		Delivering to plan / Ahead of target	Delivering to target or ahead of it.

Housing that meets your needs - KPI's

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Result	Target	Status	Commentary	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD
BP1.2.01 Number of Homeless Households living in Temporary Accommodation	Cllr L Wing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Chandler Vicki Jessop 	27	35	★	The number of households in temporary accommodation remains within target this month but, as expected, is rising. The courts have resumed eviction proceedings, more families have approached having lost tenancies. It is expected that the number of placements will go up over the next few months, as pre-COVID rules regarding notices and court action come back into force.	24	35	★
BP1.2.02 Number of people helped to live independently through use of DFG & other grants/loans	Cllr L Wing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Chandler Vicki Jessop 	66.00	45.00	★	We provided help to 66 households, during September. 26 by means of major adaptations and another 40 by means of smaller works including rails, ramps and keysafes.	340.00	270.00	★
BP1.2.03 Homes improved through enforcement action	Cllr L Wing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Chandler Vicki Jessop 	25.00	9.00	★	We have been able to complete the improvement of 25 homes through our interventions, in September.	77.00	54.00	★
BP1.2.05 Number of Housing Standards interventions	Cllr L Wing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Chandler Vicki Jessop 	58.00	55.00	★	We have recorded 58 interventions, again this month, against our target of 55. The total includes responses to 47 service requests, 9 enforcement notices served and 2 proactive investigations commenced.	370.00	330.00	★
BP1.2.06 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit New Claims	Cllr T Ilott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claire Taylor Kerry MacDermott 	14.04	15.00	★	14.04 days, this month, against a target of 15 days - which remains within target.	13.20	15.00	★
BP1.2.07 Average time taken to process Housing Benefit change events	Cllr T Ilott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claire Taylor Kerry MacDermott 	6.06	8.00	★	6.06 days achieved, against a target of 8 days -the target was met.	5.88	8.00	★
BP1.2.08 % of Major planning applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	100%	60%	★	6 Major Planning Applications were determined during September 2021, all of them within National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.	100%	60%	★
BP1.2.09 % of Non-Major planning applications determined to National Indicator	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	94%	70%	★	107 Non-Major Planning Applications were determined during September 2021, 101 of them within National Indicator target or agreed timeframe.	90%	70%	★
BP1.2.10 % of Major applications overturned at appeal	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	16.67%	10.00%	▲	1 Major Planning Appeal was overturned by the Planning Inspectorate during September 2021. 19/00963/OUT OS Parcel 9100 Adjoining And East Of Last House Adjoining And North Of Berry Hill Road, Adderbury. Resubmission of application 17/02394/OUT – Outline application for permission for up to 40 dwellings with associated landscaping, open space and vehicular access off Berry Hill Road (all matters reserved other than access).	14.17%	10.00%	▲
BP1.2.11 % of Non-Major applications overturned at appeal	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	0.93%	10.00%	★	1 Non-Major Planning Application decision, was overturned at Appeal by the Planning Inspectorate during September 2021.	0.93%	10.00%	★
BP1.2.12 Maintain 5 Year Land Supply	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	4.70	5.00	●	No change to position (4.7 years). The housing land supply position, which takes account of both current and future supply in relation to identified housing requirements, is generally reviewed once a year through the production of an Annual Monitoring Report. The next report is due at the end of 2021.	4.70	5.00	●
BP1.2.13 Net Additional Housing Completions (Quarterly)	Cllr C Clarke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill Cotton David Peckford 	311	285	★	Provisional housing completions for Q2 are 311 which exceeds the quarterly target of 285.	519	570	●

Housing that meets your needs - Programme Measures


Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP1.1.1 Homelessness Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Alison Adkins ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr L Wing			The demands on the Housing Team from those presenting in crisis has hampered our ability to focus on 'upstream' prevention work. The resources within the team are being assessed to create more capacity to work with households at an earlier stage to improve prevention outcomes.
Key Actions		Status	Comments		
6 monthly Registered Provider Forum		The 6 month Providers Forum has been delayed, until November, as we wanted to hold this after the revised Allocations Scheme passed all relevant committees and has been adopted.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP1.1.4 Deliver the Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ David Peckford 	Cllr C Clarke			Consultation on the Local Plan options paper commenced on 29 September 2021.
Key Actions		Status	Comments		
Approval of Options Paper by Executive		Approved by the Executive by the 6th of October. Consultation commenced by the 29th of September.			

Leading on environmental sustainability - KPI's

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Result	Target	Status	Commentary	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD
BP2.2.1 % Waste Recycled & Composted	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Ed Potter 	59.01%	56.00%	★	Dry recycling still at record levels with the contamination rate starting to fall.	57.70%	56.00%	★
BP2.2.2 Reduction of fuel consumption used by fleet	Cllr D Sames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Ed Potter 	41,932	39,878	●	Slight increase, from last year, at this point. Report covers 31st August 21 as it was run early in August. As previously stated, more vehicles are being used than last year.	39,595	37,685	●

Leading on environmental sustainability - Programme Measures

Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP2.1.1 High Quality Waste and recycling service to residents to support a sustainable lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Ed Potter 	Cllr D Sames	★	★	Waste and recycling tonnages are still 10% above the total pre pandemic. Collection staff are collecting 7,000 tonnes more waste & recycling per year than before the pandemic.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental blitz carried out	★	Due to the covid situation we are not carrying out full environmental blitz's in 2021/22. We are instead carrying out smaller contamination projects on highlighted areas.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High levels of recycling collected	★	Waste and recycling levels still 10% above the totals pre-pandemic. The only levels that have fallen is the amount of glass collected due to hospitality reopening.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social media posts	★	Social media campaign for the recruitment of LGV Drivers was very successful with 29 people applying for the roles. Also the business waste adverts are continuing to increase the amount of companies signing up to our service.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP2.1.2 Ensure Clean & Tidy Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Ed Potter 	Cllr D Sames	★	★	Streets clean & tidy - entering the autumn period when leaf fall can create some challenges- especially slippery pavements from leaf build up
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Environmental blitz	★	All Environmental Blitzes' are postponed due to the pandemic. We support several groups / individuals with litter picking initiatives throughout the district. They will resume when practicable to do so, involving all interested parties. Normally it is about putting extra resources into a defined area for cleaning and, at the same time, doing work in the same area to enhance the quality of the recycling collected (the areas where we carry out blitz events tend to have the lowest quality on recycling - too much contamination). The perspective is of getting the quality of recycling improved as a high priority, although getting areas clean is the highest. There have been no environmental blitzes, the quality of material is quite good at the moment.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase the number of bins for recycling	★				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Third Environmental blitz & Autumn Clean events	★	All Blitz events are postponed at present following the pandemic and staff shortages. They will resume when practicable to do so. We are supporting local litter picking groups with equipment and collections.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP2.1.3 Tackle Environmental Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Richard Webb 	Cllr C Clarke	★	★	46 fly tips were investigated, 13 warning letters were sent, 1 formal caution issued, 3 fixed penalty notices were served for duty of care offences, and 4 interview letters under caution were sent.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responding to reports of fly tipping and investigating those fly tips	★	46 fly tips were investigated. 13 warning letters were sent, 1 formal caution was issued, 3 fixed penalty notices were served for a duty of care			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP2.1.6 Develop the Country Parks to support good lifestyle choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Ed Potter 	Cllr D Sames	●	●	Country Parks running behind schedule - new Project Manager to be recruited shortly to get the project back on track.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further installation of infrastructure	●	Installation of infrastructure been delayed by several traveller incursions & actions to better secure the sites. Infrastructure likely to commence after Christmas			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social media to promote country parks	●	Social media campaign yet to start. Tree planting in Burnehyll Woodland commences in November - social media campaign to commence then			


Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP2.1.7 Work with partners to deliver initiatives to improve air quality in the District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Richard Webb 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	<p>Two portable monitors have been loaned by Oxfordshire County Council. The monitors which measure nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter(PM10 and PM2.5), sulphur dioxide and ozone and have been set up in the Hennef Way and Bicester Air Quality Management Areas and will provide live data for these pollutants.</p> <p>We were awarded a grant of £17,300 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Grants were awarded towards projects for raising awareness of air quality. The grant money will be used for promotional material and to purchase two portable air quality monitors that can be moved around schools in the district to show the changes in air pollution levels at peak times (drop off and pick up times).</p> <p>Discussions are also taking place with the Public Health Team at Oxfordshire County Council to link the project in with the air quality work they are planning to do with some schools.</p> <p>Blenheim Estates (under David Green, Head of Innovation) have been developing their own portable air quality monitors that can be assembled from a kit. It is hoped to also use these so that school children can make and use their own monitor as part of the project to raise awareness of air quality.</p> <p>Oxford City Council, on behalf of the County Air Quality Group, received a Defra air quality grant towards work to improve the county wide air quality web page such as including better mapping, live data and more information to help raise awareness of air quality.</p>
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
 Air quality monitoring continuing	★	As per above			

An enterprising economy with strong & vibrant local centres - KPI's

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Result	Target	Status	Commentary	YTD Result	YTD Target	YTD
BP3.2.1 % of Council Tax collected, increase Council Tax Base	Cllr T Ilott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Claire Taylor ■ Kerry MacDermott 	9.12%	8.50%	★	As at 01.10.2021, the amount of Council Tax due to be collected, in 2021/22, has risen by nearly £1.6m since 1.4.2021 to just over £116.9m, and the figure collected is 56.80% against a target of 57.00%. Whilst the in-month collection & year-to-date figures are both slightly short of target, recovery action remains ongoing. Reminder notices continue to be issued and those customers who have remained in arrears are being pursued through court action.	56.80%	57.00%	●
BP3.2.2 % of Business Rates collected, increasing NNDR Base	Cllr T Ilott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Claire Taylor ■ Kerry MacDermott 	11.01%	9.50%	★	As at 01.10.2021, the amount of business rates due to be collected in 2021/22, now, stands at £80.8m, having reduced due to multiple assessments of rateable value reductions. The team have continued to formally recover any arrears by issuing reminder notices and taking court action, where appropriate.	51.41%	58.50%	▲

An enterprising economy with strong & vibrant local centres - Programme Measures

Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.1 Promote the district as a visitor destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Robert Jolley 	Cllr L Pratt	★	★	Hospitality venues and visitor attractions have been able to welcome domestic visitors since the lifting of social restrictions in July. International visitor numbers remained low in September due to travel restrictions. Experience Oxfordshire launched a new digital countywide Hospitality Guide with significant Cherwell content.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work with partners to promote the district and support the visitor economy sector	★	Continued to work closely with Experience Oxfordshire (EO) who are, in turn, working with VisitEngland and VisitBritain to promote the district and support the visitor economy sector.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.2 Develop a Recovery and Prosperity Strategy (RPS) for Cherwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Robert Jolley 	Cllr L Pratt	★	★	The emerging ten-year Economic Strategy for Cherwell has been reframed and refocused as a ten-year post-COVID Recovery and Prosperity strategy.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation on strategy draft, with internal and external stakeholder	★	Socialisation of the draft strategy with key stakeholders has commenced.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and development of draft strategy document	★				
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.3 Support Business Enterprise, Retention, Growth and Promote Inward Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Robert Jolley 	Cllr L Pratt	★	★	The Council's support to businesses has been maintained through direct contact with enterprises, and in collaboration with other county and district council services, Government departments, OxLEP and neighbouring local authorities.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business Engagement	★	Cherwell businesses have benefited from one-to-one advice and guidance on grants and other business support such as overcoming difficulties with recruitment. Support has been provided to inward investors and property developers. Cherwell District Council hosted a stand, working together with partners, at OxPropFest at Bicester Heritage on 9 September, enabling direct contact with commercial property professionals and business leaders. Active involvement continues with Oxfordshire Digital Infrastructure Partnership to extend connectivity throughout the district.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.4 Develop Our Urban Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Robert Jolley 	Cllr L Pratt	★	★	Supported revitalisation of Cherwell's urban centres through service provision and continued engagement with partners.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporting revitalisation of Cherwell's urban centres to include	★	Support for Banbury Town centre businesses through liaison and collaboration with Banbury BID; support to Bicester Town Centre Task Group; involvement in 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire' project to fill empty premises; a focus on reopening high streets safely projects; and support for the continued resilience of businesses.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.5 Proactively manage the Cherwell workstreams of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Robert Jolley 	Cllr B Wood	★	★	Cherwell District Council continues to be an engaged and active participant within the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal. A local officer Programme Board has been established for Cherwell. The Board reviews, on a monthly basis, the four workstreams of Affordable Housing; Infrastructure and Homes from Infrastructure; the Oxfordshire Plan 2050; and Productivity. This is part of a five year programme and the Council entered Year Four at the start of April 2021.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deliver CDC Year Four Plans of Work	★	Work is continuing to deliver the agreed Year Four Plans of Work.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP3.1.6 Establish new Building regulations Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bill Cotton ■ Tony Brummell 	Cllr R Clarke	●	●	A draft report has been prepared to consider the options for providing Building Control services in the future; particularly a potential partnership with another local authority. The aim is to achieve a resilient service for the future that benefits from economies of scale and maximises opportunities for income generation. The report now needs to be presented to the Council's senior management team.

