

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** Tuesday 14 July 2009  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

### Membership

Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman)	Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart (Vice-Chairman)	
Councillor Ann Bonner	Councillor Tony Ilott	Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Nick Cotter	Councillor P A O'Sullivan	Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor John Donaldson	Councillor Neil Prestidge	
Councillor Alastair Milne Home	Councillor Chris Smithson	

**Substitutes** Councillor Devena Rae, Councillor Simon Holland, Councillor Rose Stratford and Councillor John Wyse

## 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. Urgent Business**

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

**4. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 10)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2009.

**5. Sustainable Communities Strategy** (Pages 11 - 43)

Presentation by the Community and Corporate Planning Manager.

This is an opportunity for the Committee to learn more about the Council's development of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, in particular the current status of the project and the next steps, and to consider what contribution they wish to make.

**6. Work Programme 2009/10 - potential topics for scrutiny** (Pages 44 - 69)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

To consider potential items for inclusion on the 2009/10 work programme as subjects of detailed scrutiny review:

- Planning for an ageing population
- Youth Facility provision
- Preparations for the 2012 Olympics regarding the tourism potential for the district.

The Head of Recreation and Health and the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development will be present for this discussion.

**7. RAF Bicester** (Pages 70 - 78)

Report of the Strategic Director, Planning, Housing and Economy

To consider recent developments regarding the status and future of RAF Bicester and the implications for the policies of this Council.

The Portfolio Holder and officers from Planning & Affordable Housing Policy and Development Control & Major Developments will be present for this discussion.

**8. Work Programme 2009/10** (Pages 79 - 92)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

To identify any issues arising from the Forward Plan and to monitor progress on the following work programme items:

- Emergency Planning
- Concessionary Travel
- Rural Affordable Housing
- Residents Parking

## Information about this Agenda

### Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to [democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or 01295 221587 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. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in Part 5 Section A of the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

**Personal Interest:** Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

**Prejudicial Interest:** Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

### 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.

### Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Catherine Phythian, Legal and Democratic Services [catherine.phythian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.phythian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) (01295) 221583

**Mary Harpley**  
**Chief Executive**

Published on Monday 6 July 2009

# Agenda Item 4

## Cherwell District Council

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 9 June 2009 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman)

Councillor Ann Bonner  
Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor Alastair Milne Home  
Councillor P A O'Sullivan  
Councillor Chris Smithson  
Councillor Trevor Stevens  
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Rose Stratford  
Councillor Devena Rae

Also Present: Councillor Colin Clarke  
Councillor Nigel Morris  
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Neil Prestidge

Officers: Mary Harpley, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service  
Ian Davies, Strategic Director - Environment and Community  
Jameson Bridgwater, Head of Development Control & Major Developments  
Grahame Helm, Head of Safer Communities & Community Development  
Chris Rothwell, Head of Urban & Rural Services  
Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

#### 3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 4 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

#### 5 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 April 2009 and 20 May 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 6 **Appointment of Overview and Scrutiny Link Members**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services regarding the appointment of individual members to take the lead in specific areas of the Committee's work.

### **Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board**

The Committee noted that no one overview and scrutiny councillor was a member of both overview and scrutiny committees. They agreed to issue a standing invitation to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board to attend meetings of this committee as necessary.

### **Pre-decision Scrutiny Link Member**

The Committee felt that it was important that all overview and scrutiny members should be familiar with the contents of the Forward Plan and use that document to brief themselves on issues of potential interest to scrutiny.

The Committee agreed to appoint the Chairman or Vice-Chairman as the formal pre-decision scrutiny link member.

### **Task & Finish Group Link Members**

The Committee agreed to appoint Councillor Smithson as the link member to the Crime Perception and Anti-Social Behaviour Task & Finish Group and the Private Sector Housing Strategy Task & Finish Group. The Committee decided that there was no need to appoint a link member to the Concessionary Fares Task & Finish Group as the review was close to completion.

### **County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny**

The Committee agreed to issue a standing invitation to Councillor Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Council's representative on the County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to attend meetings of this Committee as necessary to give updates on key issues relating to health.

### **Review of Executive Liaison arrangements**

Councillor Wood briefed the Committee on the findings of the recent review of the Executive Liaison arrangements. He said that it was apparent that, for a variety of different reasons, the system of formal pairings of Executive and Overview & Scrutiny members had not worked and had not lead to a specific scrutiny review or recommendations.

The Committee agreed that positive, open communication between all members of the Executive and overview and scrutiny was essential. However, they felt that it was important to maintain the independence and integrity of the scrutiny function and that therefore it would be better to pursue informal dialogue rather than any formal feedback mechanism.

The Committee discussed whether there would be merit in inviting Portfolio Holders to attend overview and scrutiny meetings on a planned basis to hold a general briefing or "question and answer" session. On balance they agreed that this idea was worth pursuing and asked officers to work up proposals for discussion at the next meeting.

### **Resolved**

- 1) That the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board be invited to attend meetings of this Committee as necessary to give updates on key issues relating to the work of the Board;

- 2) That the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be appointed as the pre-decision scrutiny link member;
- 3) That Councillor Smithson be appointed as link member for the Crime Perception and Anti-Social Behaviour Task & Finish Group and the Private Sector Housing Strategy Task & Finish Group;
- 4) That Councillor Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Council's representative on the County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be invited to attend meetings of this Committee as necessary to give updates on key issues relating to health.
- 5) That the current formal Executive Liaison Member arrangements should be abandoned and that all members of overview and scrutiny should be encouraged to develop informal dialogue with the Executive on matters of interest to scrutiny.

## 7 Residents Parking

At the Committee's request Councillor Morris, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural and the Head of Urban and Rural Services were present at the meeting to brief members on the latest developments concerning the proposed residents parking schemes in Banbury.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the public consultation exercise had closed on 11 May and that the responses were with the consultants for detailed analysis. The overall response rate was 30% which was in line with the consultant's expectations. The consultation exercise had been directed only to those households and properties in the proposed residential parking zones. The Executive had previously agreed to proceed with some or all of the proposed schemes if more than 50% of the respondents to the consultation voted in favour of a scheme

The next phase of work would involve further analysis of the responses and detailed working up of the various options available for the provision of residents parking schemes in parts of Banbury.

In discussion the Committee raised a number of points and where appropriate the Portfolio Holder agreed to provide additional information outside the meeting.

The Committee asked for further details on when and where the parking problems occurred. They wondered whether the introduction of a residents parking scheme would result in empty streets by day. They were also concerned about the extent of any displacement parking and the knock on implications for streets outside the residents parking zones. They suggested that other initiatives such as short-term pay and display on street parking should be considered in parallel with the residents parking schemes.

The Committee suggested that the problems associated with commuter parking in the vicinity of the rail station should be addressed in other ways. They cited the positive experience at Bicester and the constructive dialogue with Chiltern Rail which had resulted in an extension to the station car park and the introduction of a commuter shuttle bus.

There were also concerns about the possible detrimental impact on the town's retail trade as a result of the recent increase in parking fees and the introduction of

residents parking schemes. They asked for further information on the level of take up in Council car parks since the increase in charges.

The Committee also pointed out that it was important that any income from residents parking schemes should be kept separate and was not used to subsidise the Civil Parking Enforcement arrangements; although they recognised that there would inevitably be some commonality of resources and activity.

Finally the Committee expressed concern that many residents would inherit by default a scheme that they could not afford and did not want, especially in areas with low incomes and a transient population.

In conclusion the Committee expressed serious reservations about the criteria set by the Executive on which to take the decision to proceed with residents parking. They did not think that it was truly representative to go ahead on the basis of a majority of the responses being in favour of residents parking. They felt that this would result in a significant number of residents inheriting the scheme by default and being unable to afford to park near their home.

The Committee was not convinced that a residents parking scheme would solve the fundamental parking problems in Banbury. They felt that further work should be undertaken to explore alternative options and to look at the extent to which any residents parking scheme could be tailored to meet the needs of specific communities.

The Committee were in agreement that until the Civil Parking Enforcement arrangements were in place it would be inappropriate to introduce any residents parking scheme in Banbury.

### **Resolved**

- 1) That the Executive should be informed of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's reservations regarding the approval criteria set for the residents parking scheme consultation ;and
- 2) That the Executive should be asked to defer any decision on the implementation of residents parking schemes in Banbury to coincide with the introduction of Criminal Parking Enforcement (CPE) arrangements and to allow officers time to explore alternative options and proposals to address the parking problems in parts of the town.

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### **Concessionary Travel**

Councillor Clarke, as Chairman of the Task & Finish Group, presented the draft report and recommendations on Concessionary Travel. He explained that the Task & Finish Group had held a number of meetings in the first half of 2009 and had consulted widely with other local authorities, the bus companies and local residents to gather the evidence and gauge views and opinions. The relevant Portfolio Holder and the Older People's Champion had also been closely involved in the work of the Task & Finish Group.

Councillor Clarke explained that in the course of the review the Task & Finish Group had looked at a range of issues as reflected in the eight recommendations. He briefed the Committee on the background to each of the recommendations. In particular he highlighted the Task & Finish Group's conclusion that it would not be appropriate for the Council to invest in smart card reader technology at this time due to reservations about the level of financial commitment and the technical capacity of

the systems to meet the Council's needs. Councillor Clarke assured the Committee that on the question of mis-ticketing there was absolutely no suggestion of any misconduct on the part of the bus operators and their drivers but it was important to recognise that human error at the point of ticket issue could result in a cost to the Council.

The Committee noted the report and the recommendations. In particular they felt that it was important that the Council should continue to support the Dial-A-Ride service and to explore options for additional alternative community transport schemes. They also confirmed their support for the promotion of a county-wide approach to concessionary travel and community transport.

Councillor Morris, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural told the Committee that he welcomed the work of the Task & Finish Group and that he would advise the Executive to accept the recommendations. He said that he had scheduled a meeting the following week to discuss the response to the Government consultation and he would welcome the involvement and contribution of members of the Task & Finish Group and the Committee to that meeting.

### **Resolved**

- 1) To note the draft report from the Task & Finish Group on Concessionary Travel;
- 2) That the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager be delegated, in consultation with the Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Clarke, as Chairman of the Task & Finish Group on Concessionary Travel, to approve a final version of the report subject to any comments or amendments received from members of the Task & Finish Group or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee;
- 3) To agree the recommendations set out in the report of the Task & Finish Group on Concessionary Travel and to refer the report and those recommendations (detailed below) to the Executive:

#### **Recommendation 1: Smart Card Reader Scheme**

That Cherwell District Council should not pursue the introduction of a Smart Card Reader scheme at this time due to the significant financial investment required and reservations about the current technical capacity of such schemes to meet the Council's needs. The government consultation on the future administration of concessionary travel schemes compounds the uncertainty.

#### **Recommendation 2: Mis-ticketing**

That the Portfolio Holder should publicise the importance of checking bus tickets and encourage bus pass holders to submit examples of mis-ticketing. The Portfolio Holder should follow-up examples of mis-ticketing with the bus companies; monitor the scale and value of the problem for the remainder of the financial year; and report on the results and proposed actions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the spring of 2010.

#### **Recommendation 3: Management Information**

That the Portfolio Holder should encourage the concessionary fare service providers to move to a monthly rather than quarterly claim and settlement cycle.

#### **Recommendation 4: National Travel Tokens**

That the current arrangements for the issue of national travel tokens should continue for 2009/10 and that the Portfolio Holder should monitor the take up and use of the national travel token scheme. The Council's continued participation in the national travel token scheme should be reviewed against the findings of the independent research into the provision of community transport schemes in the district (see recommendation 5).

**Recommendation 5: Community Transport**

That Cherwell District Council should continue to support and promote the provision of community transport schemes across the District. In support of this corporate priority the Portfolio Holder should commission research into the feasibility of introducing alternative community transport schemes in those parts of the district where residents do not benefit from the concessionary bus pass, national travel tokens or the Dial-A-Ride service.

**Recommendation 6: Consortium approach**

That the Portfolio Holder should open discussions with colleagues at the County Council and the District/City councils with a view to promoting a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of the national concessionary travel scheme, subject to the outcome of the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.

**Recommendation 7: Government Consultation**

That the Portfolio Holder should be invited to use the work of this Task & Finish Group and the conclusions and recommendations in this report to inform the Council's response to the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.

**Recommendation 8: Concessionary Travel Scheme**

That the start time for the concessionary travel scheme in Cherwell should not be reviewed again and should remain at 09.30 am, in line with the statutory scheme, until April 2011 when the new arrangements for the administration of the concessionary travel scheme will come into force.

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**Overview and scrutiny draft work programme 2009/10**

The Committee considered the report on the draft overview and scrutiny work programme 2009/10 and made a number of observations. The Committee acknowledged the need to take account of potential resource constraints and the guidance on excluded matters when determining the work programme. They agreed that it was important to ensure that any scrutiny review would deliver tangible results for the benefit of the residents of the district.

**Annual Work Programme Canvas**

The Committee were pleased to see that there had been an increase in the number of responses from Parish Councils, although many of the topics suggested related to specific service issues or were the responsibility of other authorities, and were therefore not suitable for scrutiny. They noted that officers would respond to all of the Parish Council enquiries explaining the outcome of the Committee's discussion on work programme scheduling.

The Committee also noted the detailed suggestions put forward by the local MP.

**Potential scrutiny topics**

After due consideration of all of the proposals the Committee agreed to take forward three possible topics for scrutiny:

- Preparations for an ageing population

- Youth Facility Provision
- Preparations for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential for the district.

