



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

Foreword

This annual report for overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council outlines the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2021/22.

The committee this year covered a wide range of topics. These included: The Oxfordshire Plan, Constitution Review, Teenage Mental Health Services, New Member Education, 5G District Coverage and others.

There were high levels of contribution from members in every meeting. Passions were often expressed but every meeting was conducted in a spirit of seriousness and fairness, which greatly enhanced our ability as a group to scrutinise council business. All in all I deeply enjoyed the experience of chairing the committee and would like to thank all members for both their contributions and hard work throughout the year.

Finally I would like to extend my personal thanks to all attending Officers, namely Natasha, Emma & Lesley. Without their patience and regular assistance during meetings, as well as in pre-meeting preparation, I have no shame in saying that I would have struggled.

I finish by wishing the new committee and new elected Chairman all the best in the coming year.

Councillor Tom Wallis
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2021/22

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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

Councillor Andrew Beere – July 2021, March 2022
Councillor John Broad – September 2021, March 2022
Councillor Shaida Hussain – February 2022
Councillor George Reynolds – October 2021

Guests in attendance

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council – July 2021, September 2021, October 2021, November 2021, February 2022, March 2022
Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning – July 2021
Councillor Ian Corkin, Lead Member for Customers and Transformation
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Financial Management and Governance
Councillor Lucinda Wing, Lead Member for Housing – September 2021
Councillor John Broad, February 2022

External Guests

Craig Bower, Digital Programme Manager, Oxfordshire County Council – February 2022
Adrian Colwell, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Central Team – July 2021 and February 2022
Andrew Thompson, Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Central Team – July 2021

Officers

Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources. November 2021 for 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress update and Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer. July 2021, September 2021, October 2021 as Monitoring Officer support

Tim Spiers, Director of Digital and IT. February 2022 for Digital Infrastructure update.

Vicki Jessop, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning. September 2021 for Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021 and Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning and Development. July 2021 and February 2022 for Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Ed Potter, Assistant Director – Environmental Services. November 2021 for Climate Action Programme Update

Nicola Riley, Assistant Director – Wellbeing. November 2021 for 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress update and Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes. October 2021, November 2021 for Performance Monitoring.

Frances Evans, Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader – September 2021 for Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader - July 2021 and March 2022 for Performance Monitoring.

Sandra Fisher-Martins, Climate Action Mobilisation Manager – November 2021 for Climate Action Programme Update

Tom Gubbins, Sport and Physical Activity Manager – October 2021 for Teenage Mental Health Services within Cherwell

Andrew Maxted, Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Manager – February 2022 for Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update

Susan Asbury, Safeguarding Officer – November 2021 for Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Paul France, Senior Housing Officer – September 2021 for Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

Sarah Gilbert, Team Leader Climate Action – November 2021 for Climate Action Programme Update

Sue Marchand, Community Nature Officer – Wellbeing – November 2021 for 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress update

Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Policy Officer – July 2021 for Oxfordshire Plan 2050 update

Scrutiny Topics 2021/22 and their links to Corporate Priorities

Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring – *all priorities*

Oxfordshire Plan 2050 – *all priorities*

Constitution Review 2021 – *all priorities*

Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme – *Housing that meets your needs*

Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021 – *Housing that meets your needs*

Teenage Mental Health Services within Cherwell – *Healthy, resilient and engaged communities*

Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit – *Healthy, resilient and engaged communities*

Climate Action Programme Update – *Leading on environmental sustainability*

2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress update – *Leading on environmental sustainability*

Digital Infrastructure Update – *An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant local centres*

Training Session and Work Programme Planning

In May 2021 a scrutiny skills training session was delivered to the Committee by David McGrath of Link Support Services. The session covered the purpose and role of a Councillor in the scrutiny process, and provided tips and guidance on how the Committee could best prepare for the coming year.

Following on from the training, an informal work programme planning session was held in June 2021. Committee members were asked to propose subjects for potential consideration throughout the Municipal Year.

The subjects proposed by the Committee at the informal sessions and the actions proposed are included at **annex a**.

Scrutiny Reviews

Two subjects were proposed for in-depth Scrutiny reviews; member education and training, and the relationship between the district council and parish councils.