Key Actions	Status	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree in principle new partnership arrangements		Draft CEDR report setting out proposed strategy submitted to Assistant Director on 19 August.

Healthy, resilient & engaged communities - KPI's

Measure	Portfolio Holder	Director/Lead Officer	Result	Target	Status	Commentary	YTD Result	Target (YTD)	YTD
BP4.2.1 Number of visits/usage of District Leisure Centre	Cllr P Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Nicola Riley 	110,527.00	150,000.00	▲	Usage figures, for September 2021, for the 3 main Leisure Centres showed an increase against the August 2021 period. Woodgreen Leisure Centre showed a decrease on the previous month, however this was not unexpected, due to the change in seasonal programming for the Outdoor Pool.	614,541.00	270,000.00	★

Healthy, resilient and engaged communities - Programme Measures

Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.1 Support Community Safety and Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Richard Webb ■ Rob MacDougall 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	During September, the Community Safety team continued to provide reassurance patrols across the district, in public spaces, including providing a more regular and routine presence in Kidlington and rural areas, rather than attending those areas only on a reactive basis. This is intended to raise the profile of the council's community safety support in those areas. The team, also, undertook welfare visits to vulnerable residents in the district, and supporting a new 'Community United' programme aiming to raise awareness of the risk of child exploitation in a specific locality, in Banbury, initiated by the local school.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community safety activities undertake in the month	★	In September the Community Safety team continued to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour and carry out reassurance patrols in parks and public areas, where there had been reports of anti-social behaviour. The team started to provide a more regular and routine presence, in Kidlington, where they previously only were on a reactive basis. The team also carried out welfare checks, on vulnerable residents, and supported the planning of the women's cycle tour race.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.2 Promote Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Nicola Riley 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	Youth Activators restarted their school sessions and, by the end of the month, 55 people had signed up to the Move Together pathway - a specific programme for residents who had been asked to shield during the first phases of the pandemic and encourages them to become more socially and physically active.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promote and deliver the Bicester Festival in partnership with local volunteers	★	Delivered successfully over 3 weekends, in September.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promote Good Neighbour schemes and encourage more schemes to develop.	★	COMF Funding is now confirmed. Discussions have been held with Community First Oxfordshire. Mapping and contact with groups will begin in October.			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.3 Improve Leisure & Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Nicola Riley 	Cllr P Chapman	★	★	Plans are in place to progress the decarbonisation of the Leisure Centres within Cherwell. Project Team in place - currently awaiting tender returns and evaluation process to take place. Feasibility study plans are ongoing for future leisure provision
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review existing Leisure provision and contracts to reflect growth in the district	★	Plans are in place to progress the decarbonisation of the Leisure Facilities across the District. Feasibility studies into further investment are ongoing			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.4 Support the Voluntary Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Nicola Riley 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	Various organisations have benefited from Containing Outbreak Management Fund grants over the last three months. Mainly to support increasing social interactions from previously isolated residents, support growing projects and play days. Cherwell Theatre Company's productions of Pete Stays Home and Myths II were performed in school and park settings. The 4th Bicester Festival was delivered with the theme of Sea Change.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organise the annual District Voluntary organisations forum	★	The Voluntary Organisations Forum will take place in November 2021			
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.5 Enhanced Community Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Richard Webb ■ Rob MacDougall 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	Alongside the continuing support for the pandemic response, in September, the main focus for Emergency Planning was the planning for the women's tour cycle race. The Environmental Health team facilitated the Safety Advisory Group meetings for the start and finish and overall route, to ensure all partners could review and comment on the event plans in advance. Over the last quarter, the Emergency Planning team provided input to support the development of community resilience plans, attended a number of parish meetings to promote community resilience, and carried out exercises of key incident management plans, including for the Oxford airport.
Key Actions	Status	Comments			
Report on community resilience activities, local liaison forums attended and any events arising		Engagement with community groups continues to promote the development and review of community resilience plans. Currently, 19 local communities have a community resilience plan and there are 8 further plans are in development.			

Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.6 Support and Safeguard Vulnerable People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Nicola Riley 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	Closer working with other District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council around the rising prevalence of Domestic Abuse. Preparation for Safeguarding awareness week in October (11th - 15th) also undertaken.
Key Actions		Status	Comments		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain training with staff and members		★	Programme actions complete		
Measures & Action	Measure Director/Lead	Portfolio Holder	Status	YTD	Commentary
BP4.1.7 Promote Healthy Place Shaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ansaf Azhar ■ Rosie Rowe 	Cllr A McHugh	★	★	Kidlington Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is nearing its completion with it going out for final consultation next month. It will then be sent to OCC (Oxfordshire County Council) to be signed off. Banbury LCWIP first draft created and, currently, is being reviewed with OCC and soon also with CDC Cllrs before going to public consultation. Bicester had upgrades and repairs to their health routes with more engaging games and activities added to them. Kidlington animal routes have been installed with a launch event due in October (half term). Banbury health routes continue to be installed (from the 18th of October weather permitting). Local residents and key partners have been involved in creating routes and design for wayfinding markers. Dr Bike helped to get over 60 bikes back on the road, after being repaired and safety checked. Both K5 Better together and Healthy Bicester delivery plans have been amended, since having feedback events with key stakeholders, to better prioritise those residents in need, post lockdown.
Key Actions		Status	Comments		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report on the impact of activities to promote active travel		★	Design of signage and route marking agreed, following public engagement, and Four health routes are due to be installed in both Kidlington and Banbury, during October, prior to their launch in half term. In Bicester, 15 organisations took part in the Bicester Volunteers Forum meeting (in September). Wild Bicester project have run one event per month to promote access to nature. Draft Kidlington LCWIP report is being reviewed by OCC for final consultation. Funding secured from Welcome Back fund, for a number of benches, for Kidlington and Banbury health routes and for a new Health Route, at Graven Hill, in Bicester		

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 November 2021

Climate Action Programme Update

Report of Director for Environment and Place

This report is public

Purpose of report

To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress in delivering the Climate Action Programme and the reduction in the council's greenhouse gas emissions in 2020/21.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the progress and next steps in the Climate Action Programme.
- 1.2 To note the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2020/21 (Appendix 1).

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Cherwell District Council committed to being carbon neutral by 2030 and to enabling the district's transition to a zero-carbon future. This paper provides an update on the work being done through the joint Climate Action Programme across its three areas:

- a) Becoming a climate active council
- b) Operating at net-zero by 2030
- c) Enabling a zero-carbon future for Cherwell.

2.2 Annual Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reporting of the councils own carbon footprint is expected as good practice by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Cherwell District Council (CDC) has produced GHG reports in most years since 2008/09 and will report annually in line with its climate action commitments. The report covering 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1.

3.0 Report Details

Progress on delivering the Climate Action Programme

- 3.1 Progress has been made in the delivery of the Climate Action Programme, across its three areas:
- 3.2 **Becoming a climate active council:** Climate action continued to be embedded into the councils' processes and governance:
- Climate Impact Assessments are now required to accompany reports to the Senior Leadership Team (CEDR) and Executive proposing a new policy, procedure, service change, project or programme.
 - 'Carbon Literacy' training is being offered to CDC teams.
 - Staff are being engaged through a joint Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) / CDC staff-led climate action group.
- 3.3 **Operating at net-zero carbon by 2030:** The following initiatives contribute towards CDC's goal of reaching net zero by 2030 across estate and activities:
- £6m grant-funded Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme measures for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency projects are being delivered across council buildings and leisure centres.
 - Green grid electricity contract for corporate estate started in April.
 - Vehicle-to-grid charger being installed at Thorpe Lane depot.
 - Social value policy and toolkit for procurement developed as part of our commitment to working with suppliers to minimize carbon emissions impact of our purchasing.
- 3.4 **Enabling a zero-carbon future for Cherwell:** the following initiatives contribute to a zero-carbon future for Cherwell:
- £1.5m Green Homes Grant being delivered targeting 150 homes in fuel poverty across Oxfordshire including in Cherwell. A further £3m bid submitted to the Sustainable Warmth Fund to be announced in October.
 - Heat network feasibility study due to start in Cherwell; funded by the government's Heat Networks Delivery Unit.
 - Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy approved by Executive. Park and Charge project has installed EV chargers in Bicester Cattle Market as a pilot, with remaining car parks scheduled for completion before the end of this financial year.
 - OxGUL-e feasibility study started looking at piloting an innovative method of EV charging for on-street residents using gullies, particularly in rural locations.
 - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans approved for Bicester and under development for Kidlington and Banbury.
 - Bicester residents engaged to co-design plans and initiatives to encourage active travel.

Next steps

- 3.5 The key next steps for the development of the Climate Action Programme are:
- Developing a costed decarbonisation roadmap for council properties, further to the work being currently delivered via Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

- Developing a costed EV fleet and charging infrastructure transition plan following work in train with the Energy Saving Trust.
- Working through the Environment Advisory Group on a cross-Oxfordshire 'Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire' net-zero delivery plan to inform a Cherwell transition roadmap and action plan.

- 3.6 Work will also continue to equip council staff and managers to integrate climate action into day-to-day activities and decision-making:
- Rolling out 'Carbon Literacy' training for staff, senior leadership and members
 - Publishing a 'Carbon Neutrality by 2030' dashboard for corporate emission that will enable month-by-month monitoring of corporate emissions and project data
 - Developing guidance to help services with the Climate Impact Assessments.

Greenhouse gas report

- 3.7 In 2020/21, there was an annual 22.5% reduction in carbon emissions to 3,219 t CO₂e, representing a 52.7% reduction since baseline year of 2008-2009 (Appendix 1).
- 3.8 5.5% of the 2020-2021 reduction was due to the continued decarbonisation of the electricity grid. The remaining was mostly due to leisure centre closure. The graph below shows the evolution of the emissions included in CDC's carbon neutrality target between 2008/09 and 2020/21.