They recognised that each of these topics were complex and wide-ranging and asked officers to prepare more detailed briefing and scoping documents for consideration at the next meeting.

They also suggested that the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board should consider adding a scrutiny review of the Registered Social Landlords' Management Partnership and related standards to their work programme.

#### **Monitoring of past scrutiny reviews**

The Committee said that they wished to adopt a stronger role in monitoring the outcomes of past scrutiny reviews and agreed that RAF Bicester Conservation Area should be included in the monitoring section of the work programme. The Chief Executive suggested that it would be appropriate to take an initial update on this at the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **Resolved**

- 1) That the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above, and as set out at Appendix 1 to these minutes;
- 2) To note the responses to the annual work programme canvas;
- 3) That the following topics should be added to the work programme for further research and scoping assessment and brought to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration:
  - Preparations for an ageing population
  - Youth Facility Provision
  - Preparations for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential for the district.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Chairman:

Date:

# Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10 – Appendix 1 to Minutes

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting				
			June	July	Sept	Oct	Later
<b>Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny</b>							
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Suggestion from Tony Baldry MP Assess scoping document as potential scrutiny topic		✓			
Youth Facility Provision	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Possible joint scrutiny with other Oxfordshire authorities. Assess scoping document as potential scrutiny topic		✓			
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential in the district	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Suggestion from staff. Assess scoping document as potential scrutiny topic		✓			
Registered Social Landlords' Management Partnership and related standards	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 23 June</b> Referral from Overview & Scrutiny Committee. To agree content of work programme.	✓				
<b>Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings</b>							
Sustainable Communities Strategy	OSC	<b>Agenda item for 14 July</b> Claire Taylor to present		✓			
Partnerships	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 23 June</b> To agree schedule for partnership scrutiny.	✓	→			
2010/2011 Budget	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 23 June</b> To agree approach/topic for budget scrutiny.	✓	→			

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	June	July	Sept	Oct	Later
<b>Task &amp; Finish Groups</b> – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings							
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Cllr Rose Stratford (Ch) Cllr Stevens (VC) Cllr Smithson Cllr Tompson	Cllr Rae Cllr Sibley					✓
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Billington Cllr Tompson Cllr Sibley	Cllr Ahmed Cllr Cullip Cllr Smithson			✓		
<b>Monitoring</b> – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations							
Concessionary Fares	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcome of discussion at Executive in July 2009		✓			
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcomes of Parish Liaison discussion in June 2009		✓			
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	<b>Review October 2009</b>				✓	
Bicester Vision Partnership	R&PSB	Review in July 2009 and early 2010		✓			✓
Emergency Planning	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To review progress		✓			
Fees and Charges	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 21 July meeting</b> Review of progress against recommendations and in advance of next budget round		✓			
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.					✓

Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Refurbished centres due to open summer 2009; new Spiceball due to open winter 2009. FSWG to review at July 2009 meeting.		✓			
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcome of discussion at Executive in July 2009		✓			
RAF Bicester	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note current position		✓			

## Executive

### Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

6 July 2009

### Report of Chief Executive and Community and Corporate Planning Manager

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree a consultation draft of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy.

This report is public
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#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Agree a draft of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy prior to three months of public consultation.
- (2) Agree that any amendments on the draft arising from Cherwell Community Planning Partnership on 10 July be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning prior to public consultation.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will be the top level guiding document for the Cherwell area. It will influence future policies and plans and it will be used to influence future funding including Local Area Agreements. It will be the key strategic document for Cherwell District Council and drive the content of the next Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan.
- 1.2 The current Cherwell Community Plan is becoming out of date, new requirements have been set by central government and the evidence base for the Plan needs to be refreshed. The Cherwell Community Plan will be replaced by the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.3 Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, Cherwell's Local Strategic Partnership, have drafted a Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy following a trawl of current research, detailed analysis of relevant policies, and, extensive engagement with the people, businesses and organisations within Cherwell.

- 1.4 Appendix 1 sets out the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community.

**Proposals**

- 1.5 Executive Members are asked to agree the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy for three months of public consultation.

**Conclusion**

- 1.6 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy is the key strategic document for Cherwell and Cherwell District Council. The Strategy is not owned by Cherwell District Council, it is owned by Cherwell Community Planning Partnership. The Council has a leadership role in developing the Strategy and will be responsible for the delivery of parts of it. It is therefore important to ensure that our policies don't conflict with it.

## **Background Information**

### **What is a sustainable community strategy?**

- 2.1 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will set an overall strategic direction and long-term (until 2030) vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area. The vision needs to be ambitious and stretching. This is **not** a Cherwell District Council document. It is owned by Cherwell Community Planning Partnership which brings together the public, private and community organisations within Cherwell, Cherwell District Council is a key member of the Partnership.
- 2.2 The strategy cannot, and should not, cover absolutely everything; it is really important that it **prioritises** the most important issues for the district. Cherwell Community Planning Partnership is keen that the new strategy has fewer priorities than the current Cherwell Community Plan and that these are much more specific and measurable.
- 2.3 It is critical that the strategy is based on clear evidence and analysis. Considerable effort has been put into gathering information and analysis already but the public consultation is also a key part of this.
- 2.4 The new strategy will work alongside the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will play an important part in delivering the spatial aspects of the strategy.
- 2.5 The strategy will be the key strategic document for the Cherwell area. It will significantly influence our future strategies and plans and determine the new Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan.

### **What do we mean by 'sustainable communities'?**

- 2.6 Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children, those who do business here, and other users. They contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.

### **What has been done so far?**

- 2.7 The strategy has been drafted taking into account an evidence base, relevant policy and local knowledge.
- 2.8 The evidence base has included; data used for recent policies, Parish Plans, recent surveys and statistical information.
- 2.9 Relevant local, regional and national policy has been explored including Oxfordshire 2030, the sustainable community strategy for the whole of Oxfordshire.
- 2.10 Local knowledge has been gained by talking to people. Much of this has happened one to one, but also special meetings and conferences have been held. These include two workshops with Cherwell District Council Councillors, one workshop with Cherwell District Council managers, workshops with Cherwell Community Planning Partnership, a rural focused

visioning event and a 'stakeholder' event. To date, local knowledge has been gained from numerous organisations and groups including; families, young people, older people, community groups, voluntary groups, carers, employers, employees, colleges, head teachers, public services, ethnic groups, faith representatives, rural representatives, and local Councillors.

### **Public consultation**

- 2.11 Following Cherwell Community Planning Partnership on 10 July the draft will go out for public consultation for three months. The document and associated questionnaire will be available online and hard copies will be sent to those that request it.
- 2.12 During the consultation period a number of special meetings will be organised including a special meeting of the Voluntary Organisations' Forum.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 Does the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community adequately reflect the priorities for the Cherwell area?
- 3.2 Is the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy consistent with Cherwell District Council policies? Are there any conflicts?

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Option One</b>   | To agree the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy for public consultation as set out in Appendix 1.                           |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | To make amendments to the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy set out in Appendix 1.   |
| <b>Option Three</b> | To delegate a decision on the draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy to the Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning. |

### **Consultations**

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Numerous individuals and organisations have been involved in the development of the consultation draft, see paragraph 2.10 above.

### **Implications**

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(Financial, Legal and Risk and other implications e.g. Equalities, Human Resources, Data Quality and Environmental where relevant)

- Financial:** The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy itself has no financial effects. However, it should be noted that it will be used as the evidence base and set priorities for future Local Area Agreements. If it does not reflect Cherwell's priorities there is a real danger that they will not be included in future Local Area Agreements and

consequently will not get funding. It is important to note that the sums involved could amount to millions of pounds.

The costs of public consultation and publication can be met from existing budgets.

Comments checked by Sarah Best, Senior Accountancy Assistant, 01295 221736.

**Legal:**

Cherwell District Council takes a leadership role in the development of the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy. This means that our policies should not be in conflict with it or inconsistent with it. If they were this could be grounds for a successful challenge.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer 01295 221686.

**Risk Management:**

The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy could commit the Council to delivering actions that either it may not agree to or it does not consider a priority.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566.

**Comprehensive Area Assessment**

Under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment Cherwell District Council's contribution to priorities set within the Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy will be formally assessed.

Comments checked by Mike Carroll, Head of Improvement 01295 227959.

**Wards Affected**

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All

**Corporate Plan Themes**

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All

**Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Wood, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning**

**Document Information**

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
<b>Report Author</b>	Helen Couperthwaite, Community and Corporate Planning Officer
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221751 Helen.couperthwaite@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

## Cherwell - Our District; Our Future

# DRAFT VERSION 7

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### **A vision for Cherwell in 2030**

**“A diverse economy with opportunities for all, vibrant communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose”.**

Welcome to the Cherwell sustainable community strategy. This document presents a long term vision for the district, our shared hopes and aspirations and the challenges we face. The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership has developed this strategy based on extensive consultation and engagement and in it we set out the steps we will take to make sure this vision takes shape in our district.

The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership is made up of representatives from across the public, private and voluntary sectors and we work closely together, getting the most out of our collective experience, resources, knowledge and enthusiasm to ensure we meet the high expectations of the people who live and work here. We intend to ensure a bright future for the next generation.

#### **Cherwell in 2030**

We believe that by 2030, Cherwell will be a district more prosperous than it is today. Those who live and work here will be happier, healthier and feel safer with high aspirations and expectations. People will feel they belong here and diversity will be celebrated. Everyone will share in a better quality of life.

In Cherwell older people will lead independent and healthy lives for longer with access to excellent services. Young people will have high personal aspirations, satisfied by a wide variety of local opportunities to achieve appropriate skills, qualifications and jobs.

The quality of our natural and built environment will be cherished and our resources protected. We will embrace environmental technologies and adapt our behaviour to meet the global challenge of climate change.

Our economy will be vibrant and diverse; local people will be skilled and able to access good jobs. Our economy will have grown to provide employment for our increasing population and reduce the need for our residents to travel outside the district for work.

We will have maintained the vitality of our urban centres as economic and social hubs, offering a vibrant evening economy, as well as improved leisure and shopping. Our villages will be “lived in” as well as “slept in”, helping to sustain a rural way of life with an economic base that is not be reliant entirely on agriculture.

By 2030 we will have welcomed more houses, paying particular attention to both the quality and the affordability of those badly needed additional homes. Careful investment in our infrastructure will increase the capacity of our communities and address current deficiencies in provision. In particular, we will focus on reducing road congestion and improving public transport.

The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership and people across the district will work together towards achieving this vision of the future and, as we do, we will celebrate our achievements and successes along the way.

#### **The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is a sustainable community and what is this strategy for?

Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of us all, current and future residents, their children and those who do business here. They contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choices for everyone. They make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity.

The purpose of this document is to set out our overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Cherwell district until 2030, in a way that tells the 'story of the place' – a distinctive vision for the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis. All other strategies, and the plans of organisations across Cherwell delivering them, will reflect the long term aspirations contained here.

Because this strategy was developed in the turbulent economic times of 2009, we have adopted a **5 year focus** for our objectives under each pledge and a **local focus** where specific places have specific issues. These objectives are not intended to last us until 2030. Circumstances will change and progress will be made and it is vital the aims we have identified during the summer of 2009 are regularly refreshed and revisited to make sure they still work for us. This strategy has an associated implementation plan and links into the Local Area Agreement for Oxfordshire. Both will be used to drive delivery and assess our progress towards our ultimate goals.

## 1.2 The role of the Local Strategic Partnership

The Local Strategic Partnership is made up of representatives from Cherwell's public, voluntary and private sectors. The partnership is responsible for developing the community strategy for the district and ensuring the objectives, priorities and actions it contains are delivered.

## 1.3 How did we develop this strategy?

We have worked hard to speak to as many people as possible, councillors, community and voluntary groups, faith leaders, local business representatives, head teachers, and many others to develop the vision, pledges and objectives within this strategy.

We have asked about people's aspirations and ambitions for the area and their views on what we can all do to bring them about.

We have looked at the statistical evidence available both for current issues and what challenges we face in the future. We have thought about how we fit with our

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neighbouring counties and districts and considered regional strategies, the Oxfordshire vision and strategy for 2030 and our own Local Development Framework.

This plan reflects what we have heard through our consultation and builds upon the successes of our current strategy, the Cherwell Community Plan 2006 -2011. It's a shared vision and it's up to all of us to work together to make it a reality.

### **1.4 Our pledge to you**

The purpose of this document is to focus on where we face challenges. But we must always remember that Cherwell is a great place to live and work; a thriving area of diverse population and beautiful countryside. We intend, through the use of this strategy, to make sure it stays that way. We will bring about the change and development that we need by working together across four closely linked themes.

#### **A Diverse Economy – the economic pledge**

By 2030 we will have a diverse industry base and appropriately skilled workforce that can adapt to climate change supported by a well planned and effective infrastructure of housing, transport, leisure and services. We will have experienced significant growth in housing development and have linked this to supporting the population to gain the skills and flexibility to access local jobs and attract new businesses into the area which, in turn, encourages our younger population to stay or return here. Our farming and rural areas will have seen a revitalisation following a resurgence in localism, support for local products and businesses and appropriate evolution of its villages.

#### **Opportunities for All – the community pledge**

By 2030 we will have thriving communities where everyone, regardless of their personal circumstances, feels safe in their homes and welcome in their neighbourhoods. A society where older people are able to live independently and where younger generations have the skills and opportunities to build their future. Our communities will value the contribution made by a wide spectrum of voluntary organisations and volunteers and the shared values of our faith groups. Disadvantaged families and residents will be supported to help themselves benefit from the new housing, educational and economic opportunities available to them. A consistently innovative and varied range of cultural events will build a sense of place and a unique identity for the district.

