



**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report
2018/19**

March 2019

Foreword

This annual report for overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council outlines the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2018/19.

Councillor Neil Prestidge
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2018/19

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Neil Prestidge (Ch)
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Tony Mepham
Councillor Sandra Rhodes
Councillor Bryn Williams

Councillor Sean Gaul (V-Ch)
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Cassie Perry
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Substitutes

Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Guests in attendance

Lead members:

Councillor Andrew McHugh – Lead Member Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Debbie Pickford – Lead Member for Clean and Green

External guests:

Gary Brewer, Gypsy and Traveller Service Manager – Oxfordshire County Council
Chief Inspector Emma Garside
Victoria Fletcher – Oxfordshire County Highways

Officers:

Graeme Kane, Executive Director: Environment
Jane Carr, Executive Director: Wellbeing
Ed Potter, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
Trevor Dixon, Environmental Protection Manager
James Doble, Assistant Director: Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director: Finance and Governance & Section 151 Officer
Hedd Vaughan Evans, Assistant Director Performance and Transformation
Robert Fuzesi, Assistant Director: Property, Investment and Contract Management
Chris Hipkiss, Property and Investment Consultant
Louise Tustian, Team Leader Insight Team
Paul Almond, Street Scene and Landscape Manager
Rosie Row, Healthy New Towns Officer
Nicola Riley, Assistant Director: Communities
Colin Wilderspin, Interim Community Safety Manager
Maria Wareham, Safeguarding
Richard Webb, Assistant Director: Regulatory Services and Community Safety
Gillian Douglas – Assistant Director, Housing
Tim Mills – Private Sector Housing Manager

Carol MacKay – Oxford shire Emergency Planning Officer
 Claire Taylor – Director – Customers and Service Development
 Geoff Kent – Assistant Director, Customer and Corporate Services
 Natasha Barnes – Contact Centre Services Manager
 Yvonne Markie – Strategic Housing Facilitator
 Natasha Clark – Governance and Elections Manager
 Emma Faulkner – Democratic and Elections Officer
 Lesley Farrell – Democratic and Elections Officer

Scrutiny Topics 2018/19 – Links to Corporate Priorities	
What is Scrutiny?	Covers all priorities
Performance Monitoring	Covers all priorities
Draft Business Plan and Budget	Covers all priorities
Castle Quay Shopping Centre	Covers all priorities
Changing Models of Primary Care	Thriving Communities & Wellbeing
Show and Tell – Street Scene, including Markets – Environment Directorate	Protected Green & Clean
Show and Tell – Community Safety	Protected Green & Clean
Safeguarding and to endorse Safeguarding section 11 return	Protected Green & Clean
Unauthorised Encampments	Covers all priorities
Housing Strategy	Thriving Communities & Wellbeing
Show and Tell – Customer Services	Covers all priorities
Show and Tell – Landscape maintenance Contract – Environment Directorate	Protected Green & Clean
Emergency Planning	Thriving Communities & Wellbeing
Car Parking Review Group	Covers all priorities

What is Scrutiny?

In July 2018 Overview and Scrutiny was re-launched with the Assistant Director Law and Governance giving a presentation on what good Scrutiny looks like. Members were asked to consider Topics for scrutiny, and suggestions were added to a list that was submitted to each meeting. The annexe to this report gives a brief description of the subjects raised by Members, and how each one was addressed.

The Committee could scrutinise issues that were not part of the Council’s responsibility, as long as members were mindful of the need to make meaningful recommendation.

James Doble, the Assistant Director; Law and Governance emphasised that potential review subjects didn’t have to be raised at a formal meeting, and reiterated the ‘iceberg’ analogy regarding two thirds of the work of the Committee being carried out outside the formal meeting structure with the remaining third in committee meetings.

“Show and Tell” items had been scheduled on the work programme. It was explained to Members that it was important for members to understand the work of each

directorate and team within it, and to have an overview of what each department was looking at to help them select possible review subjects.

Performance Monitoring

In August 2018 The Assistant Director; Performance and Transformation and the Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team Leader gave a presentation on how performance management was used throughout the council.

Each quarter the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Council's performance as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

The Council had maintained generally excellent performance as in previous years.

Draft Budget and Business Plan

In January 2019 Adele Taylor, Interim Executive Director: Finance and Governance & Section 151 Officer and Hedd Vaughan Evans, Assistant Director Performance and Transformation attended the Committee to present the draft business plan and budget for 2019.

The Directors explained that 2019/20 was the last year of a four year financial settlement from Central Government. Figures for subsequent years were therefore an estimate. A more detailed report went to Budget Planning Committee on 29 January 2019.

Castle Quay Shopping Centre – Castle Quay II

In November 2018 Chris Hipkiss, the Interim Property Investment Manager, Regeneration and Estates gave an exempt presentation to the Committee on the progress made with Castle Quay Shopping Centre and Castle Quay II.