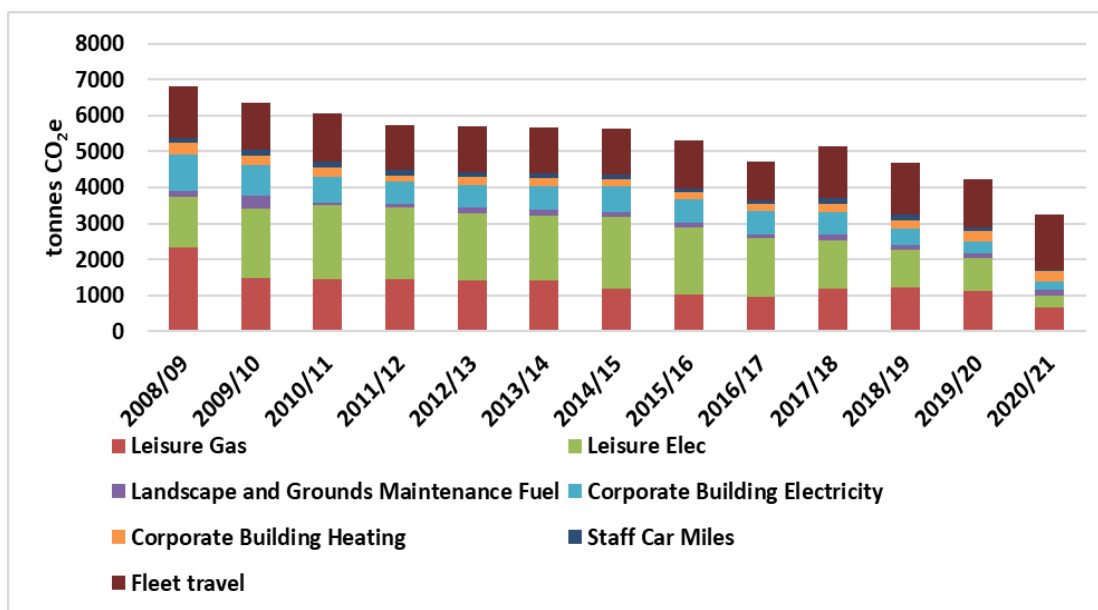


Figure 1 - Evolution of CDC's carbon neutrality target emissions since 2008-2009

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Due to the work being delivered under PSDS, CDC is on track to substantially reduce its own estate emissions. The upcoming decarbonisation plans for estate and fleet will provide a roadmap to tackling the remaining emissions, as well as an estimate of the level of investment required in the near future.

5.0 Consultation

Not applicable.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The initial decarbonisation measures for council buildings and leisure centres have already been funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS). Further rounds of PSDS funding are anticipated.
- 7.2 The decarbonisation roadmap for council properties and the EV fleet and charging infrastructure transition plan will provide an understanding of the funding required to meet the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 7.3 Capital bids have been put forward for 2022/23 for charging infrastructure in anticipation of fleet electrification, however this does not guarantee approval.
- 7.4 Climate Action Programme bids should be considered alongside other requests for funding for the limited resources of the Council to be allocated in the way that maximises the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

- 7.5 The report raises no legal implications.

Comments checked by:

Richard Hawtin (on behalf of Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), 01295 221695, Richard.Hawtin@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 7.6 After a significant drop in carbon emissions in 2020/21 due to work and service provision changes in response to COVID, there is a risk that emissions may bounce back in 2021/22. In particular, the reopening of leisure centres, which represent nearly half of the council's emissions, is likely to lead to a year-on-year increase.
- 7.7 The carbon savings delivered by the £6m programme of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme-funded measures will offset this increase to some extent, with their impact being felt mostly from 2022/23. Risks will be managed as part of

the operational risk register and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, Celia.Prado-Teeling@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.8 When developing and implementing the Climate Action Programme, the council must take an inclusive approach, ensuring the costs and benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy are fairly shared.
- 7.9 While acting on climate change will bring benefits to all, it is most likely to have additional positive impacts on several of the protected and disadvantaged groups considered within the Council's equality framework

Comments checked by:

Emily Schofield, Acting Head of Strategy, emily.schofield@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07881311707

Sustainability Implications

- 7.10 The Climate Action Programme is at the core of the council's response to the climate emergency. A number of its projects have a direct impact on our corporate emissions e.g., installing heat pumps in our buildings, while others, e.g., Local Plan Review, aim to put in place the strategies, partnerships and initiatives that will help reduce carbon emission and increase climate resiliency across the district.

Comments checked by:

Sandra Fisher-Martins, Programme Manager Climate Action, Sandra.Fisher-Martins@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Leading on Environmental Sustainability

Lead Councillor

Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

Document Information**Appendix number and title**

- Appendix 1 – CDC Greenhouse gas report 2020/21

Background papers

N/A

Report Author and contact details

Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader, 07867467797,
Sarah.Gilbert@Oxfordshire.gov.uk



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Greenhouse Gas Report

Reporting Year 2020 - 2021

Cherwell District Council

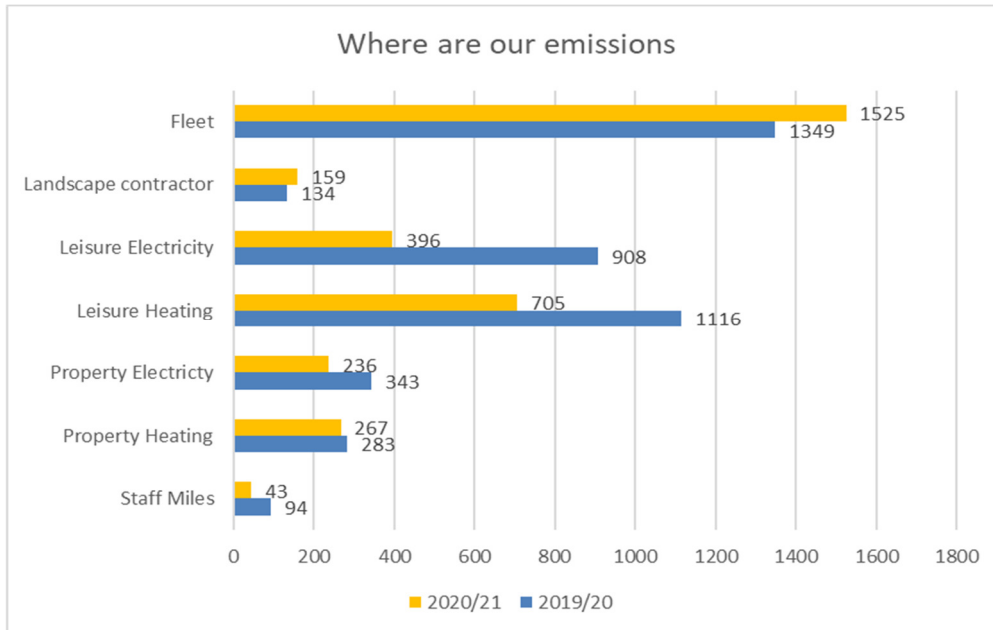
Date: August 2021
Owner: Climate Action Team

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1. During **2020/21** Cherwell District Council reduced its carbon emissions by **22.5%** (**935 tonnes CO₂e**), from **4154** in **2019/20** tonnes CO₂e to **3219** tonnes CO₂e in **2020/21** This represents a **52.7%** reduction against our baseline of **2008/09**.
- 1.2. In 2020/21 792 tonnes CO₂e of our reduction was due to the electricity grid decarbonisation. The remaining 2223 tonnes CO₂e can mostly be attributed to the COVID lockdown and therefore emission levels may bounce back in the following years.



2 Context

- 2.1. Cherwell District Council provides services to residents, businesses and communities across the whole district. The following are the key service services are provided by the Council (but not an exhaustive list)
 - leisure services
 - housing
 - planning
 - landscape and ground maintenance
 - public convenience
 - waste collection.
- 2.2. The Council either provides these services directly or commissions them from other organisations. Most of these services are statutory – things we are obliged by law to do.

3 Reporting Period

- 3.1. This report covers GHG emissions from **April 2020** to **March 2021** with comparisons to previous years

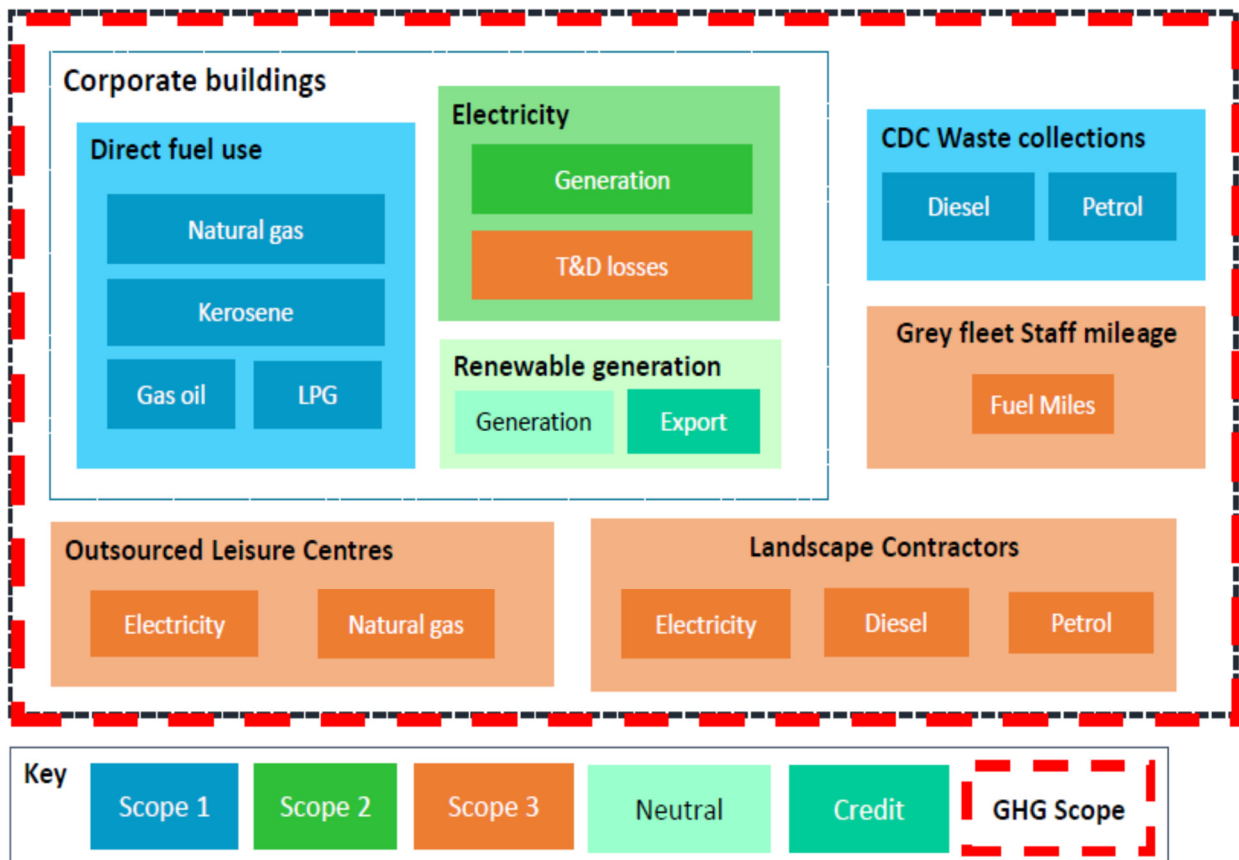
4 Introduction, boundary and conversion factors

- 4.1. Each year, Cherwell District Council publishes details of its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in accordance with the guidance published by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- 4.2. The Council is committed to improving our GHG reporting in line with the latest BEIS guidance. We will be auditing our data in **2020/21**.
- 4.3. **Figure 1** shows the scope of our reported GHG emissions boundary. The council reports on emissions from its:
 - Corporate buildings, public conveniences, waste collection fleet & business mileage
 - Outsourced leisure centres
 - Outsourced landscape service.