#### **Connected and Protected – the infrastructure and environment pledge**

By 2030 we will understand and adapt to environmental challenges as they arise and ensure that all infrastructure and other developments prioritise the protection our environment and biodiversity. We will protect our rich natural and built environment and heritage, using our resources wisely and helping people to live sustainable lifestyles. Our transport and housing will be appropriate to our needs and will be adaptable to the changes in our communities. Cherwell will be at the forefront of exploring alternative technologies and recycling, utilising its connections to innovative industry to do so, and making real progress towards being a carbon neutral district.

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## How will we do it? - the leadership pledge

By 2030 Cherwell will be characterised by our responsiveness to our changing population. Our partnerships will take a key role in delivering services, fostering community cohesion and managing our resources, directing them to where there is most need. We will champion our identity within regional structures, and our relationships with neighbouring areas. Our public services will be open and accountable with clear lines of communication between the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will have exemplary consultation and communications processes. We'll generate and share accurate, relevant and intelligent information, and enable a vibrant, engaged and inclusive Cherwell that relishes dialogue and debate and listens to everyone's different opinions and experiences.

## TO BE COMPLETED AFTER JULY CCPP LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

### 1.5 What is in this strategy?

This document contains the key elements that combine to reflect the district and make up the strategy. The content is based upon statistical evidence, regional and county wide strategies already in place and the opinions and views of residents. There is much to do and the priorities identified here will go into an implementation plan to be worked on by the Partnership in the short, medium and long term.

Seeing into the future is always challenging, but, what we can do is to take the best evidence we currently have, listen carefully to the sort of place and lives that our residents want, and tailor our aspirations accordingly. This process has helped us understand what we wish to protect about our area now, what we want to change and what new ideas we want to embrace in so we can hand on a thriving district to future generations.

**The vision** explains what we all want to see for the future of Cherwell based on what we have heard through our consultation and the key challenges that we face. A district is not simply a collection of geographic features, individuals and series of issues and agendas: a district is a place with an identity and culture of its own.

**Cherwell today** explains the context in which we live and work and describes the features and character of the district.

**Future challenges** covers what we think are the most important, cross-cutting, themes that run throughout the rest of the document and the issues that we feel are important to bear in mind as we tackle our objectives.

**The four pledges: economic, community, environment and leadership.** Each pledge has its own section which reflects our opportunities and challenges and contains a description of our objectives and priorities. Further analysis of the challenges can be found in the **Digging a Bit Deeper** analysis document accompanying this strategy.

## 2 Cherwell today

### Our location

Cherwell district covers an area of 590 square kilometres (228 square miles) in north Oxfordshire. Named after the River Cherwell which flows through it, the district is located between London and Birmingham, at the most northern point of the South East region, where it meets the West Midlands and East Midlands. The M40 passes through Cherwell and there are good rail connections to London and Birmingham.

137,600 people live in Cherwell. Over 60% of the population live in the principal centres of Banbury (approx 43,000), Bicester (approx 30,500) and Kidlington (approx 13,000); the rest in more than 70 smaller settlements of between 50 and 3500 people. 85% of the district is attractive farmland and 14% lies within the Oxford Green Belt, contributing to making Cherwell the 12th least densely populated district in the South East. But the district also has a rich built heritage, with approximately 3,000 listed buildings (8.6% of the South East's total) and 54 conservation areas.

### Our changing population

Between 1991 and 2001 Cherwell's population increased by almost 12% and has by a further 4.5% since. Growth predictions of a further 8% by 2016 and a cumulative 15.6% by 2026 are significantly higher than regional and national rates. Most of the recent growth has been in Banbury and Bicester and this will continue. Bicester's population is projected to grow by 13.8% between 2001 and 2016. Our challenge is to ensure that the levels of housing growth required across the district can be accommodated, while protecting and enhancing the character of our urban centres, villages and landscapes.

Our population is changing. The 2001 Census showed that 3.9% of the district's population was of non-white ethnic origin. These low numbers were generally widely dispersed, apart from higher concentrations in some Banbury Wards (such as Banbury Grimsbury where 10.9% was of black or minority ethnic origin). 2006 estimates indicate that the non-white population has grown to 5.9% overall. In 2001 7.5% of the population considered themselves to belong to a group other than white British. By 2006 this had grown to 10.7%. Our research and experience demonstrates that this growth has come and continues to come from migrant workers from Polish and other Eastern European communities.

Cherwell now has the highest proportion of 0-15 year olds in Oxfordshire and there is strong demand from parents and their children for affordable activities for young people. By 2031 the population is forecast to age dramatically, with numbers in each of the over 65s, over 75s, and over 85s bands increasing by at least 23 percentage points above national rates, and by more than 47 percentage points for over 85s. We have to continue anticipating the future services required by our older population, building on our strong track record of ensuring the needs of older residents are met.

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### **Economy, skills and aspirations**

In 1995 manufacturing jobs accounted for 28.9% of employment in the district. By 2006 they accounted for 14.1% with this shift matched by a growth in the service and tourism sectors, particularly in distribution, hotels and restaurants, and transport and communications. Our historically high employment rates have been maintained through this change, although the employment mix means that earnings from Cherwell workplaces are 3.9% below the national average.

Residents' earnings, however, are just above the national average. Bicester, for example, has a particularly high proportion of residents employed in higher level positions. 65% of Bicester's residents leave the town to work. We must continue the push to attract more high-tech, knowledge-based industries in order to provide more local, attractive employment opportunities to these residents. At the same time we need to raise aspirations and the demand for skills in Banbury where there is an above average concentration of people employed in low-skilled and lower paid occupations. But if new opportunities are to be accessible to our own young people, the performance of school pupils at GCSE needs to be brought at least in line with county and national averages.

Our rural areas have a relatively low business density compared with the regional rural average, although levels of home-based working are higher in Cherwell than in the rest of Oxfordshire and in the South East. Although farming employment has declined almost 90% since 1990, farming retains its vital role in maintaining the environment and defining our district.

### **Community challenges**

Cherwell is ranked as the 276th least deprived of 354 Local Authority areas by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. However, this masks a number of issues of deprivation and disadvantage. Two parts of Banbury Ruscote ward are in the 20% most deprived areas nationally and Cherwell has six of the 12 most deprived areas in Oxfordshire. In terms of education, skills and training, crime and living environment, 15 areas in Banbury and Bicester are in the 20% most deprived nationally and 15 areas across 11 rural wards feature in the 10% most deprived for barriers to housing and services. We have to focus on addressing the needs of the disadvantaged whether, for example, the rurally isolated, older people and those with disabilities, people from black or minority ethnic communities or those in particular localities.

In 2004 Cherwell had an annual shortfall of 686 affordable homes, the highest in Oxfordshire, outside Oxford. While this has been reduced to 529, increasing the numbers of affordable homes remains one of the population's and District Council's top priorities. The 2007 median house price to income ratio is 8.9, up from 7.7 in 2005, above both South East and English averages, only reinforcing the focus needed on this.

Cherwell is a safe place to live. Overall crime levels dropped by 13.2% between 2003/04 and 2007/08 (a real reduction of 794 reported crimes), compared with a 10.9% reduction across Thames Valley. Most of the crime recorded in Cherwell is committed in the urban areas. But residents are concerned about the visibility of police officers and response rates in our rural areas and a view that these are contributing to lower reporting levels and therefore lower resources. In 2006 residents across the district felt less safe than those in any other Oxfordshire district in terms of being alone and walking alone during the day or at night. And anti-social behaviour is a key concern of residents. Addressing residents' perception of crime and delivering lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour are priorities.

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Cherwell compares well with the rest of the country on most health indicators and the health of children and young people overall is better than the national average. But there are health inequalities by location, gender and ethnicity. For example, Cherwell has a high and rising rate of teenage conception with four out of six Banbury Wards in the highest 20% in England in 2005. We must work to eliminate these inequalities, delivering affordable recreational opportunities to help residents of all ages stay healthy, and securing the long-term future of Banbury's Horton District General Hospital and, with it, accessible healthcare services for people everywhere in the district.

### **Environment and infrastructure**

Cherwell residents travel further to work than people in the rest of the South East and nationally. Car ownership overall is high and residents in our rural areas are particularly dependent on their cars. Our dependence on our cars has produced a number of congestion hotspots in the district, not least at junction 9 of the M40, on the A34, in the centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington at times and in the villages with schools. Significant planned improvements to the railway infrastructure will better connect Bicester to Oxford and London and re-instate Kidlington's long-lost rail connections to Oxford. Such improvements will bring enormous benefits but will need to be complemented by much work to change attitudes to public transport and our willingness to walk more and cycle more.

High levels of out-commuting contribute of course to environmental issues and these are another reason for trying to influence the employment and skills mix in the district. Per capita carbon dioxide emissions in Cherwell in 2004 were significantly higher than regional and national levels, although domestic emissions were the lowest in Oxfordshire. Cherwell's residents are committed to recycling with excellent rates

Currently, people identify with the urban or rural settlements where they live in but not strongly with Cherwell as a district. Some residents have strong relationships with other areas outside our area, for example those who commute to other towns for work, shopping or to access services such as health services in Oxford. Banbury in particular considers itself to be independent of the other parts of Cherwell, Kidlington is keen to retain its village identity with its population of 13,000 and, in common with Bicester, wants to improve its image and demonstrate less reliance on Oxford.

### **Cherwell into the future**

This overview provides a sense of Cherwell as a place and sets the scene for the future challenges we are facing and the steps we need to take to retain our many strengths and make the best of the opportunities we have.

### **3. Future Challenges**

In Cherwell we have good homes, work, enjoy beautiful countryside and have a sense of pride and satisfaction with where we live. Nonetheless, we face some challenges through global warming; a changing and growing population with a higher proportion of older people, fewer young people and significant development of housing and new communities needing to be welcomed. In the coming years there will be political and policy changes along the way, we'll need to develop and deliver new services and there can never be enough resources to do everything we want.

We don't know exactly what will happen economically, socially or environmentally and the challenges will change over time, but this strategy equips us to cope whatever happens. The themes in this section indicate where we need to focus our attention and plan for what is to come.

#### **3.1 Adapting to Climate Change**

In the South East of England by the 2050s the average summer temperature could be around 3C warmer, rainfall could decrease by 40% and winter rainfall could increase by 20%. We face dramatic changes as we enter an era when fossil fuels are more expensive and less available. It is our responsibility to take a robust approach and adapt to these climate and environmental changes as they occur. We must plan effectively now so we can meet the challenge. We all as individuals, businesses or organisations need to find new ways to lead sustainable lifestyles reducing our carbon emissions, energy and water use.

Traffic volumes and limited public transport across the area are two of the biggest challenges and we have considerable commuting within and to and from the district and heavy traffic at 'hotspots'. There is significant housing growth planned for our area and this has implications for managing flood risks, making sure our buildings are as carbon-neutral as possible and providing an effective and responsive infrastructure. Protecting the countryside and our biodiversity is vital for impact on climate change and also a key priority.

#### **3.2 Building strong communities and reducing inequality**

Cherwell is a prosperous area with a history of high employment and high standards of living, but is also being affected by the 2009 economic downturn leading to some vacancies in high streets and an increase in unemployment.

Despite its prosperity, Banbury has areas within two wards that fall into the category of high deprivation, resulting in some cases in poor academic achievement, low skills and a higher rate of teenage pregnancy in Banbury than elsewhere. There are also some pockets of deprivation elsewhere and we need to find ways to identify and address hidden inequality. Hardship is especially difficult to identify in rural areas, where our traditional sources of evidence fail to provide us with detailed information to identify those who are in need of extra support and assistance.

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The challenge for Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy is to tackle existing and emerging inequalities of opportunity, especially health inequalities, and to build cohesive communities with a strong sense of belonging.

### 3.3 Adapting to an aging population

Like many other areas of the country, our older population is predicted to double between 2009 and 2031. It is vital that we develop flexible and accessible services that meet our future needs and support independent living for as long as necessary.

There is a need for adequate care services, both for people still living independently who want to lead active lives and for those for whom independent living is no longer possible. This is magnified in rural areas where access to services, particularly health care, and other activities is limited. Housing is also problematic for some older people who can no longer maintain their homes and need to live in smaller one-level housing with facilities for outside space a room to accommodate visiting families. There is shortage of small properties available, an issue which affects younger and older people alike and around Bicester there is also a specific issue around people retiring from the MOD and needing to resettle.

Our challenge is to address isolation and fear of crime, ensure that accommodation is appropriate to need, that a range of activities engage older people in the community and that they are well cared for in a range of settings. This older population offers Cherwell a great opportunity to fully harness the skills, knowledge and experience that is gained through maturity and many older people provide vital community activities through volunteering that would simply not exist without them. Their skills, time and experience are valuable and important. As one participant in a workshop said:

*"I'm old now but you will become old, its your future we're discussing, not mine".*

### 3.4 Empowering the next generation

Our younger people are our future, moving towards being active, engaged citizens and playing a full role in shaping and maintaining our communities. It is vital that we keep them safe, encourage them to take their place in democratic processes, they have a chance to express their opinions and help us to understand contemporary life now and in the future. They are a great resource and we are determined to offer them the best chances they can have to build fulfilling and rewarding lives.