Member education and training

A working group was established in September 2021, with all five Councillors who had been elected in May 2021 – Patrick Clarke, Sandy Dallimore, Matt Hodgson, Adam Nell and Dorothy Walker.

The working group considered the information, training and induction programme that had been in place following the May 2021 elections, and made recommendations relating to the induction programme and ongoing training for the May 2022 elections.

The report and recommendations were presented to the Committee in March 2022 (**annex c**). The recommendations were noted, and the working group will liaise with the Director – Law and Governance to implement the recommendations.

The relationship between Cherwell District Council and the parish councils

A working group was established in September 2021, consisting of Councillors Sandy Dallimore, Tim Hallchurch, David Hughes, Kieron Mallon and Bryn Williams. Councillor Andrew McHugh had a standing invitation to the meetings of the group, as the appropriate Executive Lead Member.

The review looked at the working relationship between CDC and parishes in the district. It mapped the various interactions, highlighting areas that work well and where there may be areas for improvement in the relationship and working practices.

The working group recommended to the Committee that the review continue in the new Municipal Year, with a new scoping document being submitted to the Committee in June 2022 with revised areas of focus for the review.

The Committee considered the report in March 2022 (**annex d**) and approved the recommendation to continue.

Summary of the topics considered

Performance Monitoring

Quarterly monitoring of the Council's Performance Framework remains an important part of the ongoing work programme for the Committee.

The Committee has continued to concentrate on the performance element of the reports, as the risk and finance sections fall under the remit of the Accounts, Audit and Risk and Budget Planning Committees respectively.

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

The Committee considered the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 at two meetings, in July 2021 and February 2022.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is being jointly produced by the five local planning authorities (Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council) in Oxfordshire, working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP. A central officer team is preparing the plan, and each of the five local planning authorities need to formally approve each stage of preparation. Prior to consideration by each council's Cabinet/Executive, the scrutiny committees in each authority reviewed and provided feedback.

In July 2021 the Committee considered the Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation document, and were asked to provide observations on it before it was considered by Executive. The report included the draft consultation document, and a number of supporting documents.

The Committee made a number of observations to Executive, including 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 the Regulation 18 consultation. A request was also made for later stages of the Plan process to focus on the Affordable Homes aspect, specifically social housing and social rented housing, acknowledging an explanation from the Assistant Director – Planning and Development that in planning terms ‘affordable’ does include social rented housing.

In February 2022, a consultation feedback report was provided to the Committee from the central plan team. The report gave an update on the preparation of the plan, and included a summary of comments received during the Regulation 18 consultation.

The Committee were asked to note the report, and recommend to Executive the adoption of a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which detailed how consultation would be undertaken. The SCI had been updated to reflect changes to Coronavirus regulations.

The Committee emphasised the need for more social rented housing rather than Government defined affordable house, and queried whether it would be possible for affordable rented houses to be linked to local wages rather than the national market formula. The Assistant Director – Planning and Development said that discussions on the possibility of such a link could be held at the relevant time.

Executive considered the updated SCI at the March 2022 meeting, and approved the adoption of the revised document.

Constitution Review

A resolution of the 2020 Constitution review 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.

Whilst the Committee agreed to establish a working group and agreed terms of reference for the group at its 30 November 2021 meeting, the Labour and Progressive Oxfordshire Groups did not wish to participate in the working group. Notwithstanding, the annual review was due to commence its work in early 2022 with a view to submitting proposals to the March Overview & Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to Full Council. However, the decisions of Cherwell District

Council and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to formally serve notice to terminate the formal partnership working arrangements between the two councils has impacted the review.

As part of the decision to terminate the partnership with OCC, a new Monitoring Officer was appointed for CDC and given delegated authority to undertake a review of the existing Scheme of Delegation. The delegations granted did not however incorporate all areas that had been initially agreed as the scope of the 2021/2022 annual Constitution review, and the Committee was requested to grant a further delegation to enable the Monitoring Officer to complete the review, in consultation with appropriate officers, Lead Members and Committee Chairmen.

The Committee approved the delegation, and proposed amendments will be presented to full Council in May 2022 for consideration.

Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

In September 2021 the Committee considered a report which detailed proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme. Committee was asked to consider the changes prior to approval being sought from Executive.

The proposed changes offered clarity to wording and definitions in a number of sections of the scheme, as well as adding a new section that dealt with the potential implications of Oxford's unmet housing need.