These have historically been included in our carbon footprint.

- 4.4. In **July 2019** the council committed to becoming carbon neutral by **2030** for all its reported emission sources, which include corporate and contractor emissions.
- 4.5. The carbon factor methodology applied are the **2020** advanced carbon factors for the emissions generated in the financial year **2020-21**, which can be found at [Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2020)

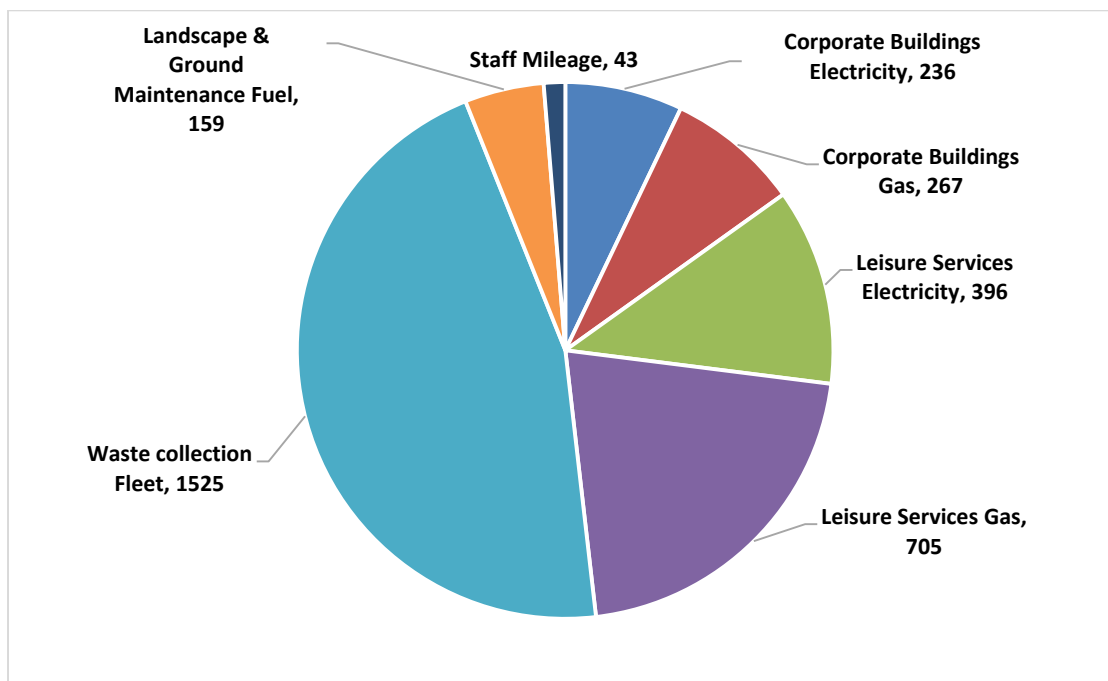
Figure 1: CDC GHG Emissions Boundary



5 Greenhouse Gas (GHG Emissions) 2020/21

- 5.1. **Figure 2** shows that for **2020/21** gross emissions from Cherwell District Council were **3219** tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) split across the six service areas and fuel types. This includes offsetting from solar exports in corporate and leisure centre buildings (as highlighted in Table 1).

Figure 2: Total GHG emissions breakdown per sector and fuel type (tonnes CO₂e)



6 Change from Previous Year

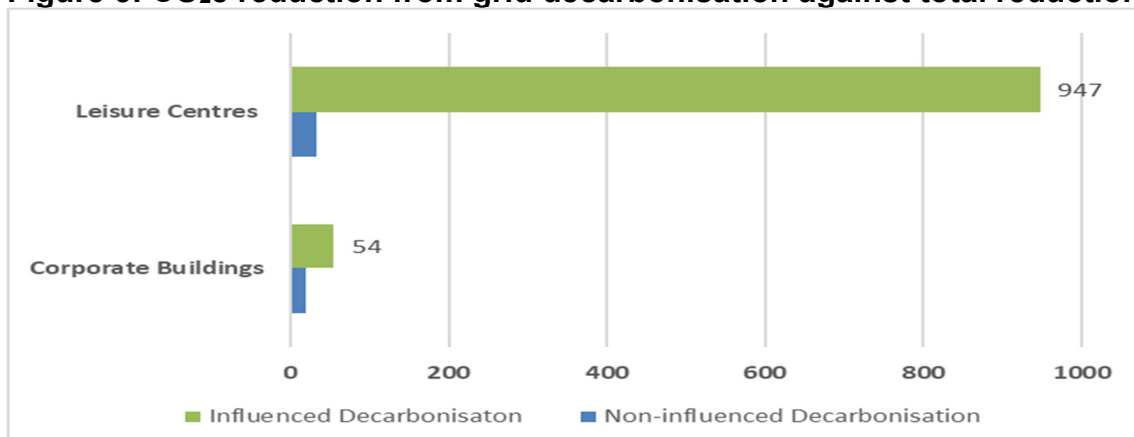
- 6.1. Total emissions in **2020/21** fell from **4,154** tonnes of CO₂e to **3219** tonnes of CO₂e, a reduction of **22.5%** (**935** tonnes of CO₂e).
- Emissions from **corporate buildings, public conveniences, waste collection fleet & business mileage** fell from **2209** tonnes of CO₂e to **1983** tonnes of CO₂e, a reduction of **2.3%**. This includes offsets from Solar PV exports.
 - Emissions from **outsourced leisure centres and outsourced landscape service** fell from **2125** tonnes of CO₂e to **1236** tonnes of CO₂e, a reduction of **41.8%**. This includes offsets from Solar PV exports.
- 6.2. **Table 1** below shows the comparison of emissions in **2020/21** against **2019/20**.

Table 1: Emissions Comparison 2019/20 and 2020/21 (tonnes CO₂e)

2019/20 and 2020/21 Comparison			
	2019/20	2020/21	Reduction
Corporate Buildings	622	494	-20.5%
Public Conveniences	5	10	105.5%
Waste collection Fleet	1,349	1,525	13.1%
Staff Mileage	94	43	-54.1%
Solar Export Corporate (offset)	- 40	- 89	
conveniences, waste collection fleet & business mileage	2,029	1,983	2.3%
Leisure Services	2,024	1,101	-45.6%
Landscape & Ground Maintenance	134	159	18.8%
Solar Export Leisure Centre (offset)	- 33	24	
Contractors	2,125	1,236	-41.8%
Total Emissions	4,154	3,219	-22.5%

- 6.3. Non-influenced **decarbonisation** (due to electricity grid **decarbonisation** and annual changes to carbon factors) accounted for **51** tonnes CO₂e, **5.5%** of total reduction, with influenced **decarbonisation** (due to changes in consumption) accounting for the remainder.
- 6.4. Impact of **COVID** on ventilation - The **CV19** restrictions to working arrangements and subsequent guidance on ventilation has subsequently meant that realistic comparison with previous years is not appropriate at this stage.
- 6.5. Although emissions are expected to bounce back after the COVID restrictions end; we do expect some emissions to rise and some to continue to fall.
- As buildings reopen fully gas consumption is likely to increase from the pre-COVID levels due to legislative changes in air handling.
 - Electricity from property is likely to remain lower than pre-COVID levels due to a decrease in property occupation by staff.
 - Emissions from electricity will continue to reduce from grid decarbonisation.
 - Staff mileage may remain lower than pre-COVID levels due to the use of Teams meetings.

Figure 3: CO₂e reduction from grid decarbonisation against total reduction.



- 6.6. Gas consumption in **2020/21** increased in line with expectations due to weather differences between **2019/20** and **2020/21** Cherwell District Council will be investigating the option to install automatic meter readers to improve the accuracy of gas consumption data.

7. Comparison against baseline year and reduction target

Cherwell District Council track emissions against the baseline year of **2008/09**.

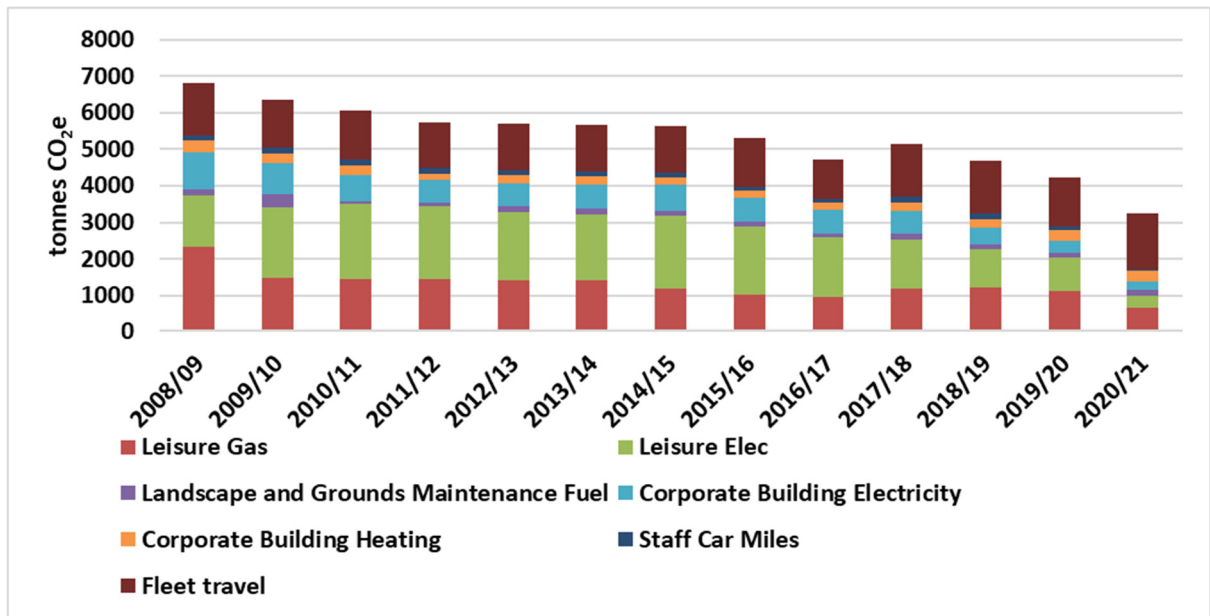
- 7.1. **Total emissions** were **6,804** tonnes of CO₂e in 2008/09 and **3219** tonnes CO₂e in **2020/21**. This represents a decrease of **3585** tonnes of CO₂e or **52.7%** since the baseline year, equivalent to an average reduction of **4.4%** per year.
- Emissions from **corporate buildings, public conveniences, waste collection fleet & business mileage** have reduced by **28.2%** since **2008/09**, an average reduction of **2.4%** per year.
 - Emissions from **outsourced leisure centres and outsourced landscape service** have reduced by **67.8%** since **2008/09**, an average reduction of **5.17%** per year.

Table 2: Emissions Comparison 2008/09 and 2020/21 (tonnes CO₂e)

2008/09 and 2020/21 Comparison			
	2008/09	2020/21	Reduction
Corporate Buildings	1,278	494	-61.4%
Public Conveniences	37	10	-73.3%
Waste collection Fleet	1,419	1,525	7.5%
Staff Mileage	154	43	-72.1%
Solar Export Corporate (offset)	-	89	
conveniences, waste collection fleet & business mileage	2,888	1,983	-31.3%
Leisure Services	3,748	1,101	-70.6%
Landscape & Ground Maintenance	168	159	-5.7%
Solar Export Leisure Centre (offset)	-	24	
Total - Leisure Centres & Landscape Co	3,916	1,236	-68.4%
Total Emissions	6,804	3,219	52.7%

- 7.2. **Figure 4** below shows carbon emissions from the baseline year **2008/09** to **2020/21** with a breakdown of consumption by sector and fuel type.