There is concern that some young people in Cherwell seem to lack aspiration beyond basic jobs or their immediate neighbourhoods. One cause of this may be the level of academic success young people are achieving, but it also about facilities and spaces for young people, parenting influences and not having enough awareness of what is on offer. Overall there is a strong desire to improve their achievements and prospects so that they too have the opportunity to secure employment and take part in the prosperous economy around them. We are aware that not all young people are being equipped with the skills they need to get work and have a career. A common refrain from young people is about a lack of facilities and activities. Some young people are affected by rural inaccessibility and are unable to use facilities which are usually held in the three urban areas. There are sometimes very simple solutions on offer. As one young person said:

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*“there are only two activities in my village during the week and they are on the same night so I can’t do both!”*

Addressing the issues associated with young people requires a real commitment to include and listen to them. We need to engage young people in their communities, support everyone to gain skills, raise aspirations and ensure this has a positive impact on the quality of life for everyone.

### 3.5 Diverse communities

Diverse communities add to cultural vibrancy and a mix of approaches leads to a better understanding of different ways of life. Our projected growth over the coming years means existing communities evolving and some altogether new ones emerging. We will continue to welcome those who choose to make Cherwell their home, including them in our towns, villages and way of life and embrace the contribution they make to our district and identity.

Banbury has a significant Kashmiri and Polish community, the Kashmiri community is established as it has been settling here since the 1950s and plays an active role in many community activities. The Polish and Eastern European community, which has settled more recently, is not faring so well. Some people from these communities are living in overcrowded accommodation, do not have legal status here and are existing on low wages. More importantly perhaps they are not really engaging with existing communities and there is some evidence of racism in schools against these communities.

Another significant group is MOD service personnel and their families. The mobile nature of employment in this community means that it is more difficult for families to assimilate and become accepted in schools and communities.

As Cherwell continues to build exemplary inclusive communities it is vital that in celebrating and supporting our diversity we are led by the needs of our residents covering all seven strands of equalities: age, disability, faith, gender, race, sexual orientation and transgender. Effective consultation and engagement is an essential part of making sure that fair and accessible services for everyone are developed.

### 3.6 Managing growth

These are exciting times for our district, one of growth and expansion, welcoming new development as an indicator of our success and as the foundation for our future prosperity and dynamism. New housing development will enable us to build more successful and thriving towns and bring ideas and resources into our villages which need new families and employees, new entrepreneurs and volunteers to continue to evolve over time. This raises significant challenges to our communities in accompanying this growth with a matching rate of investment in infrastructure and community services, growing our economy to provide jobs, ensuring our centres are equipped to service this increased community and encouraging residents to identify with their neighbourhoods and take part in community life.

*“We need infrastructure **before** expansion for it all to make sense”* consultee

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It is our job to be sure that we take a strategic and holistic view of where and how we introduce this expansion. The Local Development Framework sets the direction and it is vital to keep a clear eye on how our district works, building on existing resources and introducing new ones where needed. This represents a great opportunity to plan our built environment in order to make significant contributions to all our key challenges, many of which are affected by the way our infrastructure and housing works.

### **3.7 Tight resources and creating prosperity**

Managing resources is a key challenge for us and we will make sure that we utilise what is available across the partnership to maximum effect. The money available to support change and meet challenges is going to be affected by the economic downturn; the public sector may have rather less to spend. Many of the plans that were in development already may be delayed. We are realistic about the fact that we will not have the resources to do everything immediately.

We have some gaps in facilities, and we must now look at how we can address this in a climate of scarce public and private sector investment; ensuring the growth in housing is accompanied by investment from both the private sector through planning contributions and the public sector in their investment programmes. The prosperity of the district is not the sole responsibility of our public sector and our overall wealth and development will be immensely affected by our local economy and the wealth this generates within communities. This is why our economy is a key theme in this strategy, helping to bring about the prosperity and wealth we need locally to help fund our plans and ambitions.

Tough decisions will need to be made between sometimes conflicting priorities. It is our responsibility to balance these tensions and a key principle here is to ensure that resources follow need, balancing the focus on deprived areas and the need for services across the district. We need our community to be fully engaged and involved in decision making, and for expenditure to be based on agreed priorities and their impact on the area. More than ever we will need to harness the abilities of our public, private and voluntary sectors to improve our capacity to deliver what is needed. This may mean some significant work to increase capacity where needed so that collectively we can meet the challenges.

### **3.8 Strengthening local participation**

We actively support the role of Councillors at all levels as champions and representatives of their local community.

An often overlooked feature of a strong community is the contribution made by volunteers in delivering services, caring for neighbours or running clubs and activities. Volunteering makes a significant contribution to wellbeing in our district and is rewarding for the volunteers as well as for those they help.

Our challenge is to work with Councillors as community leaders, to engage people from all communities, to support volunteers and to ensure that people from across the district can have a voice in political change.

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<sup>8</sup> ABI, 2007

## 4. A diverse economy – the economic pledge

**By 2030 we will have a diverse industry base and appropriately skilled workforce that can adapt to climate change supported by a well planned and effective infrastructure of housing, transport, leisure and services. We will have experienced significant growth in housing development and have linked this to supporting the population to gain the skills and flexibility to access local jobs and attract new businesses into the area which, in turn, encourages our younger population to stay or return here. Our farming and rural areas will have seen a revitalisation following a resurgence in localism, support for local products and businesses and appropriate evolution of villages.**

The economic pledge considers the jobs we have now and the jobs we would like to have in the future, the skills of our workforce and the wealth of enterprise and innovation on our doorstep. A vibrant and diverse economy is the bedrock on which we can build a sustainable future. Cherwell has long been a prosperous district with very low unemployment, a wide variety of successful businesses and thriving towns and villages. However, as this strategy has been developed, the national and global economy has seen its worst downturn for 50 years and this has forced us all to evaluate how comfortable we are and how potentially vulnerable we might become.

*“The ‘credit crunch’ has forced us all to take a long look at what we want for our district’s economy and has given us a chance to pause and plan now for the future.” Consultee*

We recognise that much of our economic stability and growth comes from small and medium sized businesses and it is these entrepreneurial companies which provide most employment and growth. These businesses and our rural enterprises need support as well as those which are at the cutting edge of innovation and technology or the larger employers who provide great opportunities locally. Retail is an important business sector, especially our town centres and Bicester Village, a creator of local jobs and a significant tourist draw.

Everyone in our community has the right to earn a good living and have an interesting job that they enjoy, enabling them to provide for themselves and their families and to reap the benefits that a stable income can provide.

There is a well-documented trend towards locally produced food, goods and services and the protection of our environment, which represents an opportunity to shape our own district. We are lucky to have some excellent food producers and rural enterprises perfectly positioned to take advantage of the growing demand and others ready to take up the environmental challenges. Our rural enterprises have already diversified into a wide range of industries and tourism is a strong contributor to our local economy.

Finally, as the key challenges section of this strategy has outlined, we are facing an aging population and a rapidly growing one. We need to be secure in the knowledge that there are opportunities to utilise the skills and experience of our older residents and that we are providing great chances for the younger ones.

Together, we will work towards an innovative and resilient economy that offers a variety of opportunities, celebrates the success of our enterprises, supports our workforce and enables Cherwell residents to thrive in our towns, villages and countryside.

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### Did you know?

- There are 68,000 jobs (80% in service industries) in 5,800 VAT registered businesses in Cherwell with a healthy surplus of new VAT registrations, an illustration of an entrepreneurial culture.
- The district has a higher than average proportion of jobs in manufacturing, with 12.3% falling into this sector, compared to 8.5 % across the south east region<sup>8</sup>. Businesses in Cherwell are generally small with only 16% having 10 or more employees<sup>9</sup>.
- Farming employment in Oxfordshire has declined by almost 20% since 1990.
- Tourism related expenditure translated to over £294m<sup>10</sup> worth of income for local businesses. It is estimated that tourism activity in the district supports 5,728 jobs in Cherwell.
- There is 3.9 % unemployment but JSA claimant levels only total 1400. In December 2008, there were 1400 claimants of job seekers allowance across the district<sup>11</sup>.
- The ratio of jobs to working age population is higher than both the regional and national comparators<sup>12</sup> but there are 6800 economically inactive people wanting a job (45% higher than UK average)
- Cherwell has a skills profile similar to UK average (50% NVQ Level 3 +) but well below the Oxfordshire averages<sup>13</sup> and wage rates are lower than figures for the region or nationally.
- 8% of 16 – 19 year olds are not in education or employment<sup>14</sup>

### 4.1 Our economic objectives

#### We will:

1. Raise expectations and ambitions and provide a range of economic opportunities for everyone including lifelong learning and retraining. We will foster and develop alternative ways of accessing employment such as apprenticeships, volunteering or work-based training.
2. Manage our infrastructure development, matching housing growth with local jobs, transport to work, facilities and services. We will plan effectively for our future workforce and employment patterns, focusing on what we need to achieve in raising our skills and attracting the right businesses into the area.
3. Promote and support business diversification and a sustainable economy in both urban and rural environments. Protect and grow local services and businesses, while supporting town centres to be attractive economic hubs for the district.

<sup>9</sup> Broadly in line with the UK as a whole. ABI,2007

<sup>10</sup> Tourism Impact Report 2007

<sup>11</sup> JSA, 2008

<sup>12</sup> ONS jobs density, 2006

<sup>13</sup> ONS, 2001

<sup>14</sup> 2001 Census

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### 4.2 5 year focus

In this section we will outline our priorities and steps we will take to meet our economic objectives in the coming five years. The list below reflects the ideas and suggestions we have developed from our consultation to date. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

#### **Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review**

- Tackle the causes of under achievement which include poor housing, lack of access to transport, social and economic culture, education and training.
- Improve access to skills, training and employment opportunities skills (link to national performance indicator 163 Working age population qualified to at least level 3 or higher)
- Enable a good supply of housing and a wide range of affordable housing opportunities to ensure that housing provision is able to support the development of the local economy and people's ambitions and needs (link to national performance indicator 154 Net additional homes provided)
- Create strong links between the private, public and voluntary sector with clear roles and contributions to the economic, aspiration and skills agenda.
- Promote environmentally sensitive and innovative enterprise, supporting new initiatives that may help to adapt to changes in the climate.
- Attract and retain the right sort of industries, a balance between high and lower technology industries, understanding that not everyone wants to achieve in only academic terms and that not all businesses are high-tech.
- Develop a North Oxfordshire focused inward investment strategy using the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy to promote the area to investors.
- Fully exploit any opportunities that come from the proximity to Oxford and spin-off academic industries.

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## 4.3 Local Focus - Economy

We recognise that different areas across the district will have their own priorities and we will identify specific actions to address them. The list below outlines the feedback we have received from our initial consultation. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

### Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review

#### Banbury

- Improve the percentage of Banbury residents with skills and qualifications (in specific areas/locations)
- Develop skills and qualifications to reflect the needs of local businesses
- Fully utilise the College resources and encourage engagement with the population and businesses.
- Support and develop the town centre to maintain thriving shops and cultural activities in a pleasant and safe environment

#### Bicester

- Reduce the number of residents commuting out of the area for work by increasing the number and variety of jobs available locally
- Build upon the accessibility of Bicester, its skilled workforce and location within the O2C Arc to attract new businesses
- Implement the town centre development and improved rail connections
- Tackle the congestion issues and improve the availability of business premises

#### Kidlington

- Encourage stronger links between all industrial areas, the airport and local residents and the village centre
- Support the development of the civic and shopping areas of the village
- Position Kidlington as a unique place in the O2C Arc on account of the airport and its proximity to Oxford
- Explore the full commercial and recreational potential of the Canal and Airport

#### Rural Areas

- Support local shops and businesses to serve their rural communities and create jobs
- Encourage diversification of farms and other rural businesses to enable the creation of local employment and reduce commuting
- Explore opportunities to pool resources and community facilities to provide new commercial opportunities
- Ensure that broadband provision is maintained and improved to support increased home working

## 5. Opportunities for All – the community pledge

**By 2030 we will have thriving communities where everyone, regardless of their personal circumstances, feels safe in their homes and welcome in their neighbourhoods. A society where older people are able to live independently and where younger generations have the skills and opportunities to build their future. Our communities will value the contribution made by a wide spectrum of voluntary organisations and volunteers and the shared values of our faith groups. Disadvantaged families and residents will be supported to help themselves benefit from the new housing, educational and economic opportunities available to them. A consistently innovative and varied range of cultural events will build a sense of place and a unique identity for the district.**

Cherwell does not hit national headlines for poor education, housing, or significant socio-economic problems. The communities within Cherwell are generally harmonious, healthy and have a sense of coherence. People like where they live, have a strong allegiance to their town or village and strong feelings about what does and doesn't work. Communities are often very local, at a neighbourhood or estate level, and not necessarily as attached to their surrounds or Cherwell as a whole. Some places have already experienced rapid population growth and development, which has diluted local identity and a sense of belonging. The arts, culture and creative industries of the area make a vibrant contribution to our communities. They provide recreation, companionship and shared interests within groups and societies and are often a focus for community activity.

*“A successful community is comfortable, green, caring, confident, clean, sharing and learning.” Consultee*

We see communities as people brought together by common interests, culture, activities and geography, including and focusing on those who do not benefit as much as they could from the area. Those which may need extra support in Cherwell include young people, older people, young families, and people moving into the area from outside the UK and marginalised communities, for example people with disabilities or from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Traditional rural villages are experiencing changes, an erosion of the younger population, local employment and services. Residents are passionate about keeping their villages thriving and inclusive. It is the areas which impact on our quality of life that are the focus of this section, specifically sense of community spirit, educational achievement and aspirations, health, well-being, housing and a sense of belonging. We want to ensure a high level of community capacity and engagement, supporting communities to find their own solutions.