The Committee supported the proposed changes, and Executive subsequently approved the amendments at their meeting in November 2021.

Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021

Also in September 2021 the Committee considered a report which outlined changes to the Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement.

The proposed changes included reflecting changes to legislation that had occurred since the statement was initially adopted in 2017 and reflecting the council's ambition to deliver more social rented housing.

The Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader explained that the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to promote the consultation to all Registered Providers (RPs) in the district. Two consultation workshops had been held with RPs, in addition the Housing Team had promoted the consultation to stakeholders, voluntary and community groups.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader explained that current residents had not directly been encouraged to respond to the consultation, but the consultation was a full public consultation and advertised in line with the council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

The Committee were asked to contribute to the consultation via the Slido online polling app, which asked three questions:

- To what extent do you agree/disagree that more social rented homes should be provided?
- To what extent do you agree/disagree that the vision and aims of the new draft strategy are the right one for Cherwell District?
- What challenges might be we in delivering this new strategy for Cherwell District?

The Committee submitted two comments to Executive for their consideration:

- For all future consultations, a mechanism for ensuring residents directly affected by a consultation are contacted and encouraged to respond
- A continuous effort is required to improve quality and standard of housing in the district

Executive considered and approved the changes at their meeting in November 2021.

Teenage Mental Health Services within Cherwell

In October 2021 the Committee received a presentation that explained the work of the Wellbeing and Physical Activity Team in relation to mental health wellbeing.

The subject had been raised by Councillor Perran Moon at the informal work programming session held at the start of the Municipal Year.

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 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'.

Climate Action Programme Update

In November 2021 the Committee received an update on progress delivering the Climate Action Programme. Came back following updates in September 20 and March 21.

The Climate Action Mobilisation Manager explained that 20 homes suffering from fuel poverty had been approved for 'green homes' grant funding, which would include provision of insulation and in some cases solar powered generation solutions.

The Climate Action Mobilisation Manager explained that the team had secured a £6m government grant from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The grant was being used to focus on heat decarbonisation of council buildings, through methods such as the replacement of boilers with heat pumps or solar thermal systems.

Once all replacements had been completed it was anticipated the changes would save 1000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

The next steps for the programme included the continued rollout of park and charge points in Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington, and Carbon Literacy training during 2022 for senior officers and members.

Community Nature Plan 2020-2022

In November 2021 the Committee received a progress update regarding the Community Nature Plan.

The Committee had considered a draft plan in December 2020, prior to it being considered and approved by Executive in January 2021.

The wellbeing team had launched a 'Connect to nature initiative' during the COVID-19 lockdowns, which gave a monthly theme for residents across the district to engage with nature. The November theme was 'be kind', and focussed on looking after hibernating creatures such as ladybirds and hedgehogs.

Work would be starting during 2022 on the next iteration of the plan, and the Assistant Director – Wellbeing explained that Members would be involved in the drafting of the new plan via a workshop that would take place during March.

During the workshop it was agreed that an update on progress of the new plan would be presented to the September 2022 meeting of the Committee.

Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

In November 2021 the Committee received a presentation from the Safeguarding Officer that detailed the work of the Safeguarding Team during 2020/21, and gave an overview of the Safeguarding Self-Assessment audit.

The self-assessment audit had to be completed annually, and the 2021 assessment was submitted to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children and Adults Board on 3 December. It included evidence of working with the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Neglect Strategy Group to raise awareness.

The Safeguarding Officer reported that actions from the 2020 audit included improving the level of training and awareness of safeguarding responsibilities amongst staff and elected Members.

Mandatory Safeguarding training for staff had been moved to the online iHasco platform in December 2020, which meant that staff received email reminders to complete the required modules, and the Safeguarding Team could monitor completion levels. Elected Members had also been added to the online platform, with 44% having completed "Prevent" training and 10% "Safeguarding" training.

Digital Connectivity in Cherwell

In February 2022 the Committee received an update on Digital Connectivity in the district, following an initial report that had been considered in July 2020.

The Programme Director of Digital Infrastructure Oxfordshire explained that 98.5% of the district had connected to superfast broadband services. This was an increase from 63% when the digital infrastructure programme started in 2014.