Changing Models of Primary Care

The Committee considered a briefing paper by Rosie Rowe, Healthy New Towns Officer which informed the Committee of the Changing Models of Primary Care and its implication for Cherwell District Council.

The Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) approach to planning for future health and care services involved working collaboratively with local government and health and care providers to focus on how to meet the specific needs of their local population.

The Healthy New Towns Officer explained that OCCG were keen to engage with Cherwell District Council on future planning of primary care in the district and that there would be opportunity to make sure any concerns were taken into consideration.

Show and Tell – Street Scene, including Markets – Environment Directorate

The presentation covered; Overall Strategy; Street Cleansing Team; Vehicle Fleet; Scope of work; Performance and Enforcement.

Victoria Fletcher of Oxfordshire County Council Highways gave an update on the Air Quality Action Plan. The AQMA was reviewed every year, with actions being

updated as required. The location of the diffusion tubes which collected the data was also kept under review.

Show and Tell - Community Safety

Colin Wilderspin, the Interim Community Safety Manager gave a presentation giving details of the current work and challenges of community safety in Cherwell District.

Chief Inspector Garside gave a verbal update on the perspective of the police force and their work with regards to community safety in the district.

Safeguarding – Training Framework and Draft Section 11 Audit Return

Jane Carr the Executive Director for Wellbeing attended the meeting of the Committee in November 2018 and gave details of the draft Cherwell District Council Section 11 return ahead of its submission to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB)

The Committee endorsed the return alongside a summary of outcomes of a practitioner survey carried out on front line staff and a summary of safeguarding training.

Unauthorised Encampments

In January 2019, Gary Brewer, Gypsy and Traveller Service Manager, Oxfordshire County Council gave a presentation on Unauthorised Encampments within Cherwell District.

The process of dealing with unauthorised encampments was explained to the Committee.

The Committee raised concerns at the lack of official sites available to travellers in the Cherwell District. The Committee anticipates a briefing note from the Executive Director; Place and Growth (Interim) relating to the current position on Authorised Encampment sites in the Local Plan part 2.

Housing Strategy

In February 2019 Gillian Douglas, the Assistant Director – Social Care Commissioning and Housing attended Committee to present the draft Housing Strategy for the period 2019 to 2024.

The Assistant Director – Social Care Commissioning and Housing explained that a period of public consultation had been held, and the Strategy had been updated following feedback received.

With regard to a recent change in legislation concerning Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), the Committee asked about the impact of changes on the Council in terms of workload. The Assistant Director – Social Care Commissioning and Housing explained that no impact was anticipated, as the change related to the number of storeys in the house rather than the number of occupants.

Following a request from the Committee the Assistant Director – Social Care Commissioning and Housing agreed to provide an update on progress of the action

plan. The Committee noted that the action plan started on 4 March 2019 and agreed an update in 12 months' time should be added to their work programme.

The Committee supported the draft strategy, which went on to be approved by the Executive at its meeting on 4 March 2019.

Show and Tell – Customer Services

Geoff Kent, Assistant Director, Customer and Corporate Services, attended the Committee in March 2019 to give an overview of the Customer Services team and the way they work.

The Assistant Director, Customer and Corporate Services explained that the team would be undertaking a 'Customer Services Marathon', which was a programme of improvements that would be completed over 26 weeks. The programme would cover four key areas: Customer Service Excellence; Maximise Capacity; Staffing; and Using IT.

The Committee found the presentation very informative.

Show and Tell – Landscape and Arboricultural Service – Environment Directorate

In March 2019, Graeme Kane, Executive Director: Environment and Paul Almond, Street Scene and Landscape Manager, gave an overview of the Landscape and Arboricultural Service, including the landscape maintenance contract.

The presentation covered the make-up of the Landscape Team; the landscape contract; partners in the contract; services covered; performance of the contract; and how the landscape service contributed to the Council's overall priorities.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Street Scene and Landscape Manager confirmed that any complaints made in relation to landscape maintenance were discussed with the contractor, and regular meetings were held

Emergency Planning

Following a request to officers in October 2018 Graeme Kane attended Committee in March 2019 to give an overview of the Emergency Planning process in place at the Council.

The Executive Director: Environment explained that Cherwell District Council (CDC) had entered into a partnership arrangement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). This meant that, over the coming months, the full time Emergency Planning team at OCC would assist CDC with training and development of relevant officers in relation to Emergency Planning.

Task and Finish Working Groups

Just one task and finish group took place during 2018/19 Municipal Year. The topic was Car Parking in the Cherwell District and Civil Parking Enforcement.

Car Parking Review Group

Following the request for possible topics for scrutiny Cost versus benefit of delivering free parking in town centres and decriminalisation of parking were two suggestions received.

The Car Parking Review Group was formed, and the terms of reference agreed that the group would hear from officers about the council's current car parking provision and arrangements, as well as any future proposals with a view to producing a new Car Parking Strategy.

The group has met four times and a draft strategy is due for consideration by the Committee in May.