There are issues which need our attention if they are not to become longer term problems. For example, secondary education is of concern in the area. Older people, young people and young families can experience isolation, especially in the rural part of Cherwell which is a significant proportion of the area. There are some areas which suffer from anti-social behaviour, especially in our town centres and at night, which impacts on those using these centres, affecting their sense of safety and may hinder our towns' development as cultural hubs in the longer term. Giving young people plenty to do, increased facilities and encouraging greater engagement has been shown to decrease the incidence of such behaviour.

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Housing is a big concern for everyone. There is a shortage of social housing, a shortage of affordable housing generally and uncertainty within communities about the impact of housing growth upon their area and how they can influence this. However, it must be remembered that Cherwell also has a breathtaking array of listed buildings and a generally high quality built environment, villages and towns. We already have the Local development Framework to structure our approach to tackling our challenges and most parishes have completed parish plans or are working on them to inform our decisions.

### Did you know?

- Health indicators show that the health of residents in the area is better than in Oxfordshire or England, new facilities are opening and life expectancy is above average.
- Older people will make up an increasingly large percentage of the population, with projections of 21% of overall population for the over 65s and up to 20% for the elderly population (85+).
- The level of qualifications achieved across the area is low with only a third of Banbury residents having qualifications and 28% in Kidlington.
- The percentage of children achieving 5+ GCSE at A\*- C level is significantly lower than the national average although it is improving.
- Average net household income is £24,336 and entry level property costs £118,000, leading to an increasing gap between what can be afforded and what is available.
- 96% of the population classifies itself as white.
- Fear of crime is the highest in the county although crime levels are comparatively low.
- Two parts of the Banbury Ruscot ward are in the 20% most deprived super output areas nationally. Teenage pregnancy in the area is higher than the national average and going against a national downturn, suggesting underlying problems amongst young people relating to lack of aspirations and disaffection.
- Rural isolation is a key feature of the area affecting older, younger and poorer people more profoundly. 11 rural wards fall into the 10% most deprived in terms of access to housing and services.

### 5.1 Our Community Objectives

Whilst overall the area enjoys a relatively high quality of life, good employment levels and relatively high standards of living, there are underlying issues around deprivation, social exclusion and disaffection emerging in some areas. In the long term, demographic shifts in population growth and age will present some priority areas to focus on. We are already working together to build stronger and safer communities and will continue to do so, ensuring that the vital role of voluntary and community groups is acknowledged and valued for the contribution it makes.

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### **We will:**

1. Provide support for older people to ensure they can live independently for as long as possible and appropriate facilities and care are delivered.
2. Focus activity on deprived areas of both urban and rural Cherwell to ensure that communities do not develop further into the “haves” and “have not’s” leading to cohesive neighbourhoods where all people receive their fair share, get on well together, and have a real sense of belonging.
2. Offer high quality education, support and opportunities to our young people to achieve suitable and appropriate qualifications to enable them to realise their ambitions
3. Decrease the percentages of people who fear crime and feel unsafe in their area, reducing the incidences of anti-social behaviour and building confidence in the police.
4. Maintain and develop health services, including preventive health programmes, that directly address health inequality and which enable residents to access services and information in order to lead healthy lives.

# DRAFT VERSION 7

## 5.2 5 year focus

In this section we will outline our priorities and steps we will take to meet our community objectives in the coming five years. The list below reflects the ideas and suggestions we have developed from our consultation to date. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

### **Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review**

- Support older people to live independently.
- Support the role of volunteers, the community and churches and other faiths in sustaining the wellbeing of the district and in delivering much needed local activity.
- Increase opportunities to access lifelong learning and re-training.
- Improve educational attainment and better access to post-16 qualifications.
- To ensure that the expansion of housing and provision of housing address the inherent link to community cohesion through effective design and investment, providing a range of housing options.
- Work to build a sense of strong community across the district.
- Improve access to services for BME communities to address inequalities in education, access to services and to support integration.
- Targeted support for young people to put on and engage them in appropriate activities and increase their aspirations and a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
- Reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce levels of crime.
- Ensure that healthcare is accessible to people, particularly people in rural settings, without transport or people who have difficulty getting around.
- Undertake a health inequalities programme that narrows the gap in life expectancy across the district.
- Improve levels of health and well being in priority groups.

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## 5.3 Local Focus - Community

We recognise that different areas across the district will have their own priorities and we will identify specific actions to address them. The list below outlines the feedback we have received from our initial consultation. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

### Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review

#### Banbury

- Address and reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy
- Improve school attendance and achievement
- Reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour
- Improve support for new communities to access services and have their needs met

#### Bicester

- Raise young people's aspirations, facilities and opportunities
- Manage Bicester's rapid growth with extra effort to integrate new and emerging communities
- Improve leisure facilities
- Increase the sense of pride and belonging to Bicester to create more community cohesion

#### Kidlington

- Increase consultation with and facilities for young people
- Ensure sufficient access to services for a village of this size
- Increase provision of a range of housing options and especially affordable housing

#### Rural Areas

- Design and deliver appropriate services to the right people on an outreach basis or at least being sure that there is adequate transport to centres of support.
- Develop new ways of identifying deprivation in rural areas to understand where resources are needed.
- Define the role of the police in rural low-crime areas and what it can reasonably be expected to deliver
- Provide a range of and more affordable housing, including villages in the planning process.
- Increased support for youth, senior and community activities in rural locations. Explore the options for creative use of community buildings

## 6. Connected and protected – the infrastructure and environment pledge

**By 2030 we will understand and adapt to environmental challenges as they arise and ensure that all infrastructure and other developments prioritise the protection our environment and biodiversity. We will protect our rich natural and built environment and heritage, using our resources wisely and helping people to live sustainable lifestyles. Our transport and housing will be appropriate to our needs and will be adaptable to the changes in our communities. Cherwell will be at the forefront of exploring alternative technologies and recycling, utilising its connections to innovative industry to do so, and making real progress towards being a carbon neutral district.**

The built and natural environment is a unique selling point for Cherwell and one of the main reasons that communities and businesses choose to locate or remain here. People value the unrivalled accessibility offered by the excellent transport connections, the diverse character of the settlements and their centres, the good access to local services and quality of the countryside. However, socio-economic and environmental changes (such as increased commuting for employment, an aging population and climate change) are calling into question the way our towns function into the future, the viability of our rural areas and our ability to ensure that everyone gets to share in the quality of life that we value.

The environmental pledge considers the type of infrastructure we currently have, the way this has changed over recent years and the challenges we face in balancing our economic and housing growth aspirations with maintaining our environmental quality over the coming years. Our Local Development Framework has to make provision to accommodate 13,400 homes between 2006 and 2026. We relish the challenge and the opportunities that the proposed housing and population growth brings but it is important we are able to protect the countryside that we value, retain our distinctiveness and adapt the way we do things to reflect Climate Change.

### Did you know?

- 84% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (Place Survey, 2008)
- Despite being a rural district, over two-thirds of the population live in the three main urban areas of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
- Approximately 14% of the District lies within the Oxford Green Belt and 8% within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The District contains 32 scheduled ancient monuments and has a rich built heritage, with approximately 3000 listed buildings and 50 conservation areas.
- The house price to income ratio is 8.8 in Cherwell - higher than national and regional comparators but the lowest in Oxfordshire, except Vale of White Horse
- Household growth is outstripping population growth due to the falling household size in the area – as a result of socio-economic trends such as increasing life expectancy, divorce and partnering later in life.
- During 2007 / 08, 60% of new dwellings were built upon previously developed land and the average density for new dwellings was 47 dwellings per hectare (Cherwell District Council,

## DRAFT VERSION 7

2008).

- The Regional Spatial Strategy requires Cherwell to make provision for 13,400 new homes across Cherwell between 2006 and 2026. The majority of these will be located in Banbury and Bicester.
- Our domestic water use is 10% higher than the national average
- Over 60% of people drive to work, with a further 7% travelling as a passenger in a car.
- The district produced 11.59 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (2006) per capita compared to 8.03 across South East Region
- Cherwell recycles (45%) of household waste, the highest % in Oxfordshire and significantly higher than the UK average of 34.5%. This has increased three-fold since 2003/04.

### 6.1 Our Infrastructure and Environmental Objectives

The quality of the environment is one of the features that the people in Cherwell most value. This relates to both the natural environment and also the historic built environment that defines the character of many of our towns and villages. However, our District is facing challenges at a global and more local level which are challenging the way we look after our environment into the future. We must get more efficient at recycling and reusing waste, reducing our above average carbon emissions and levels of water use. Most notably, the stakeholders we spoke to talked about their concern over accommodating the forecast levels of housing growth and the impact this will have upon the community spirit of our settlements or the provision of our infrastructure and services. The objectives below reflect what you have told us needs to happen to protect our environment and accommodate growth in a sustainable way.

#### **We will:**

1. Cherish the resources that define Cherwell's character and distinctiveness including our natural environment, our built heritage and the vitality of our towns and villages.
2. Mitigate against and adapt to the impacts of climate change including minimising our waste and resource use, combating our carbon emissions and embracing new technologies.
3. Improve accessibility and tackle congestion including a shift in transport methods from our reliance on the private car towards public transport and walking or cycling opportunities.
4. Ensure our social infrastructure grows at the same rate as our communities and current deficiencies in provision are addressed including affordable housing, community buildings, open spaces, cultural and leisure opportunities.

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## 6.2 5 year focus

In this section we will outline our priorities and steps we will take to meet our environmental and infrastructure objectives in the coming five years. The list below reflects the ideas and suggestions we have developed from our consultation to date. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

### **Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review**

- Maintaining the vitality of our town and village centres – as economic cores, service centres and hubs of our community.
- Supporting our towns and villages to be different from each other and maintain the qualities that define their identity. Enabling rural communities to grow and evolve appropriately to support vibrant and dynamic villages.
- Provide and maintain a high quality environment (clean streets, reduced graffiti and link to reducing anti-social behaviour and enhancing a sense of community wellbeing).
- Support communities to prepare a town or parish plan for their area.
- Reduce the overall carbon emissions for the district, aspiring to eventually becoming carbon neutral.
- Supporting farmers and other land managers in protecting our environment and biodiversity.
- Develop existing and new methods of minimising, managing, recycling and reusing waste.
- Decrease the amount of energy and water used in the district, harnessing new technologies and communication methods to encourage personal responsibility.
- Improve accessibility and tackle congestion by supporting a shift from our reliance on the private car towards public transport and walking or cycling.
- Ensure new homes and existing housing are accessible and decent, with increased energy efficiency and a reduction in fuel poverty, in an environment where people want to live and which can respond to their changing life circumstances.
- Deliver more affordable housing.
- Adapt the way we do things to respond to climate change embracing new technologies and applying them to our new developments and infrastructure.
- Prepare a strategic infrastructure plan and use this to understand where the current deficiencies lie and how the provision of infrastructure can be effectively delivered into the future.

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- Adopt the Local Development Framework which sets out how and where we will accommodate growth across the district, as set out in the Cherwell Local Development Scheme.
- Invest in community transport solutions in rural areas.

### 6.3 Local Focus Environment and Infrastructure

We recognise that different areas across the district will have their own priorities and we will identify specific actions to address them. The list below outlines the feedback we have received from our initial consultation. We will finalise the list and targets after the formal consultation period ending in October 2009.

#### Draft Priorities – For Consultation and Review

##### Banbury

- Review and address the transport needs and traffic control for Banbury
- Address the needs of all communities within Banbury to plan for appropriate, affordable and decent housing for everyone.
- Develop Banbury Farmers market

##### Bicester

- Address the deficiencies in community facilities.
- Reduce out commuting and develop innovative ways of reducing its carbon impact.
- Implement the redevelopment proposals for Bicester town centre including bringing forward the environmental improvements programme for Market Square.
- Support town improved transport links
- Bicester to be used as a pilot for exemplary environmental and social practice in managing growth

##### Kidlington

- Directly address the issue of the main road bisecting the village and traffic management.
- Continue to explore the possibility of a new station.
- Explore the use of the canal as an alternative transport resource.
- Provide affordable and appropriate housing development in close consultation with the village community.

##### Rural Areas

- Identify where traffic control is both desirable and beneficial.
- Review community-based and alternative transport options.
- Include rural communities in the plans for developing both housing and commercial development.
- Identify where biodiversity and rural land management have a unique relationship with environmental protection.

## 7. How will we do it? - the leadership pledge

**By 2030 Cherwell will be characterised by our responsiveness to our changing population and our partnerships will be take a key role in delivering services, fostering community cohesion and managing our resources, directing them to where there is most need. Our local representatives will take an active and vibrant role in representing their communities and bringing about local solutions to local problems. Our public services will be open, honest and accountable with clear lines of communication between the public, private and voluntary sectors who work together to deliver what is needed. We will have exemplary consultation and communications processes, generating and sharing accurate, relevant and intelligent information, and enabling an engaged and inclusive Cherwell that relishes dialogue and debate and listens to everyone's different opinions and experiences.**

Cherwell cannot thrive or address the challenges ahead without clear leadership and accountability for results. Democratic and partnership structures are in place but these can only function if they are embraced. Communities and their representatives need to take some of the responsibility for keeping them vibrant. There is now strong evidence that community leadership lies at the heart of the development and delivery of good and sustainable community strategies.

Our consultation told us we must be clear about who is accountable for the delivery of this strategy. An integral part of accountability is being sure we know what is happening, who is doing it and assessing our progress.