In October 2021 a new project had started called 'Gigahubs'. 24 public service buildings across the district had been identified as hub sites, which would have fibre connections installed that could then be used to extend fibre connectivity to local residents and businesses.

In relation to mobile digital signal, the Programme Director of Digital Infrastructure Oxfordshire explained that the team had a focus on 'small cell' improvements. This involved the installation of small units on street furniture such as lampposts, to increase the available mobile signal. Initially the project would be rolled out to a small number of lampposts in Oxford, but it was hoped that by the end of 2023 up to 70 lampposts across the county would have the technology, including some in Banbury and Bicester.

Rolling Topic Sheet and previous items considered

The Committee continued to use the rolling topic sheet throughout the year, to keep track of subjects raised as possible areas of scrutiny.

A new document was introduced, to update Committee on items they had made recommendations/given feedback to Executive.

Both documents are attached, at **annex a and b**.

Topic and suggested by	Update
<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>Initial information was gathered from the Wellbeing Team to respond to Councillor Moon's query.</p> <p>Cherwell District Council is part of the Oxfordshire mental health prevention concordat. The mental health work that CDC delivers is often in partnership with other organisations and other mental health initiatives that are delivered around the District are commissioned either via OCC Public Health, OCC Children's services or through the CCG. We have been a partner of the MH concordat partnership since it was formed in 2019 and have helped to shape the recently launched framework. The framework has been set out by all of the concordat's partnership organisations. The framework outlines how we will work together for everyone in Oxfordshire. For residents to have the opportunity to achieve good mental health and wellbeing over the next 3 years. The Mental Health Prevention Framework - 2020-2023. Here is a link to a round up of what the partnership has achieved since it was formed https://vimeo.com/551507662/e9978902ad.</p> <p>CDC's Youth Activators (in partnership Oxfordshire Mind and Resilient Young Minds) have been delivering a successful mental health programme in a number of Schools around the District. Initially this has been solely in primary schools but it is soon to be expanded to older age groups. This work is funded by schools.</p> <p>The Sport and Physical Activity Manager attended the October meeting of the Committee to give a detailed presentation on the work of the team. The presentation answered Councillor Moon's query and the subject was removed from the topic list.</p>
Homelessness within the LGBT community	The Housing Options and Allocations Manager advised that during a homeless application one of the questions asked related

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<p>Raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore at the informal session held on 30 June 2021</p>	<p>to sexual orientation, and the customer could choose a response. There was no specific data collected on anyone who may be made homeless due to their sexual orientation, although if this were the case it would be picked up as part of the ongoing casework with the customer.</p> <p>Councillor Dallimore asked for further information as to why information on sexual orientation was not specifically requested, and if it could be in future.</p> <p>The Housing Options and Allocations Manager explained that the questions asked during a homelessness application were linked to information that had to be collected for an annual statistical return for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (as it was at the time of the query). It was not possible to ask any additional questions.</p> <p>Following the receipt of this information Councillor Dallimore agreed that there was no further work that could be undertaken in relation to the query and therefore it could be removed from the topic list.</p>
<p>The relationship between the District council and our parishes Raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore at the informal session held on 30 June 2021</p>	<p>The Healthy Communities Manager provided a brief overview of the work of the Healthy Communities Team in relation to interaction with parishes. Twice a year the council hosted a conference style parish liaison meeting to consult, inform and inspire parishes, and give them the opportunity to network with each other and senior council members and officers. Since July 2021 the meeting had been virtual due to coronavirus restrictions.</p> <p>A fortnightly parish bulletin had also been started as a result of the first coronavirus lockdown, which included items such as</p>

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grant opportunities, consultations and changes to government guidance that would be useful for parishes.

In response to the information provided by the Healthy Communities Manager, Councillor Dallimore proposed that a fact finding working group be established, to investigate and understand the interactions between CDC and the parishes. The focus of the group would be to look for easy gains in communication and relationship, and identify areas of value.

The working group was established in September 2021, and the recommendations of the group are due to be considered in March 2022.