Figure 4: Annual carbon emissions by sector from baseline year 2008-2009



8 Measurement, data quality, methodology and refinements

- 8.1. Cherwell District Council collects the data from property invoices, staff millage claims and fleet travel records.

Annex A - Operational Scope breakdown

- Central Offices (Scopes 1 and 2)
- Operational Depots (Scope 1 and 2)
- EV Fleet (Scope 2)
- Fleet (Scope 1)
- Business miles (including cycling) - corporate estate and activities (Scope 3)
- Transmission and Distribution (Scope 3)
- Vacant properties - (in Scope 3)
- Outsourced Leisure Centre's (Scope3)
- Landscape Contractors (Scope 3)

Not included in current reporting and reasoning

We do not currently include the following in our reporting for a variety of reasons but will annually review this situation:

- Water - Scope 3 - currently no reliable data available
- Supply Chain - Scope 3 – no data available
- Staff Commuting to work - Scope 3 - no data available
- Business mileage from public transport and walking - Scope 3 - currently no data available.

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

30 November 2021

2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress Update

Report of Assistant Director - Wellbeing

This report is public

Purpose of report

To provide a progress update for the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan progress report and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity duty
- 1.2 To recognise the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan
- 1.3 To note that the development of the 2022-2024 Community Nature Plan (CNP) will include an all-member seminar in 2022 involving planners, as requested by O&S in December 2020. The implications of the provisions of the Environment Act will be taken into account in this next iteration of the CNP

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The key purpose of the Community Nature Plan (Appendix 1) 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 progress update (Appendix 2) sets out aims, actions and targets with progress updates for each target. These all relate 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. This duty is strengthened by the Environment Bill which recently received Royal Assent so is now an Act of Parliament. Part 6 of the Act (nature and biodiversity) is just one of several sections that applies 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.

In January 2021, Executive resolved that “the resource implications of the Environment Bill in terms of nature and biodiversity be investigated”. These provisions will require local authorities to take additional approaches and have increased ecological advisory capacity. A recent government policy paper (September 2021) states that it “will work with local authorities and professional organisations to make sure that they have access to the right training, ecological expertise and systems required to deliver the measures in this section.....” but it gives no information on how this will be done.

In response to this Executive resolution, a consultant was commissioned to produce a report on these implications for the Council. A final draft has been received but it requires detailed consideration and further analysis before recommendations can be made. The Community Nature Plan seminar will give an opportunity for further debate and option appraisal.

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. Website links to the work of some of these partners have been provided.

- **The Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)** - <https://www.tverc.org/cms/> 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)** - <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/wildlife/wildlife-conservation/local-wildlife-sites> - 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 and more recently launched Wild Bicester Project - <https://www.bbowt.org.uk/wild-bicester> which are all about enhancing habitats for wildlife and bringing people into contact with nature.
- **Wild Oxfordshire** - <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/> 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** <https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/groups/oxford/places/278487/> 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** - <https://www.thewarrinerschool.co.uk/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 were consulted about the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan (CNP) in 2020. They have also been consulted about the CNP progress update:

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Wellbeing
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development
Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Officer: Planning Policy, Conservation and Design
Rosie Rowe, Healthy Place Shaping Lead: Wellbeing Directorate
Dale Hoyland, Projects Team Leader: Bicester Delivery Team
Street Scene and Landscape Services Officers

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 progress update and the recommendations in the report

This is not proposed as, without the Plan's progress update, the Council would not be able to 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)

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 future resources in relation to the provisions of the Environment Act 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:

Christopher Mace, Solicitor, Legal Services, 01295 221822, christopher.mace@cherwell-dc.gov.uk;

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:

Celia Prado-Teeling, Strategic Intelligence and Insight, 01295 221786 Louise.tustian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All wards

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The Council's Business Plan 2021/2022 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 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 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
- Appendix 2 Community Nature Plan 2020-22 Progress Update

Background papers

None.

Report Author and contact details

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Community Nature Plan 2020–2022

A natural environment
for people and wildlife



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6. Working in partnership	13
7. Community nature plan aims, actions and targets	14

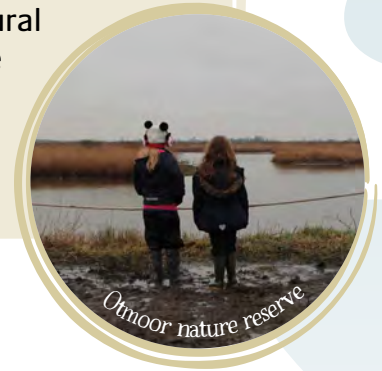


1. Introduction



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.

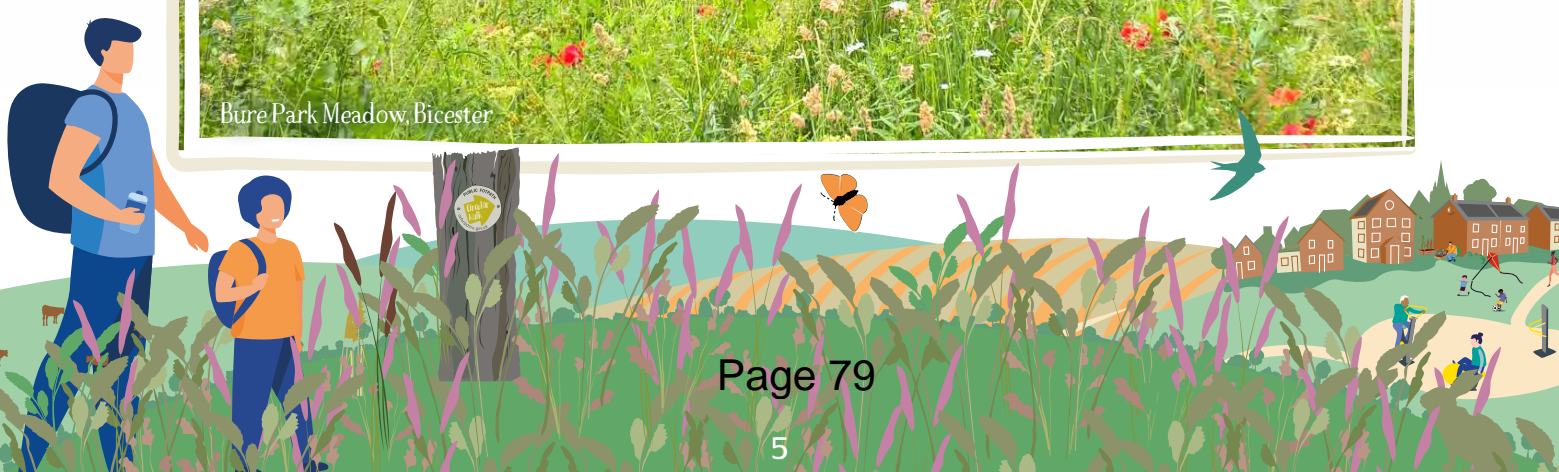


2. Cherwell's natural environment

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

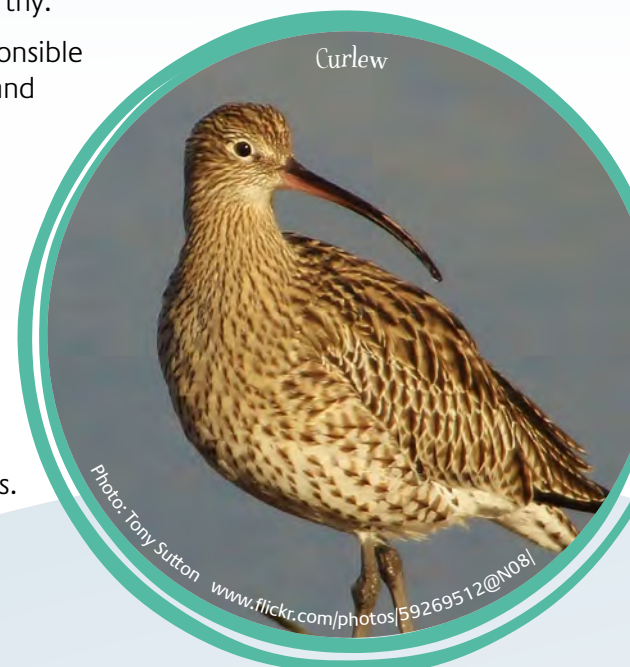




Provision for swifts at the Hill Community and Sports Facility

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

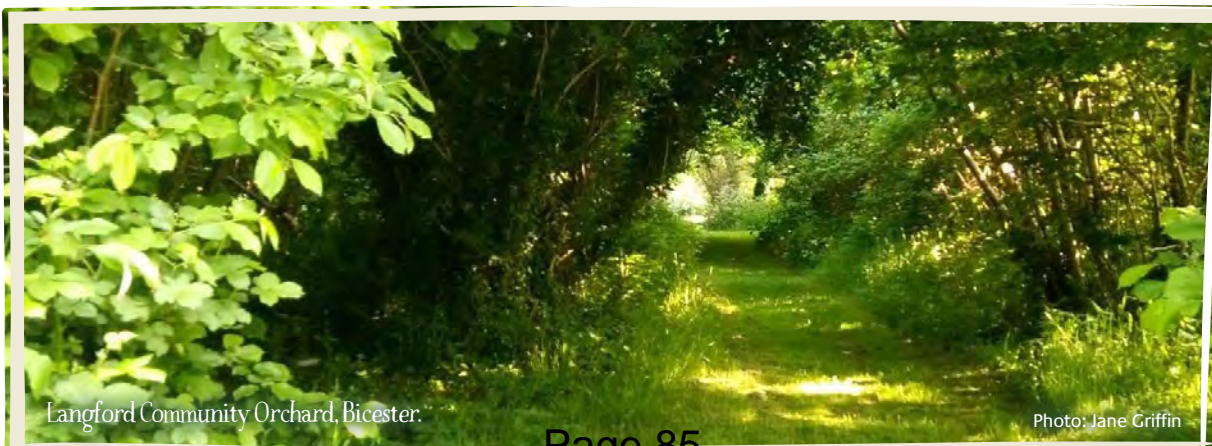
Current understanding of the value of nature in society is embodied in the concepts of natural capital and ecosystem services:

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



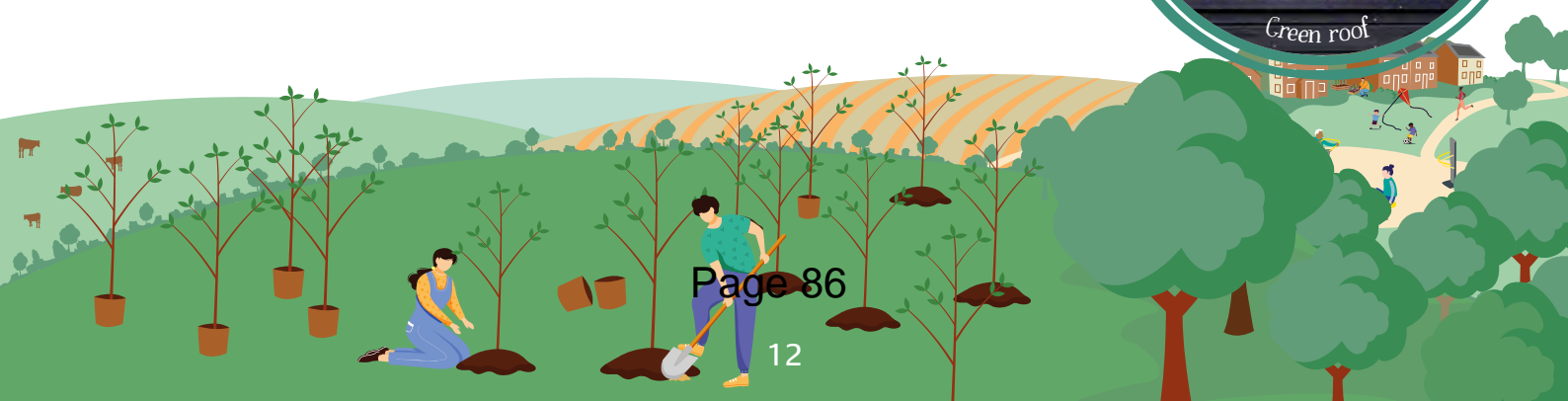
The climate emergency and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked. The creation, protection and sustainable management of habitats which have carbon removal and storage functions play a key role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Tree planting is just one of the carbon capture options together 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-assessment



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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COMMUNITY NATURE PLAN 2020-22

PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2020 requested that officers give an update on the progress of the 2020-22 Community Nature Plan (CNP) towards the end of 2021, hence this report.