Our role as the Local Strategic Partnership is to ensure that we have the right systems in place to do this and that we have methods of analysing the causes and consequences of progress. We will act promptly when results are disappointing, reassess our priorities regularly and communicate this effectively. It is vital that we all work together to maximise community involvement, use available resources as efficiently as possible and raise our common understanding of the problems and their potential solutions.

This strategy is one of a family of documents. It will sit alongside an analysis of the issues and an evidence base, a leadership framework, the Local Development Framework and an implementation plan. There are also a number of medium term strategies and the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) that will deliver the objectives and priorities contained within the pledges.

Together they will enable us to build effective partnerships and networks and work alongside each other to bring about the change and improvement that we all want to see.

## 8. Thanks and Acknowledgements

As part of the development of this strategy we have held or taken part in a number of events including elected councillors, rural and stakeholders' workshops, sessions with the voluntary sector and the parish liaison group, the Cherwell Skills Summit and a session with community workers in Banbury.

We would like to thank all the people, community groups, councillors, voluntary groups and public agencies that have taken part in developing the strategy so far. Also thanks to those who have invited us to attend their events and the many individuals who have spent time with us, showing us around their areas and telling us about their expectations and aspirations for the future of Cherwell.

ADD A DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW THE CHERWELL SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY LINKS INTO OTHER PLANS AT THE REGIONAL, COUNTY LEVEL AND DISTRICT LEVEL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGMENTS

# Agenda Item 6

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

14 July 2009

### Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with background information on possible topics for inclusion in the work programme for 2009/10.

This report is public
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#### **Recommendations**

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The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) consider whether or not to undertake a scrutiny review into the Council's preparations for an ageing population;
- (2) agree that Cllr Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, should be invited to monitor developments relating to "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" and to brief them as appropriate;
- (3) consider whether to invite the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board to provide a more formal and detailed presentation on "The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" at a future meeting of the Committee;
- (4) invite members of the Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Task & Finish Group to brief them on the conclusions of the review at a future meeting of the Committee;
- (5) invite the Portfolio Holder, Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the report on what Cherwell is doing to prepare for the 2012 Olympic Games to access the tourism potential for the district.
- (6) determine which topics they wish to add to their work programme for 2009/10 and agree the timescales for those reviews and whether they should be committee based or a Task and Finish Group review; and

- (7) agree that, in the case of those topics which will be the subject of a Task and Finish Group review, the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager be delegated to invite nominations to those Task and Finish Groups from the Group Secretaries.

## **Details**

### **1 Potential topics for scrutiny**

- 1.1 The annual work programme canvas identified a number of potential scrutiny topics. At the meeting on 9 June 2009 the Committee agreed that three of those suggestions might be appropriate subjects for scrutiny and asked officers to prepare more detailed briefing and scoping documents.
- 1.2 The three topics are discussed in more detail below.

### **2 Preparations for an ageing population**

- 2.1 Tony Baldry MP suggested this topic, citing the fact that the country as a whole has to confront an ageing population and that the situation is more acute in Cherwell.
- 2.2 This is clearly an important and wide ranging issue for the district but any scrutiny review would need to be limited in scope and clearly defined to ensure that it retained focus and delivered tangible results.
- 2.3 In 2006 the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review into. The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet considered the final report in November 2008 and in January 2009 respectively.
- 2.4 A copy of the report summary is at Appendix 1. The panel of members examining this issue found that there was, throughout the various relevant agencies and their partners, a significant degree of awareness of the issues around demographic change, and it was clear that much work is already being done to account and plan for it. It is important to note that the report did not make any specific recommendations but instead identified a series of "red flags", i.e. the main issues that needed further consideration:
- The contribution of older people to society
  - The contribution of informal carers
  - Maintaining independent living
  - Partnership working
  - Access to Services
  - Financial issues
- 2.5 The report proposed a conference which would take the red flags as a starting point and would be an opportunity for all relevant agencies to come together to

discuss the issues in greater detail and to begin planning for the future. The conference took place in March 2009 and was attended by Councillor Lawrie Stratford and Councillor Rose Stratford as members of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The conference included an address from the Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire and presentations on the following issues:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
Age: We Stopped Counting Years Ago	B&Q
Volunteering and the Older Person's view	Age Concern
Influencing Regional Strategies: introduction to the Age Proofing Toolkit	Nottingham Trent University
20th Century – Last Century of Youth?	Oxford Institute of Ageing

(Copies of the presentation material is available on request from the Democratic Services team).

- 2.6 The Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee concluded that the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board was the appropriate body to ensure that progress was made on these matters as it includes members from all of the Oxfordshire councils, the NHS and voluntary organisations etc. This approach was endorsed by the County Council Cabinet.
- 2.7 In view of the above the Committee may wish to consider inviting Cllr Mrs Rose Stratford, as the Cherwell District Council representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to monitor developments in this area and to brief them as appropriate. The Committee may also wish to consider inviting the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board to provide a more formal and detailed presentation on this topic at a future meeting.
- 2.8 Appendix 2 provides details of the services that Cherwell District Council currently offers to older people. This information was prepared for a county wide mapping exercise of services to older people. It serves as relevant background information for the Committee's discussions.
- 2.9 The Committee may consider that there are specific issues relating to Cherwell's ageing population which might benefit from further scrutiny.

### **3 Youth Service provision**

- 3.1 The Head of Recreation and Health will be present at the meeting to brief the Committee on the Council's discretionary services in support of young people.
- 3.2 Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have identified this as a topic for possible joint scrutiny with the district councils. Once again the topic area is enormous and scoping work would need to ensure a focus on tangible issues. Initial suggestions are that the review could address the following issues:

- Types of provision / where it is/ and it's appropriateness (looking at youth provision in a multi-agency context within a target age group 8-19 years);
- To look at outreach work to encourage engagement/participation in activities;
- To focus on particular groups of young people e.g. provision in areas of high urban / rural deprivation; and
- One possible suggestion is that they could form a panel of young people from existing consultative forums (e.g. youth parliament representatives) to scope and conduct the review.

Both Councils are still considering when and how to proceed with such a review.

- 3.3 The Cherwell District Council Value for Money review schedule for 2009/10 includes a thematic review of our work for young people in the first quarter of 2010. This will consider all aspects of service delivery, across directorates and across partnerships, for young people and the outcomes achieved. This reflects the importance of this issue for the future of the district. As far as possible it would be sensible to dovetail any scrutiny work in this area with the value for money review.
- 3.4 The Council's provision of and support for youth services and promotion of youth democracy are emerging themes from the Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Task & Finish Group. The activities of this review are now complete and the Chairman of the Task & Finish Group will present the final report and recommendations directly to the Executive in the autumn. The Committee may wish to invite members of the Task & Finish Group to brief them on the conclusions of the review at a future meeting of the Committee.
- 3.5 All of this suggests that a single, or indeed a series of, time limited and topic specific Task & Finish Group review(s) into some aspect of this Council's work with young people would be an appropriate addition to the work programme for 2009/10. Appendix 2 sets out some initial proposals on what, how and when the Committee might wish to engage in such work.

#### **4 Olympics 2012: what is Cherwell doing to prepare for the games and to access the tourism potential for the district**

- 4.1 This was a staff suggestion submitted as part of the annual work programme canvas. The Portfolio Holder, Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) has commissioned a report into this issue. The report will be available in the autumn.
- 4.2 This is a topic which could be addressed by the Committee as a whole at a future meeting, using the Portfolio Holder report as a basis for the discussion and inviting witnesses as appropriate.

## Implications

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<b>Financial:</b>	<p>There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.</p> <p>Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221559</p>
<b>Legal:</b>	<p>There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific legal issues.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are over-stretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.</p> <p>Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management &amp; Insurance Officer 01295 221566</p>

## Document Information

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	"The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" Summary.
Appendix 2	Ageing Successfully ~ Cherwell District Council services for older people
<b>Background Papers</b>	
"The Demographic Challenge in Oxfordshire" ~ report by Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee. Available from Democratic Services.	
	James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221587 James.doble@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

## **OCC CABINET – 20 JANUARY 2009**

### **THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE IN OXFORDSHIRE**

#### **Report by the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Social and Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Oxfordshire, like the rest of the UK is going through a period of profound demographic change. The population of the County is growing, and it is also growing older. In twenty years time there will be more people living in the County, the proportion of those people who are aged over sixty-five will be considerable larger than it is now and that there will be a particularly large increase in those aged over eighty-five.
- 1.2 This is good news: people are living longer, and many can now look forward to a considerable number of years of active life beyond the current age of retirement. Moreover, as friends, neighbours, carers, active citizens, and simply as individuals in their own right, older people make a tremendous contribution to society; an increase in their number is to be welcomed.
- 1.3 But this also presents challenges; a higher proportion of older people in the population, particularly people who can be numbered amongst the 'oldest old,' will put a strain on those services that are most frequently used by older people – most notably those statutory health and care services provided or commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. It also means that the ratio between those of retirement age, and those of working-age, will be different from what it is now.
- 1.4 It is appropriate then to think about the impact of demographic change on the various services provided in the county – including the impact on community and volunteering initiatives – and to start to plan, collectively, for this change. The challenge is by no means insurmountable, but it does demand that all stakeholders engage in a serious dialogue about demographic change; consideration of how well prepared the County is to deal with the challenges that change presents; to think about what can be done to anticipate it, and to start

Summary report, as presented to Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in January 2009  
planning now for what is needed to be done to meet the challenge of  
demographic change effectively.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The population of Oxfordshire is growing; on current trends, the population of the county could increase by 20% by 2031, from 685,600 to 758,000 people.
- 2.2 The population of the county is also ageing. On present trends, there will be 154,200 people aged over 65 in 2031 (66% more than in 2006); numbers of the very elderly (85 years plus) are projected to increase by almost 40% by 2016, and by 143% by 2031. This means that the proportion of older people in the population will increase from just under 15% in 2006 to just over 20% in 2031, while a decrease is projected in the proportion of the population of working age, from 54% in 2006 to 48% in 2031.
- 2.3 Demographic change will have a significant impact on services for older people and on service-provision in general: in 2005/06, for example, just under 50% of Oxfordshire's total personal social services expenditure was spent on older people, which amounted to just under £1,000 per head of population aged 65 and over.
- 2.4 It should be noted in passing, however, that this is not the only change afoot; up to 2017, Central Government expects positive net migration to account for half of UK population growth, and expects this trend to remain positive in the longer term. Migrants are overwhelmingly of working-age, and this should be taken as a corrective to viewing the phenomenon of population ageing outside of the broader demographic context.

## **3 Emerging Themes**

- 3.1 In general, the panel of members examining this issue found that there was, throughout the various relevant agencies and their partners, a significant degree of awareness of the issues around demographic change, and it was clear that much work is already being done to account and plan for it.

- 3.2 The single biggest theme to emerge from the review process was the importance of partnership-working *in*, and joining-up *of*, services for older people; where it existed, the benefits of partnership working were consistently lauded by review participants, although there were suggestions that partnership could be emphasised more at a grassroots level. Members also saw a need to join up strategies in a way that is not always intuitive – for example, harnessing the Local Transport Plan (LTP) to the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) Strategy.
- 3.3 The need to promote and support independence and choice among older people by, for example, moving to deliver various services in, or close to, the home was the second theme to consistently emerge. The ethic of home-delivery cuts across services provided by health and social care, but should also be borne in mind as an element of housing and planning strategy.
- 3.4 The importance of prevention was the third recurring theme. As the number of older people grows, costs to various services can be reduced by taking steps to decrease morbidity – for instance, by taking simple preventative measures in health, and also by trying to attend to moderate, as well as critical, need in care service provision.
- 3.5 The fourth theme to emerge consistently was inclusion; older people are not a homogenous group, and there are different sectors of older people who will either have different or greater needs, who will be harder to reach for service-providers, or who do not always avail themselves of the services available to them – be they older people living in rural areas, older members of black and minority ethnic communities, or older people living with a physical or learning disability.

#### **4 Caveats**

- 4.1 With all of this said, it should be noted that the situation is subject to re-appraisal; future-proofing is an inexact science, and future ageing will not occur without other changes, such as significant technological or medical developments, or a change in cultural or social practices. Therefore, this review should be conceived of as a 'living process,' or one incident in an ongoing process that would need reviewing on a regular basis.

Summary report, as presented to Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in January 2009

4.2 Furthermore, the panel strove to retain focus on the bigger picture of demographic change insofar as this was possible, and thereby to create a review that was self-consciously strategic in outlook. In producing this report therefore the Panel was striving to use the wealth of data obtained to *identify* and deepen awareness of areas and issues that require detailed examination, and not to seek to fully engage in that examination itself.

4.3 Hence, what follows should be seen as a series of 'red flags' that are intended to raise awareness of the major issues identified by the review rather than a series of specific recommendations.

4.4 However there is one specific recommendation and that is to undertake a conference in Oxfordshire, in the spring of 2009. The conference would take the major themes of this review as its point of departure, and would be an opportunity for all relevant agencies and bodies – both statutory and voluntary – to come together to hear influential speakers, to discuss the issues in greater detail and to begin to further develop begin the serious work of planning for the future.

## **5 Red Flags**

5.1 As pointed out above, the following are intended to raise awareness of major issues of importance recognised by the panel that will need attention if the response to the demographic challenge is to continue to be positive and effective.

### **5.2 The Contribution of Older People**

5.2.1 Efforts should be made to ensure that all communities are aware of the services that are available to older people and the importance of understanding the needs of older people and, perhaps more importantly, the contribution that they can make to society.