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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>Oxfordshire Plan 2050: Summary of responses from Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation and next steps</p> <p>(Considered 1 February 2022, Minute 41 refers)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the summary results from the recent regulation 18 (part 2) consultation be noted.2. That the revised scope of the Oxfordshire Plan, with clarification over its relationship to city and district Local Plans and supporting evidence base be noted.3. That the next steps of the Oxfordshire Plan process be noted.4. That Executive be recommended to adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement for the Oxfordshire Plan (Annex to the minutes as set out in the Minute Book) when it considers a report on this matter at its March 2022 meeting.	<p>The item is due to be considered by Executive at its meeting on 7 March 2022. A verbal update will be given to Overview and Scrutiny at the meeting on 15 March 2022.</p>
<p>2020-2022 Community Nature Plan Progress update</p> <p>(Considered 30 November 2021, Minute 33 refers)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan progress report and its approach to addressing the Council's statutory biodiversity be noted.	<p>This item was considered by Executive at its 10 January 2022 meeting.</p> <p>Executive resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That The 2020-2022 Community Nature Plan progress report and its approach to addressing the

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	<p>2. That the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan be recognised.</p> <p>3. That it be noted that the development of the 2022-2024 Community Nature Plan (CNP) will include an all-member seminar in 2022 involving planners, as requested by Overview & Scrutiny in December 2020, and it be noted that the implications of the Environment Act will be taken into account in this next iteration of the CNP.</p>	<p>Council's statutory biodiversity duty be noted.</p> <p>2. That the essential role of key partners in the delivery of the Community Nature Plan be recognised.</p> <p>3. That it be noted that the development of the 2022-2024 Community Nature Plan (CNP) will include an all-member seminar in 2022 involving planners, as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee December 2020 and the implications of the provisions of the Environment Act will be taken into account in this next iteration of the Community Nature Plan.</p>
<p>Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme (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

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<p>Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021 (Cherwell District Council)</p> <p>(Considered 7 September 2021, Minute 17 refers)</p>	<p>1. That the draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement be noted</p> <p>2. That the following comments be submitted to the Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For all future consultations, a mechanism for ensuring residents directly affected by a consultation are contacted and encouraged to respond b. A continuous effort is required to improve quality and standard of housing in the district 	<p>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>
		<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 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

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<p>Constitution Review 2021 (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 requested to liaise with Political Group Leaders to agree the practical steps and process for the review. 		<p>annual updates to the Tenancy Strategy appendices to ensure the data remains relevant.</p> <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>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. 	<p>Considered by Executive on 19 July 2021 Minute 37 refers.</p> <p>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 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the Regulation 18 consultation 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. 	<p>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> <p>The consultation document was also approved by the four other Local 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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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 could be used as 'get outs' by land owners/developers later in the plan process
7. Concerns around the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment documents and the accuracy of the figures
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.
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.

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<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 <p>In addition to the resolution the then Lead member for Housing Councillor John Donaldson confirmed that increasing social housing was a priority.</p>
<p>Draft Statement of Licensing Policy – considered on 12 January 2021, Minute 42 refers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy be supported <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
<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2020/21 – considered on 16 March 2021, Minute 52 refers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2020/21 be noted. 	<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>



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Members' Education and Training

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group Report

March 2022

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Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman)

Councillor Mike Bishop

Councillor Matt Hodgson

Councillor David Hughes

Councillor Perran Moon

Councillor Les Sibley

Councillor Doug Webb (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Sandy Dallimore

Councillor Simon Holland

Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillor Adam Nell

Councillor Bryn Williams

Membership of the Working Group

Councillor Patrick Clarke

Councillor Matt Hodgson

Councillor Dorothy Walker

Councillor Sandy Dallimore

Councillor Adam Nell

Executive Summary and Recommendations

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

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

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

The recommendations of the group are:

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

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

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

Councillor Sandy Dallimore, Chairman of Education and Training Working Group

Introduction

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

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

Objectives and context of the review

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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



Parish Engagement
Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report
March 2022

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1.0 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Parish Working Group

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

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

2.0 Acknowledgements

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

3.0 Executive Summary & Recommendation

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

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

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

4.0 Introduction

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

5.0 Objectives of the review

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

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

6.0 Context and Background Information

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

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

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

District – Responsible for services across the whole District including:

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

Parish – Responsible for local issues including:

- Allotments
- Public clocks
- Bus shelters
- Community centres

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

They also have the power to issue fixed penalty fines for

- Litter
- Graffiti
- Fly posting
- Dog offences

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

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

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

6.7 CDC Planning department consults with parish councils.

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