The Community Nature Plan is produced every two years by the Community Nature Officer in the Wellbeing team and involves consultation with officers from related workstreams. The specific role of the Community Nature Officer is to connect people with nature for their health and wellbeing. Officers from different teams, particularly planning and environmental services, work on policies relating to the natural environment and the mechanics that ensure that nature and greenspace is planned for and made available.

The key purpose of the Community Nature Plan (Appendix 1) 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 has been strengthened by the recent enactment of the Environment Bill to both conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

This statutory duty relates to all Council services but the Community Nature Plan particularly focuses on the following -

- **Theme 1 - Planning and Sustainable Development (Policy and Development Management):**
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
- **Theme 2 – Community Value/Natural Capital (Wellbeing, Healthy Placeshaping and Economic Development):**
The importance of the natural environment for community health and wellbeing, specifically access to green space and connection with nature AND the value of the natural environment (natural capital) and the services it delivers (ecosystem services) for people and the local economy
- **Theme 3 – Land and Buildings Management (Landscape Services and Facilities Management):**
The contribution of the management of land and buildings to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment
- **Theme 4 - Climate Action:** The important role of natural carbon management for climate change adaptation and resilience.

This CNP progress report sets out the aims, actions and targets from the 2020-22 CNP (Section 7) and includes progress updates for each target *in italics*.

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 (updated in July 2021) 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
- Creating ecological network maps is a key principle 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/Progress Updates

- Review policies relating to protection and enhancement of biodiversity, green infrastructure and conservation target areas in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
 - *A review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) has commenced involving an appraisal of all policies through engagement with internal officers via a cross-service working group. The Council's 'Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options Consultation' is currently underway (29 September 2021 to 10 November 2021). Section 5.7 'Natural Environment and Biodiversity' asks for views on policies for inclusion in the review of the Local Plan on biodiversity and the natural environment and gives options relating to biodiversity and natural capital*
 - *Work on a CDC Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy has commenced*
- Include policies relating to biodiversity net gain and offsetting, nature recovery network and natural capital as appropriate in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
 - *See above - the Council's 'Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options Consultation' is seeking views on policies for inclusion in the review of the Local Plan on biodiversity and the natural environment and gives options relating to biodiversity and natural capital*
- Contribute to OP2050's policy development relating to nature and biodiversity through planning and natural environment workstreams
 - *Relevant CDC officers regularly attend OP2050 meetings as well as Oxfordshire Environmental Group meetings, involving representatives from all Oxfordshire local authorities, to discuss and progress this policy development*
- 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
 - *TVERC is funded on an annual basis in accordance with a provision of data service level agreement. A satisfactory annual review meeting was held in January 2021 to discuss outputs from 2020/21 and requirements for 2021/22*
- Continue to fund TVERC to deliver the District Wildlife Site (DWS) Project through site surveys and in accordance with approved selection criteria
 - *TVERC is funded on an annual basis to deliver the District Wildlife Sites (DWS) Project. DWSs are sites that have significant value for wildlife and support important areas of habitats and species. This value has been confirmed by recent surveys carried out by TVERC and in accordance with a robust process involving detailed criteria and a selection panel of ecological specialists. Out of a total of 63 sites, 39 have been considered by the selection panel – 29 approved, two rejected and 8 deferred*

AIM 2: Development Management

- Ensure NPPF, Council 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/Progress Updates

- Screen all planning applications in terms of their impact on important sites, habitats and species in line with relevant legislation and policy
 - *Registration planners use the GIS information provided by TVERC and others to decide whether consultation with the Ecology Officer is required*
- Assess those that impact upon important sites, habitats and species in line with relevant biodiversity legislation and policy
 - *Limited staff capacity is resulting in assessment limitations relating to planning application consultations concerning ecology and increasing response times*
- Require planning applications for all Partial Review sites to include biodiversity impact assessments and biodiversity improvement and management plans
 - *All Partial Review site policies require planning applications to “be supported by a Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) based on the DEFRA biodiversity metric prepared in consultation and agreed with Cherwell District Council”. Also planning applications “shall be supported by a proposed Biodiversity Improvement and Management Plan informed by the findings of the BIA and habitat surveys and to be agreed before development commences”*
- Seek a minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity when considering proposals for development
 - *Ahead of the enactment of the Environment Bill, a minimum of 10% net biodiversity gain was already being sought by the Ecology Officer, when considering proposals for development, in accordance with an Executive resolution in October 2019. The Environment Act now makes it mandatory for housing and development (with a few exemptions) to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity*

- Produce guidance relating to biodiversity impact assessment, net gain and offsetting
 - *CDC guidance has not yet been produced but robust concise guidance on biodiversity net gain is available from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and other related professional bodies. This provides clarity and so will assist the planning process by making sure developers are aware of the requirements and ensure their submissions provide the information needed at an early stage*
- Continue to fund TVERC to collate, analyse and supply data associated with screening and assessment of planning applications
 - *TVERC is funded on an annual basis in accordance with a provision of data service level agreement. A satisfactory annual review meeting was held in January 2021 to discuss outputs from 2020/21 and requirements for 2021/22*

AIM 3: Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Support the establishment and development of green and blue infrastructure networks and ecological connectivity throughout the District

Action

- Support partners and deliver projects that can help protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure

Targets/Progress Updates

- 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
 - *Successful implementation of Kidlington's Zoo Trails in September 2021. Funded by Sport England, and managed through Cherwell's K5 Better Together partnership, the initiative uses a combination of paw print pavement markings, signposts and nature hubs to encourage families to walk around the village on foot*
- Work in partnership with Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (OPFA) to support the provision, retention and viability of high quality, accessible community green space
 - *OPFA is supported on an annual basis in accordance with a funding agreement. During the Covid pandemic it has provided regular advice and guidance relating to the closing, signing and reopening of parks, green spaces and play areas for local Councils and communities. Although restricted in 202/21 it assisted three Parish Councils with plans for playground refurbishment and two Parish Councils with sports field issues*
- Continue to fund Wild Oxfordshire to facilitate the Conservation Target Area (CTA) Project
 - *Wild Oxfordshire is supported on an annual basis in accordance with a service level agreement. Its 2020/21 progress report outlines the work relating to Conservation Target Areas (CTAs) and in July 2020 a North Cherwell CTA was identified - <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/conservation-target-areas/>*

A satisfactory annual review meeting was held in January 2021 to discuss outputs from 2020/21 and requirements for 2021/22

- Support Wild Oxfordshire to progress the development of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network and Strategy
 - *In 2020/21 an additional contribution was provided to Wild Oxfordshire to co-ordinate a Nature Recovery Network for Oxfordshire through the Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG) to inform the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 - <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/biodiversity/oxfordshires-nature-recovery-network/>*

- Support and participate in the catchment partnership work in the District led by BBOWT
 - *The Cherwell & Ray Catchment Partnership is hosted by BBOWT and acts as a forum for information, advice and evidence sharing across the catchment. The Catchment Plan is about managing the Cherwell and Ray catchments to achieve the Partnership's vision – that the Cherwell and Ray catchment is clean, healthy and full of wildlife, that it is enjoyed, valued, and managed sustainably by all for the long-term. Recently the Partnership has been identifying infrastructure projects relating to water quality improvements and habitat restoration that can take advantage of funding opportunities and can be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan*

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/Progress Updates

- 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
 - *2020/21 reports for the Council's key nature partners are available from the Wellbeing team (email Wellbeing@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)*
Highlights include –
 - *Wild Bicester Project Officer recruited in November 2020 for 18 months and managed by BBOWT but with funding from CDC's Bicester Garden Town, Healthy Placeshaping and the Wellbeing team. Key projects - scything training courses at Langford Community Orchard, creating a wildlife garden with residents of Launton Grange care home project supported by Bicester Green Gym and exploring how Wild Bicester can support and promote opportunities for social prescribing*
 - *Wild Banbury Project Officer recruited in July 2021 for one year and managed by BBOWT but with funding from the CDC Wellbeing team. Volunteers are already working on new sites, with support from Banbury Town Council and the Banbury Ornithological Society. Outreach work with Restore, the mental health charity in Banbury, the Hill, the Grimsbury Network and Bridge Street Community Garden is ongoing*

- *Wild Oxfordshire - although restricted in 2020/21, meetings were held with Kidlington Parish Council to help improve the biodiversity of sites that they own/manage. Advice was given to Parkhill recreation ground/woodland and a community planting day at Lyne Road Green is planned for 30 October 2021*
 - *RSPB – Over 100 volunteers work on Otmoor and provide a vital service in developing and maintaining this regionally important wetland site. Although restricted in 2020/21, sessions were planned and are now going ahead including curlew monitoring and species identification training*
 - *Warriner School Farm - although restricted in 2020/21, three Brighter Future primary schools were able to attend a six week forest school programme at the Farm*
 - *TVERC – although restricted in 2020/21, TVERC continues to work with and support volunteer recorders who help with habitat surveys of Local Wildlife Sites and District Wildlife Sites as well as site selection*
 - *OPFA - although restricted in 2020/21, OPFA assisted three Parish Councils with plans for playground refurbishment and two Parish Councils with sports field issues as well as providing guidance and advice relating to local facilities and Covid issues*
 - *Muddy Feet Training - a forest school/outdoor learning provider funded by CDC. Produced a primary school nature-based, back to school resource pack in March 2021 to help teachers use their outdoor space more effectively and help children manage anxiety after lockdown. Supports community events (eg Banbury Playday), schools (eg Bardwell in Bicester) and leads on community centre projects (eg the Hill in Banbury)*
- Promote BBOWT's Wild Parishes online resources and webinars which support parish councillors, clerks and volunteers to improve their patch for wildlife and people
 - *Links to BBOWT's Wild Parishes and Wild Oxfordshire's webinars on connect-with-nature webpage - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature> RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch was promoted through the Parish bulletin*
 - Support the Cherwell Swift Conservation Project with advice and promotion
 - *Regular communication with Project co-ordinator relating to planning matters and request for mapping. Swift conservation link on connect-with-nature webpage - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature>*
 - Contribute nature-based activities to community events such as fundays, school projects and local greenspace activities
 - *Community events include Banbury Playday 2021 where CDC and partners created a nature zone; Wild Bicester (funded by CDC) stall at Bicester Superheroes event in Garth Park; Green Road/nature zone at Kidlington Gala Day including Wild Oxfordshire and Muddy Feet, and the Swift Conservation Project*
 - Work with Grants Officer, Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment to assess and deliver local wildlife, green space and access projects
 - *Projects include Elmsbrook Forest School in Bicester, Fritwell playground refurbishment, Deddington Orchard and Bridge Street Community Garden in Banbury*