### **5.3 The Contribution of Informal Carers**

5.3.1 Informal carers make a tremendous contribution to the wellbeing of their families, friends, neighbourhoods and communities and in fact this is the main level of care for most people. There are a variety of forms of informal care

Summary report, as presented to Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in January 2009

and it will be important to encourage, support and develop all of them—whether it be family caring, simple neighbourliness, or a more structured idea of volunteering. Support from the statutory authorities working together is vital to maintaining this level of informal support.

## **5.4 Maintaining Independent Living**

5.4.1 In order to help people to continue to live for as long as possible in their own homes both social care and the local NHS should give particular attention to:

- Continuing to develop the preventative agenda by promoting positive lifestyle change and reviewing the barriers to older people's activity
- Attending to critical needs in social care, but also attending to those needs that are less obviously acute
- Continuing, and spreading more widely, investment in specific preventative services – including, but not limited to, the falls prevention service
- Developing, and increasing, the use of assistive technology

5.4.2 Independence, choice and dignity of older people should be promoted and maintained by taking steps to increase the take-up of direct payments and personal budgets, with the appropriate support and advice.

5.4.3 The move towards lifetime homes and neighbourhoods will have a significant part to play in enabling people to continue living at home and careful thought should be given towards how this could best be developed in Oxfordshire.

5.4.4 Extra care housing is part of the support which is available to more frail older people to enable them to continue living independently for as long as possible and, as such, the development and implementation of the extra care housing strategy should be pursued.

5.4.5 Deteriorating mental health is often a barrier to people managing to live independently, particularly in old age. A significant increase in dementia and depression should be anticipated, although this could be ameliorated by the promotion of good mental health and by working against social isolation.

- 5.4.6 A model of choice and independent living for older people with learning and physical disabilities needs to be promoted and sustained.

## **5.5 Partnership Working**

5.5.1 Partnership working between health and social care, and between other agencies (statutory and voluntary), has developed well and is ahead of many other parts of the country. However it will be important to ensure that effective partnership working takes place between all agencies at the level of frontline services as well as at the institutional level.

5.5.2 Joined-up planning will be vital to the development of strategies for responding to the demographic challenge. This is particularly relevant to housing and to transport; for example, housing plans could and should be linked with relevant plans from other agencies – such as the PCT Health Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, District Council Community Plans and others.

5.5.3 Consideration should also be given to broader modes of partnership and linking-in; for example, the County Council could conceivably forge links with organisations such as the SPARC (Strategic Promotion of Ageing Research Capacity) initiative, a showcase for, and a funder of, ‘the latest research findings from design, engineering and biology to all stakeholders in older people’s issues.’

## **5.6 Access to Services**

5.6.1 Access to services is obviously limited if people do not know about them; unmet need could be addressed to a major degree by ensuring that older people are made aware of, and have access to, all of the services and benefits that are available to them.

5.6.2 Specialist advice and advocacy services for older people would be of great benefit in helping older people to access services, and to claim those benefits to which they are entitled. Imaginative provision of such services, for example

Summary report, as presented to Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in January 2009

by using GP surgeries as sites or signposts, could bring them to the attention of a wider group of people.

- 5.6.3 With regard to access, particular note must be made of older people living in rural areas, and older members of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

## **5.7 Continuing the Work – A Conference on the Demographic Challenge**

- 5.7.1 To carry the spirit of this document forward, it is proposed that a conference take place, on this topic, in Oxfordshire, in the spring of 2009. The conference would take the major themes of this review as its point of departure, and would be an opportunity for all relevant agencies and bodies – both statutory and voluntary – to come together to hear influential speakers, to discuss the issues in greater detail and to begin to further develop begin the serious work of planning for the future.

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

Health Promotion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

- Age Concern Oxfordshire – Joint information and activities, health promotion.
- The WRVS Centre – Joint recreational activities and information using the centre as a base, volunteering, health promotion.
- OCC – Information
- Sanctuary Housing – Recreational activities and information, health promotion.
- Banbury Day Centre - Recreational activities and information using centre as a base, health promotion
- Bicester Resource Centre - Recreational activities and information using centre as a base, health promotion
- BCTA – Local Transport
- Volunteer Bureau – Support for Older Peoples Groups, information
- PCT – information
- ORCC – Information
- Cultural and Adult Learning - Recreational activities and information, health promotion
- Oxfordshire WI - Recreational activities and information, health promotion
- The Carers Centre - Recreational activities and information using centre as a base, health promotion
- Oxfordshire Association for the Blind – Information
- Arch Oxfordshire - Recreational activities and information, health promotion, volunteering
- Banbury CAB – Information, volunteering
- Thames Valley Police - Recreational activities and information, health promotion
- Royal British Legion – Information, volunteering
- 216 Seniors Groups - Recreational activities and information, health promotion, volunteering

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

In 2008/09 we:

- issued 70 seniors grants totalling £33,000
- Supported 557 activities
- Led 760 events in which 13239 people attended
- Held 254 Mobile Cinema Sessions with 4604 people attending
- Contacted or established 44 new groups totalling 201 groups in total.
- Held 122 Kurling, Ten Pin Bowling, Croquet or skittles sessions since June 2008.
- Designed, printed and distributed 7,600 Seniors Directories
- Designed, printed and distributed 22,000 Cherwell Seniors Groups Newsletters.
- Secured 111,500 for partner groups and organisations.

Our other large projects have included:

- 11 Tai Chi sessions per week with 310 people attending per week.
- 13 IT classes per week with 104 people attending per week.
- Established the Guest Speakers and Entertainers Booklet
- Established the New Touring Musicians Scheme with 1440 people attending from August 2008
- 5 old time musicals, 2 old time dances with 1032 people attending
- 100 Groups Consulted at 6 forums
- Established The Nintendo Wii Scheme in February.
- We have 9 exercise to music session per week with 72 people attending per week.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

The service is at currently at capacity. We will therefore be looking at alternative ways in which to develop such as greater partnership working and supporting volunteers. Thus freeing up resources for new initiatives to begin. Also supporting individual groups to enable their own development thereby creating more local activities. At the same time we will look at any external funding that either the District Council or older peoples groups can access in order to develop their activities. We are also looking to encourage those that are socially isolated to become more involved with in their community.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

In order for service delivering to move forward within Cherwell and Oxfordshire resources, expertise and funding need to be pooled and service delivery planned between all organisations to enable maximum impact.

Council .....Cherwell District Council.....  
Officer Name, Post and Tel No .....David Symcox, Community  
Development Officer, 01295 227907.....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

Health Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing (Delivery of new housing and information and advice)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

**County Council** –joint working and procurement of extra care housing  
**County Council** –Supporting People (SP)-commissioning of support service for older people (ALERT)  
**Homes and Communities Agency** –Funding of Housing Schemes  
**Housing Associations (RSLs)** – provision of extra care housing, asset management of sheltered housing and SP services , provision of incentive schemes for older people wanting to downsize  
**Age Concern**-consultation body plus working to improve the provision of information and advice  
**Oxfordshire Rural Community Council** – Work with Parish Councils, Housing Needs Surveys for affordable housing (including older people) in villages  
**Other Oxfordshire District Councils**- Sub regional CBL – marketing and allocation of older people and disabled adapted accommodation

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

Extra care strategy and implementation in place – 130 units in pipeline within District  
 Working with RSLs on asset management of current sheltered stock-improved stock or reuse for other purposes  
 Improved Housing Needs Surveys in Villages specifically targeting the needs of older people as well as families. Scheme at Weston being designed with Bungalow provision to meet needs of older residents and free up family housing

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Have just completed Housing Strategy for Older People with 5 key priorities

- Improve provision of support to people living in their own homes (much of this work will be delivered through private sector initiatives –see private sector/DFG papers
- Delivery of specialist housing – plan for delivery of Extra Care/ improving sheltered housing
- Improve information and advice –framework for provision with a number of agencies led by CDC/Age Concern

- Involvement of Older People – set up database and framework for involving older people in all aspects of service delivery
- New developments –include good provision and design for older people – eg lifetime homes, age-proofing new development, provision in rural areas

**What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?**

Some ideas include making best use of Sheltered/Extra Care schemes to provide community and health related services.  
 Joint advice services.

Council ...Cherwell District Council.....  
 Officer Name, Post and Tel No ...Fiona Brown Strategic Housing Officer  
 01295 221659.....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

- |                                   |                          |   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Health Promotion                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Housing<br>(Delivery of new housing and information and advice) | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Recreation Activities             | <input type="checkbox"/> | DFGs  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteering                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Local Transport                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefits Advice   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Support for Older People's Groups |                          |   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?
<p><b>County Council</b> – Social &amp; Health Care: DFG referrals are received from Occupational Therapists and proposed works agreed with them. Discretionary loans can also be funded by OCC in cases where costs exceed the DFG grant maximum.</p> <p><b>County Council</b> – Social &amp; Health Care &amp; Supporting People (SP) both provide funding for the Home Improvement Agency Service.</p> <p><b>Other funding agencies</b> (such as SAFA &amp; British Legion) provide ad-hoc joint funding on a case-by-case basis.</p>

What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?
<p>Delivered a DFG budget of £910k in 2008-09. This resulted in 140 completed jobs. Practical assistance was provided through our in-house HIA. (£950k budget approved for 2009-10)</p>

What plans do you have to develop the service?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a DFG policy which will determine how we manage a demand expected to exceed the available DFG budget and will include alternative approaches to meeting needs.</li> </ul>

What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of schemes to assist clients relocate to more suitable premises, particularly in the RSL sector. This will be increasingly important as financial resources come under pressure.</li> </ul>

Council ...Cherwell District Council.....  
 Officer Name, Post and Tel No ...Fiona Brown Strategic Housing Officer  
 01295 221659.....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

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- |                                   |                                     |                 |                          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Health Promotion                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Housing         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Recreation Activities             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | DFGs            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteering                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Information     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Transport                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Benefits Advice | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support for Older People's Groups |                                     |                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

**Annual Electric Blanket testing:** 2 days in each district council area testing carried out in September/October each year. Aimed at older people, especially the vulnerable, who may be on low incomes.

Partners: Oxfordshire Trading Standards, all 5 Oxfordshire District Councils.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

Ensuring that older people remain warm in winter at night.

Unsafe electric blankets are taken out of service. Blankets that can be repaired are repaired on site and made safe to use. Table below shows the results across the county for the last 10 years:

Year	No Blankets tested	Blankets failed	% Failures
1999	913	346	37.8
2000	805	378	46.9
2001	793	325	40.9
2002	951	338	35.5
2003	846	333	39.3
2004	708	225	31.7
2005	689	239	34.6
2006	789	315	39.9
2007	678	241	35.5
2008	827	243	29.3

People whose blanket fails are offered either a new replacement, or a voucher to help them purchase a new blanket at approximately half price.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Due to the huge demand for the service, this year, 2009, we are adding an extra day per local authority e.g. Cherwell will be offering testing in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.

The steering group is investigating the possibility of training fire service staff to provide the testing rather than as at the moment employing a company to undertake the testing for us. This would be a considerable financial saving.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

See last paragraph above. The financial saving would enable more new blankets to be purchased to ensure that those in financial difficulty can have their faulty blanket replaced with a new one.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy

Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

Health Promotion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

#### Food Hygiene courses

No partners, but an Introduction to Food Hygiene course has been developed to meet the demands of food hygiene legislation for all food handlers to have some basic food hygiene training, this includes volunteers and people preparing and serving food for older people's lunch clubs etc. Older volunteers and those on benefits who wish to undertake the one-day accredited Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering can access the course at a reduced rate.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

During the last financial year 2008/09 40 older volunteers took up the Introduction course and a further 10 accessed the one-day course, successfully passing the final examination.  
Outcomes include a contribution to the reduction of the incidence of food poisoning. A nationally QCA accredited qualification.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Working to capacity.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

None planned as currently no capacity to expand.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy

Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

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Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

#### Health Bus

Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust are joint partners and owners of the vehicle.

The bus is used by a huge range of statutory and voluntary organisations for health initiatives/programmes - it is provided free of charge to any organisation within Oxfordshire.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

Last year 1533 people accessed the Health Bus for information, advice and health checks.