- Protect, improve and promote urban green spaces in Bicester and Kidlington through Healthy New Town and Healthy Placeshaping initiatives
 - *Initiatives include community garden projects have been developed in two of Kidlington's green spaces and the healthy placeshaping team has secured COMF funding to enable similar projects in Bicester and Banbury through working in partnership with Harvest@Home*

- Produce and promote a public facing document to encourage taking action for wildlife and discovering local green spaces and the District's natural environment
 - *A printed flyer has been produced which was launched by Cllr McHugh at Banbury Playday where CDC and partners created a nature zone.*
 - *Social media messages about connecting with nature have been posted twice a month since April 2021 linking people directly to the Council's 'connect with nature' webpage which has become a hub of information with a monthly theme - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature> A press release published in August invited residents to connect with nature and look after wildlife with the help of some easy to use resources ie the flyer and the online hub*
 - *The 'connect with nature' webpage is also promoted through the Activity and Wellbeing Hub, and the Chief Executive's weekly message, which have been important resources during the pandemic - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/Activity-and-wellbeing-hub>*

- Explore opportunities for local community projects relating to habitats and species eg road verges, hedgehogs, bees
 - *Opportunities include a hedgehog project and/or container food growing project involving Wild Bicester and Bicester Green; and a pollinator/bee project involving Wild Banbury. There are also several parishes working on local community wildlife projects eg Kidlington Parish Council, Biodiverse Bloxham, Deddington Environmental Network*

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 to inform decisions on site allocations and natural capital investment

Targets/Progress Updates

- Participate in strategic and local debate as the natural capital mapping work progresses
 - *Key partners and Oxfordshire local authority representatives have been sharing attendance at meetings and updates relating to natural capital work across the Ox-Cam Arc and in the County*

- Explore using a natural capital approach to strategic site allocation as part of the Cherwell Plan Review 2040
 - *As part of the Local Plan review, work on a CDC Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy has commenced which has involved engaging with staff at the Environmental Change Institute of the University of Oxford who are providing information and guidance relating to taking a natural capital approach, the latest version of the natural capital map for Cherwell District, a Cherwell Natural Capital Assets report and an updated version of the natural capital report for Oxfordshire*

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/Progress Updates

- Work in partnership with BBOWT to improve Enslow Marsh and Trow Pool Local Wildlife Sites
 - *Trow Pool LWS is owned by the Council and was surveyed in 2019. A follow-up management visit was made in March 2020 but further work has been delayed. This will be now be progressed. Enslow Marsh LWS, which is partially leased from the Canal & River Trust by the Council, was surveyed in 2021 and BBOWT will now provide a management brief*
- Liaise with partners to plan biodiversity and access improvements within Burnehyll Community Woodland through regular working group meetings
 - *Quarterly working group meetings are held with partners. Further to the change of use planning consent the masterplan is being finalised, and the biodiversity enhancements and management plan are being prioritised. 1000+ trees are to be planted by the Friends Group in late November 2021*

- Deliver biodiversity and access improvements within Banbury Country Park
 - *The re-submission of the planning application for change of use is being prioritised and a preliminary ecological appraisal was carried out in August 2021 which will inform this application. Additional wildlife habitat has been created by the Environment Agency at a flood storage site in Wildmere Wood (between the industrial estate and the River Cherwell). Wildmere Wood is owned by the Council and is part of Banbury Country Park. Discussion with the Environment Agency about access is ongoing*
- Continue to include biodiversity protection and enhancement measures within Cherwell Build projects
 - *The Cherwell Build team includes swift boxes/bricks in all of its developments (eg the Hill community and sports facility in Banbury and is planning on including more biodiversity in future schemes. Most notable is the provision of swift bricks in*
- Promote 'Biodiversity in the Built Environment Good Practice Guide: Preservation of existing nesting sites and provision of artificial nesting sites'
 - *This is being promoted via the Connect with Nature webpage under Swift conservation - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature>*

AIM 2: Cherwell District Land and Buildings

- 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/Progress Updates

- RSPB and BBOWT to provide reports to demonstrate delivery in accordance with funding agreements
 - *2020/21 reports from both organisations have demonstrated project delivery in accordance with service level agreements These are available on the connect with nature webpage under Community Nature Plan 2020-22 - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature>*

- Any funded projects in the CTAs to provide reports to demonstrate delivery of objectives
 - *No projects funded in CTAs during Community Nature Plan period to date*
- Wild Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association (OPFA) to provide reports to demonstrate delivery of local projects in accordance with funding agreements
 - *2020/21 reports from both organisations have demonstrated project delivery in accordance with service level agreements These are available via email from the Wellbeing team (wellbeing@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)*
- Promote BBOWT's Wild Parishes online resources and webinars which support parish councillors, clerks and volunteers to improve their patch for wildlife and people
 - *Links to BBOWT's Wild Parishes and Wild Oxfordshire's webinars on the connect with nature webpage - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/connect-with-nature>*

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/Progress Updates

- Include policies relating to biodiversity net gain and offsetting, nature recovery network and natural capital as appropriate in the Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040
 - *A review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) has commenced involving an appraisal of all policies through engagement with internal officers via a cross-service working group. The Council's 'Community Involvement Paper 2: Developing our Options Consultation' is currently underway (29 September 2021 to 10 November 2021). Section 5.7 'Natural Environment and Biodiversity' asks for views on policies for inclusion in the review of the Local Plan on biodiversity and the natural environment and gives options relating to biodiversity and natural capital*
 - *Work on a CDC Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy has commenced*

- Contribute to OP2050's policy development relating to nature, biodiversity and natural carbon management through planning, natural environment and climate change workstreams
 - *Relevant CDC officers regularly attend OP2050 meetings as well as Oxfordshire Environmental Group meetings, involving representatives from all Oxfordshire local authorities, to discuss and progress this policy development*
- Support key biodiversity partners to protect, manage and enhance habitats which have carbon removal and storage functions
 - *BBOWT through the Oxfordshire Wildlife Site Project and Wild Bicester/Banbury; Wild Oxfordshire through its work relating to Conservation Target Areas, the Nature Recovery Network/Strategy and community sites; the RSPB through its management of the Otmoor Nature Reserve*
- Work with partners to develop an Oxfordshire Tree Strategy
 - *Seed funding was provided by the Healthy Bicester team to create the Oxfordshire Treescapo Opportunity Map which was launched in mid-October 2021 - <https://www.oxtrees.uk/> This Map is a robust tool that shows the right places to establish treescapes for the right reasons. Treescapes means trees in all their forms - woodland, hedgerows, agroforestry systems, community orchards, street trees, gardens or public places. The right reason means the establishment of treescapes in areas where farmers and landowners can maximise opportunities to harness their power to address biodiversity loss, capture carbon, reduce flooding and contribute to human wellbeing*
- Work with partners to explore the delivery of biodiversity and carbon offset projects
 - *Following on from the launch of the Oxfordshire Treescapo Opportunity Map, Bioregional has been commissioned by the Healthy Bicester team to undertake some analysis to highlight where the best opportunities exist for the Council to maximise the uptake of treescapo establishment with landowners and maximise the Council's opportunities for successful funding bids*
 - *Offset projects are also being explored with RSPB Otmoor and through the catchment partnership work led by BBOWT*

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Review Group Overview & Scrutiny Committee Member Lead	Councillor Sandy Dallimore (Lead) Councillor David Hughes (Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, will have a standing invitation to meetings as this falls within his Executive portfolio)
Membership	Up to 4 Members (non-Executive) with a genuine interest in investigating the relationship between the District and Parish councils.
Officer Support	Kevin Larnar – Healthy Communities Manager Lesley Farrell – Democratic and Elections Officer
Background	Cherwell District Council (CDC) and parishes in the district interact in many ways. This review will look at the working relationship between CDC and parishes in the district . It will map the various interactions highlighting areas that work well and where there may be areas for improvement in the relationship and working practices.
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity as to the interactions and working relation between CDC and parishes in the district, highlighting what sits with CDC and what sits with other organisations • The group is an initial scoping and investigation group to identify potential areas for further in-depth scrutiny review working groups
Indicators of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current working relationship mapped providing clarity for CDC and parishes • Identification of potential areas for further detailed review
Out of Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of individual Parish Responsibility • Areas of CDC responsibility • Working relationships between a parish and other parish support organisations i.e. Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils • Statutory Functions that cannot be amended locally i.e. Register of Interests, election processes, Community Governance Review
Method / Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with parishes about current interactions and to identify potential areas of value to them. • Discussion with district councillors and officers about current

	interactions and to identify potential areas of value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate details of other organisations that provide support to parishes to ensure no duplication • Map the current interactions and working relationship to enable identification of what works well, where there could be improvement and specific aspects that could be further reviewed 		
Guest speakers / Witnesses / Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing • Parish Clerk(s) and parish councillors • Officers 		
Evidence required and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding current interactions and working relationships between CDC and parishes in the district • Current processes for Parish consultancies. • Other organisations in the district that provide support to parishes 		
Site Visits	Parish Councils - discuss with Parish Clerks and Parish Members relationship with Cherwell District Council (although these can be virtual)		
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of councillors and officers to progress the work • Availability of parish clerks to meet with the working group 		
Projected Start Date	30 November 21	Draft Report Deadline	7 March 22
Meeting Frequency	As required	Projected Completion Date	15 March 22

Approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Date:
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Draft Outline of meetings

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

Meeting 1 –
Meeting 2 –
Meeting 3 –

Meeting 4 –
Meeting 5 –

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Cherwell District Council Annual Constitution Review 2021/2022

Background

The Constitution is the document by which, in accordance with the law, the Council exercises all its powers and duties. It is essential that it is reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

A resolution of the 2020 Constitution review ([Council Minute 61 refers](#)) was that an annual review of the Constitution be introduced whereby, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider and make recommendations to Full Council for agreement, with the potential for the Committee to convene a Constitution Review Working Group to offer advice if appropriate. The annual review would also include notice of any changes required by law.

Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG)

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Constitution Review Working Group has been established by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to support the work of the 2021/2022 Constitution Review. It will undertake this role by:

- a) Working with the Monitoring Officer to review areas in the Constitution to ensure that they are fit for purpose and put forward appropriate changes
- b) Considering changes proposed by Members, Officers and advice from the Monitoring Officer
- c) Where possible by consensus, refer proposed changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by way of recommendation for consideration and subsequent recommendation to Council for approval

2. Membership

9 members: 5 Conservative; 2 Labour; 1 Progressive Oxfordshire; 1 Independent

Substitutes are not permitted to ensure consistency.

Group Leaders will nominate their Group representatives. If a Group Leader chooses not to nominate representatives to the CRWG, this will not prevent the CRWG meeting and progressing its work, subject to the quorum requirements being met.

Members of the CRWG will be representatives of their respective political group and will express the agreed views of their political group when those are fed back to the CRWG.

3. Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Review Working Group will be appointed at the first meeting of the CRWG.

4. Quorum

The quorum of a meeting of the Constitution Review Working Group will be 3 members and, wherever possible, with at least two Groups represented.

5. Frequency of Meetings

The Constitution Review Working Group will meet as and when required.

All meetings will be virtual and held in private at dates and times to be agreed by CRWG members.

6. Scope of the 2021/2022 Annual Constitution Review

The areas the review will consider are focussed on ensuring the Constitution is up-to-date and fit for purpose.

- Overall review of all sections to ensure consistency of language, accessible format and layout
- Officer Scheme of Delegation (ensuring it reflects the management structure, operational practice and any changes in Government policy)
- Contract Procedure Rules
- Financial Procedure Rules
- Members' Planning Code of Conduct (to introduce guidance and procedures to allow councillors to engage with development proposals at the pre-application stage, in accordance with Government guidance, so they can provide input to development proposals whilst they are still being formulated)
- Councillor call-in of planning applications
- Clarity regarding matters reserved to Council/Executive/Committees
- Clarity regarding non-Committee/Executive Members attending and speaking at Committees/Executive

7. Timetable for 2021/2022 Annual Constitution Review

Date	Activity
Tuesday 30 November 2021	Review scope and Working Group Terms of Reference endorsed by Overview & Scrutiny Committee
December 2021	Working Group established and first meeting held
December 2021 – February 2022	Officer work on the review areas with working group considering aspects. Working Group members liaise with their Political Groups on review areas to ensure they present their Groups views on all aspects

Appendix 2

Tuesday 18 January 2022 (agenda published 10 Jan)	Working group, through its Chairman, provides an update to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday 15 March 2022 (agenda published 7 March)	Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider proposals from the working group and make recommendations to Full Council
Wednesday 18 May 2022 (agenda published 10 May)	Full Council considers recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a view to their adoption

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22

(Updated: 17 November 2021)

Item	Description	Contact Officer
18 January 2022		
COVID Response – Recovery Planning and Lessons Learnt	Following a COVID update report to Executive on 5 July 2021 , a programme of engagement with the O&S Committee, all members and key partners will be developed	Robin Rogers, Programme Director COVID Response
Business Planning for 2022/2023	Information/Briefing for the Committee ahead of Business Planning for 2022 onwards	Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Performance
Work Programme	Standing item: Updates on topics suggested for consideration and review of work programme	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
15 March 2022		
Constitution Annual Review	To consider and review the proposals and recommendations of the working group and changes and make recommendations to the May Full Council meeting	Anita Bradley, Director – Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer
Report of the Member Education Scrutiny Review Working Group	To consider the final report of the Member Education Scrutiny Review Working Group	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Report of the District and Parish	To consider the final report of the District	Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections



Item	Description	Contact Officer
Relationship Scrutiny Review Working Group	and Parish Relationship Scrutiny Review Working Group	Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2021/22	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 Officer Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Performance Monitoring – Quarter 3 2021/2022	Performance Report relating to Quarter 3	Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Performance
Work Programme	Standing item: Updates on topics suggested for consideration and review of work programme	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer
Items to be allocated		
Recovery and Prosperity Strategy for Cherwell (formerly the Cherwell Industrial Strategy)	Policy development: To consider and contribute to the development of the Recovery and Prosperity Strategy for Cherwell (formerly the Cherwell Industrial Strategy)	Robert Jolley – Assistant Director Growth and Economy
Cherwell Local Plan and Oxfordshire Pan 2050 Update	Following queries raised by the Committee – this will be scheduled at the appropriate time	David Peckford, Assistant Director Planning and Development

Meeting Dates 2021/22 (All Tuesday, 6.30pm unless indicated)

30 June 2021 – informal meeting; 14 July 2021; 7 September 2021; 19 October 2021; 30 November 2021; 18 January 2022; 15 March 2022



Meeting Dates 2022/23 (All Tuesday, 6.30pm unless indicated)

Wednesday 1 June 2022; 5 July 2022; 6 September 2022; 11 October 2022; 29 November 2022; 24 January 2023; 14 March 2023

Work Programme Items:

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

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

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Appendix 4

Topic and suggested by	Update	Status / Proposed action
<p>Member Education and Training</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore at the 7 September meeting</p>	<p>The scoping document was approved at the October meeting of the Committee, and will now form terms of reference for the review.</p> <p>The working group met on 18 November to discuss detailed aspects of work to be undertaken, including reviewing the induction programme.</p>	<p>Committee to note the update.</p>
<p>Teenage Mental Health - In Grimsbury & Hightown, I've seeing a sharp increase in casework relating to children's mental health issues, following the pandemic lockdowns.</p> <p>I would really like to understand what, if anything, is within scope of CDC O&SC to support our 13-19 year olds with mental health issues.</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Perran Moon at the informal session held on 30 June 2021</p>	<p>Following the presentation given by the Sport and Physical Activity Manager at the October meeting, details of organisations who can offer help and guidance to 13 – 19 year olds were circulated to the Committee by email on 5 November.</p> <p>The email also signposted a report that had been considered by the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing board on 7 October, which looked at various projects taking place across the county regarding mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Councillor Moon to advise if the subsequent information and signposting provided answers his initial query, if not specific questions to be provided to follow up with officers. As this is information only and not a review as there has been no scoping document or outcomes identified, it is proposed this item is removed from the topic sheet as the matter is under consideration and review by the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, within whose remit this matter sits.</p>
<p>The relationship between the District council and our parishes</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore at the informal session held on 30 June 2021</p>	<p>After the October meeting of the O&S Committee three Councillors came forward to join the Parish Working Group. Councillors Kieron Mallon, David Hughes and Tim Hallchurch.</p> <p>A preliminary meeting of the group took place on 9 November 2021 joined by Councillor Andrew McHugh</p>	<p>Committee to consider and approve the scoping document.</p>

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	<p>and the Healthy Communities Manager, Kevin Lerner, to agree the Scoping Document. Councillor Tim Hallchurch sent apologies.</p> <p>The Scoping document has been included on the agenda for this meeting for consideration and approval.</p>	
<p>Planning Policy for the District, including the Growth Deal.</p> <p>Raised by Councillor Ian Middleton and 3 former committee members, May 2019</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 1 former committee member, May 2019</p>	<p>In light of the COVID pandemic and as part of the council's recovery strategy, the Cherwell Industrial Strategy has been superseded by the emerging Recovery and Prosperity Strategy (RPS) for Cherwell.</p> <p>At the June Executive meeting, the Assistant Director Growth & Economy agreed to a request for an All Member Seminar on the draft Strategy at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The draft Strategy has been added to the Executive Forward Plan for consideration at its January 2022 meeting. After this, it is anticipated there will be wider Member engagement. Further details will be provided when available.</p>	<p>Attendance will be scheduled when appropriate.</p>

Update on items previously submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

This document will be used to track progress of items that have been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to another meeting, such as Executive or Full Council.

Item Description	Resolution from Overview & Scrutiny	Outcome
<p>***New***</p> <p>Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme</p> <p>(Considered 7 September 2021, Minute 16 refers)</p>	<p>1. That the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme be supported</p>	<p>This item was considered by Executive at its 1 November 2021 meeting, and the comments of the Committee were reported.</p> <p>Executive resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme be approved and the scheme (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be adopted. 2. That authority be delegated to the Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, to make any minor editorial amendments to the Scheme as needed prior to publication.
<p>***New***</p> <p>Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021 (Cherwell District Council)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement be noted 2. That the following comments be submitted to the Executive: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For all future consultations, a 	<p>This item was considered by Executive at its 1 November 2021 meeting, and the comments of the Committee were reported</p> <p>Executive resolved:</p>

<p>(Considered 7 September 2021, Minute 17 refers)</p>	<p>mechanism for ensuring residents directly affected by a consultation are contacted and encouraged to respond</p> <p>b. A continuous effort is required to improve quality and standard of housing in the district</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the changes to the draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement in response to the feedback and officer responses set out in the Consultation Report be noted 2. That the final draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved to ensure that the council meets statutory requirements and complies with good practice 3. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, to make any minor editorial amendments to the strategy as needed prior to publication; and, to approve annual updates to the Tenancy Strategy appendices to ensure the data remains relevant.
<p>***New***</p> <p>Constitution Review 2021</p> <p>(Considered 7 September 2021, Minute 18 refers)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the process for the 2021 annual review of the Constitution be endorsed. 2. That the establishment of a cross-party Constitution Review working group be agreed. 3. That the Director Law and Governance be 	<p>Following liaison with Political Group Leaders, the Terms of Reference for the review have been submitted to the 30 November meeting of the Committee for consideration.</p>

	<p>requested to liaise with Political Group Leaders to agree the practical steps and process for the review.</p>	
<p>The Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document (Considered 14 July 2021, Minute 10 refers)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the draft Executive report and the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document for public consultation be noted. 2. That the following observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be reported to the Executive: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A feeling of discontent amongst the Committee regarding the volume of information relating to the consultation, and the length of time Members had to go through it (acknowledging that it was within statutory legal timescales for agenda publication but not ideal). The Committee felt unable to sufficiently scrutinise the documentation in the available time. 2. A request for a clear communications strategy, and for progress updates and further involvement of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee specifically, and more general briefings for all Members during the course of work on the plan following 	<p>Considered by Executive on 19 July 2021 Minute 37 refers. Councillor Wallis attended the meeting to present the feedback from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Committee was thanks for its contribution.</p> <p>Executive resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document be approved for public consultation 2. That an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which will become the formal basis for the forthcoming Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation be adopted 3. That the Assistant Director be authorised to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the documents, and to agree the final publication style, in liaison with the Lead Member for Planning and subject to agreement with their counterparts in the other four partner Local Planning Authorities. <p>The consultation document was also approved by the four other Local</p>

	<p>the Regulation 18 consultation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. A request for an understanding as to how the plan will address the estimated annual cost to the economy in relation to Mental Health, as detailed in the table in paragraph 248 of the consultation document (Committee supplement part 1, page 87).4. A request for the later stages of the Plan process to focus on the Affordable Homes aspect, specifically social housing and social rented housing, acknowledging the explanation from the Assistant Director – Planning and Development that in planning terms ‘affordable’ does include social rented housing.5. A request for clarity regarding how the preferred and alternative options will be presented in the final consultation document, to avoid possible confusion for those reading it.6. In relation to Policy Option 01: Sustainable Design and Construction, the removal of caveats such as ‘this policy would be subject to viability and deliverability testing’ (Committee supplement part 1, page 52) as they	<p>Planning Authorities, and the consultation opened at the end of July and will run for 10 weeks, to Friday 8 October. Any individuals wishing to submit a consultation response can do so through the Consultation website.</p>
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	<p>could be used as 'get outs' by land owners/developers later in the plan process</p> <p>7. Concerns around the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment documents and the accuracy of the figures</p> <p>8. Natural growth is not referred to through the document, trajectory graphs provided are all straight lines and do not seem to take account for natural growth to decrease as well as increase.</p> <p>9. Within Policy Option 10 – Green Belt (Paragraph 258, Committee supplement 1 page 89), National Planning Policy Framework guidelines are frequently referred to but the messages are mixed. In some cases there seems to be a suggestion of making it easier to build on Green Belt, and in others discussion is around enhancing Green Belt.</p>	
<p>Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 to 2026 – considered on 12 January 2021, Minute 41 refers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the draft strategy be noted. 2. That Executive be advised the strategy should focus on Social Housing provision rather than Affordable Housing. 3. That the Executive be requested to explore the potential of housing co-operatives. 	<p>Considered by Executive on 1 March 2021, Minute 105 refers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The amended Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 – 2026 be approved

		In addition to the resolution the then Lead member for Housing Councillor John Donaldson confirmed that increasing social housing was a priority.
Draft Statement of Licensing Policy – considered on 12 January 2021 , Minute 42 refers	<p>1. That the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy be supported</p> <p>The Committee also requested clarity on the process for notifying Councillors and town/parish councils of Licensing applications in their areas.</p>	<p>Considered by Executive on 1 February 2021, Minute 96 refers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed changes to the policy were endorsed 2. Officers were requested to provide feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to their comments regarding...notification to ward members of licensing applications
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21 – considered on 16 March 2021 , Minute 52 refers	<p>1. That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2020/21 be noted.</p>	<p>Considered by full Council on 19 May 2021, Minute 16 refers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The report was noted <p>The Committee fulfilled their Constitutional obligation to provide an annual report.</p>