Users with a focus on older people included: Age Concern, Health Trainers, Oxfordshire Smoking Advice Service, Oral Health, Tax Help for Older People, British Lung Foundation Breathe Easy Support Network, Health Visitors, WRVS, CAB etc.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Continually contacting potential user groups and offer the bus for promotional work, to raise awareness of new groups etc

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

More of the same.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy

Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

Health Promotion	✓	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

**Health Walks in North Oxfordshire** (started in 2002)  
 Lead for the north, Cherwell District Council. Partners: Natural England, Oxfordshire County Council Social Services.  
 Walks are for sedentary people or those recovering from serious illness e.g heart disease. Although not specifically for older people the majority of walkers are aged 50+.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

Training is offered 4 times per year for volunteer walk leaders. There are currently 13 walks leaving every week from a range of villages and towns across the district. There are currently 500+ regular walkers and 74 trained walk leaders. Last November a new walk started designed especially for fragile, vulnerable users of Bicester Resource Centre in the Launton Road. In addition 4 visually impaired volunteer walk leaders were trained in May and a series of 6 walks is being promoted for the visually impaired during the summer  
 Outcomes: improved health and fitness, greater confidence, improvement in mental health.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Already working to capacity, but if successful the walks for the visually impaired will be included in the next edition of the Health Walks timetable.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

New ways to encourage the community to volunteer to become walk leaders.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

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Health Promotion	✓	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?
<p><b>Message in a Bottle Scheme</b>                  Lead partner: Oxfordshire Lions who provide the bottles                  Other partners: Oxfordshire Fire &amp; Rescue, Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Ambulance Service, NHS, local pharmacies, other District Councils.                  All help to promote the scheme to vulnerable people and to distribute bottles through their networks, which include voluntary organisations, Age Concern, Parish Councils, housing associations, sheltered housing.</p>

What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?
<p>Providing a 'safety net' for vulnerable people especially those who have no friends or neighbours who could be called on in an emergency. Scheme helps the emergency services provide the right treatment at a home visit and to them to patient allergies, medication, current illness etc. CDC issues approx 1000 bottles per year.</p>

What plans do you have to develop the service?
<p>No specific plans, except to ensure that as many vulnerable people as possible are issued with a bottle.</p>

What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?
<p>Improvements would include regular updates on the scheme and ongoing training/information about the service for new staff. Better promotion of the service through pharmacies, GP practices.</p>

Council: Cherwell District Council.....  
 Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy Officer, 01295 221628.....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

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Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

**Referrals for Prevention:** This scheme is open to anyone, but is especially beneficial for older, vulnerable people.  
Partners include: Citizens Advice Bureau, Oxon district council departments including housing, Oxfordshire County Council including Social Services and Fire & Rescue, NHS in particular GPs, Health Visitors & District Nurses, Oxfordshire Falls Service, Housing Associations, Age Concern, Message in a Bottle, Oxfordshire Smoking Advice Service, and Thames Valley Police.  
This scheme has been set up to establish a simple and quick mechanism for the transfer of a client's name and address, and their identified need from one organisation to another e.g. Fire Service for smoke detectors, police for security advice, housing for small repairs etc.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

Scheme has referred a number of clients – awaiting up-to-date stats on the scheme.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Working with colleagues to include benefits teams and the mobile library services in the scheme.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

Currently Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust is providing 1 day per week officer time to act as the central clearing point for referrals. This is currently on temporary basis; the scheme needs to ensure ongoing support.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

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Recreation Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

Sole Mates Basic Footcare Scheme  
Lead: Age Concern  
Cherwell District Council grant aids Age Concern Oxfordshire to support the Sole Mates scheme. The funding is used to provide training to the volunteers who deliver the basic footcare treatment programme. It also funds a footcare clinic in three different locations, which are delivered on the Health Bus every month.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

There are 387 Cherwell residents registered and receiving regular treatments, of these 206 receive their treatment on the Health Bus and the remainder in their own homes.  
Reduction in falls in the home, greater independence.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

The scheme is booked to capacity and there is a waiting list for the service. Without additional funding the service cannot be developed further at the present time.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

Reduced waiting lists.

Council: Cherwell District Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Wendy Kingsbeer, Health Improvement & Strategy

Officer, 01295 221628 .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

- |                                   |                                     |                 |                          |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Health Promotion                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Housing         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Recreation Activities             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | DFGs            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteering                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Information     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Transport                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Benefits Advice | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support for Older People's Groups |                                     |                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?**

Parkwood Community Leisure

**What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?**

Designated older person's activities at the 4 main sports centres within the district (50+). These include Keep Fit Classes /swimming sessions/various other activities dependent on which Centre is attended.

Reduced rates for Senior Citizens across a number of activities.

Banbury Cross Indoor Bowls Club operates out of Woodgreen Leisure Centre. Whilst not specifically an older persons activity, the nature of the activity means that the vast majority of users are 'older people'

**What plans do you have to develop the service?**

The service will be developed in partnership with Parkwood Community Leisure. As part of the management contract Parkwood Community Leisure needs to develop activity programmes to address the needs of under represented groups including older people.

**What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?**

Council .....

Officer Name, Post and Tel No .....

## Ageing Successfully In Oxfordshire

Please tick one box below to indicate the District/City service you are providing information on. Please complete a separate form for each service.

Health Promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation Activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DFGs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefits Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for Older People's Groups			<input type="checkbox"/>

### What organisations are your partners in delivery and how?

Age Concern Oxfordshire, as the project is targeted to their population group. We have also linked up with Age Concern Berkshire through accessing Fit as a Fiddle lottery funding to run a series of Nordic walking courses for the 50+ age group.

### What are you achieving? What are the outcomes?

We will be delivering a new outdoor activity, Nordic Walking for the 50+ group to engage in. Through the Fit as a Fiddle funding we are able to offer the service free of charge. There will be two 8-week courses in the Cherwell district.

Outcome: to introduce and develop Nordic walking as a viable and sustainable outdoor activity for the 'active ageing'.

### What plans do you have to develop the service?

Following the 8 week course we will be providing training to identified volunteers to ensure sustainability. We will also be looking at other ways 'GO Active' can provide suitable activities for the more 'active ageing' that we have identified as a GO Active target group.

### What joint initiatives or other improvements would you like to see?

We would like to see the introduction of more moderate intensity exercise for the older generation. Also, initiatives which are appealing to the 50-65 age group who can often be put off 'age focused' activities/projects.

Council: Cherwell District Council

Officer Name, Post and Tel No: Marianne Boyle, GO Active Co-ordinator, 01295 221715.

# Agenda Item 7

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RAF Bicester

14 July 2009

### Report of Strategic Director, Planning, Housing and Economy

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

Progress report on actions taken with respect to the future of RAF Bicester

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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That the Committee:

- (1) notes the update on recent actions, and
- (2) makes any recommendation to the planning and Housing Portfolio Holder as to any further action required.

#### Executive Summary

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##### 1 Background

- 1.1 RAF Bicester is described by English heritage as "*the best preserved bomber airfield dating from the period up to 1945*". The whole site, including some of the officers' and airmen's housing, is designated a conservation area and there are 41 grade II listed buildings and sixteen areas designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- 1.2 The technical site and flying field have not been in active military use for a number of years. One hangar and the flying field are leased to Windrushers Gliding Club. The remainder of the site is mothballed and the buildings are falling into disrepair.
- 1.3 English Heritage lists all 19 listed buildings on the technical site as being "At Risk" on its Buildings At Risk Register and the Scheduled Ancient Monument is reported in the 2009 Heritage at Risk Register.

- 1.4 The Domestic site has recently been declared surplus to Defence requirements and Defence Estates intends to market the site in September with a view to disposal this financial year.

## **2 Update on recent actions**

### **2.1 Condition of the buildings on the technical site**

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [The Act] empowers the LPA to take measures where the owner of a listed building does not keep the building in an adequate state of repair. The Act provides Local Planning Authorities with the power to serve a Repairs Notice (which is a step towards the LPA compulsorily acquiring a listed building in need of repair) and an Urgent Works Notice (which gives notice that the LPA will do urgent works itself and charge the owner the costs of doing so) on the owners of a listed building in a poor state of repair. However, Defence Estates, being part of the Ministry of Defence, enjoys Crown Immunity with respect to the serving and /or the enforcing of such Notices and also ancillary powers such as that to enter and inspect the premises. Therefore the Council has no powers to force Defence Estates to repair the buildings. Nevertheless, for a number of years officers have been trying to work with Defence Estates to agree appropriate works to bring the buildings into at least a wind and weather tight condition. There is a history of correspondence going back to 2003 recording a lack of co-operation by Defence Estates at officers' attempts to gain access to the technical site to make an assessment of the condition of the buildings.

Having detailed information about the condition of the buildings and likely costs of repair and maintenance is also now very important as part of responding to planning proposals by any private developer or supporting a potential local community project to acquire and use the site. Such information would be needed to support a bid for purchase and to prepare a business plan for the future use of the site.

Earlier this year the Chief Executive sought the assistance of Tony Baldry MP on the matter and this resulted in a meeting with the Under Secretary for State for Defence on 20 May 2009. The meeting was attended by Tony Baldry MP, Defence Estates, English Heritage and CDC Officers including the Chief Executive. During the meeting the Minister made it clear that

- Accompanied access to the technical site for the conservation officer and consultant surveyor on 5<sup>th</sup> June had been agreed the day before the meeting
- There is no money available to Defence Estates for further repairs to the buildings on the technical site and it is "highly unlikely" that further repairs will be undertaken. There will be no "MOD dowry" available to any potential future owner
- Quadrennial Inspections would be undertaken in the second half of 2009 and these would be used to inform the value of the site,
- The valuation will also be informed by the outcome of the Crichel Down process and any subsequent legal challenge, expected to be completed in Spring 2010 and no decision on the future of the site can be made until then. (The Crichtel Down process is a part of compulsory purchase and compensation law that, in certain circumstances, requires land acquired

for public use, but no longer required for that purpose, to be offered back to the original owner. Interpretation of the law in this field is very involved but, if the development of the site is constrained in the way the Council feels appropriate, it seems unlikely that there will be any benefit to previous owners in acquisition).

- The Minister agreed that Cherwell District Council, working closely with Defence Estates and English Heritage, should now produce a Planning Brief for the whole of RAF Bicester site and asked that a Working Group be established to get on with this.

The letter from Tony Baldry MP to the Under Secretary of State for Defence confirming what was discussed at the meeting is appended at Annex A.

The visit to the technical site took place on 4 June 2009. The Council utilised specialist building surveyor advice. Although there were a few buildings that were not able to be entered for a variety of reasons, an itemised list of repairs required for the buildings inspected has been drawn up. This has been included within the Draft Planning Brief to set out what the Local Planning Authority is seeking with respect to the repair of the listed and other buildings and this will assist in informing the value of the site.

## 2.2 The disposal of the domestic site

Defence Estates intends to dispose of the Domestic site by the end of March 2010 and is seeking advice from the Council as to acceptable future uses. A short Planning Statement has been produced for Defence Estates to include within its Sales particulars. The DCMS protocol (2003) for the Disposal of historic buildings in the government's estate states that financial consideration should not be the over-riding criterion. A visit to the site for Elected Members from each of County, District and Town Councils is being arranged by Defence Estates prior to marketing.

## 2.3 The preparation of a Planning Brief

As agreed at the meeting with the Under Secretary for State, officers have been working on a Planning Brief for the parts of RAF Bicester that are surplus to Defence requirements and are to be sold. The Brief will need to be prepared quickly with only limited stakeholder consultation so that it is available to respond to developer interest as the site is marketed. The "Brief" will take the form of one of the Council's "informal development principles" documents and the hope is that it will be used effectively with the co operation of defence estates as part of the marketing process. Following input from Defence Estates, English Heritage, Windrushers Gliding Club, Bomber Command Heritage and the County Archaeologist a draft document was circulated to stakeholders for comment on 3 July. The stakeholders included Defence Estates, English Heritage, Bicester Town Council, Caversfield Parish Council, Launton Parish Council, Fringford Parish Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Windrushers Gliding Club and Bomber Command Heritage. It is the intention that the comments received will be reported to the Council's Executive for approval in September, together with a document that may be amended in response to comments received. As an informal document the status of the Brief in planning decisions will be limited. However it will help the Council to be efficient and effective in informing potential purchasers of the site's opportunities and constraints, and will be a material consideration in determination of planning applications.

## 2.4 Policy Context including LDF timescale

The Development Plan comprises the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (known as the South East Plan) and the saved policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996. The Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan (NSCLP) 2004 does not have statutory development plan status but is an important material consideration in planning decision-making.

*The South East Plan* sets out the long term spatial planning framework for the region over the years 2006 – 2026, identifying nine sub regions as the focus of growth and regeneration (Policy SP1). RAF Bicester is within the Central Oxfordshire sub region, where the strategy is to strive to be a world leader in education, science and technology (Policy CO1) and to give priority to development which supports these sectors (Policy CO2). It refers to the substantial portfolio of land held by the defence sector and Policy CC9 encourages Government departments and public land owners to undertake strategic reviews of landholdings taking into account the policies and objectives in the SE Plan in the use and disposal of land. Policy CC9 sets out the regional policy on the use of major sites (ie those which would be referred to the regional planning body) in public ownership.

The adopted *Cherwell Local Plan*, had a policy for the site but this was overtaken by the designation of the conservation area and so has not been saved and so is no longer has force in planning decisions. It is however an important background to the to the current Informal Development Principles exercise..

The site was designated a conservation area in July 2002.

The *NSCLP* has not been subject to all of the statutory local plan preparation procedures including the public inquiry and therefore its policies and proposals do not have statutory development plan status. However, it is a material consideration and is used, together with other relevant considerations, in determining planning applications. Policy EN 49a is a site specific policy for RAF Bicester that states permission will be granted for proposals that

- provide for the re-use of buildings within the technical area ..... provided that they are set in the context of an agreed comprehensive plan and are sympathetic to the appearance and character of those buildings, their settings, the trident layout and the wider conservation area
- provide for the use of the open airfield for recreational purposes provided that such use would not conflict with or change its open, flat and treeless landscape character and its visual relationship with the technical area and its adjoining countryside
- are compatible with the ecological value present on the site.

The supporting text states that the Council will work with Defence Estates and prospective developers to ensure that proposals are set within a comprehensive and viable plan for the whole of the area. It also states that there is little scope for new building within the conservation area. In principle, re-use of existing buildings could include for offices, light industry, manufacturing, storage, cultural uses such as an aviation museum and leisure facilities, both indoor and outdoor. In terms of employment uses, paragraph 4.47 of the NSCLP states that B1, B2 and B8 uses could be

acceptable at Bicester Airfield provided they comply with Policy EN49a. The policies do not specifically refer to the Domestic site. Policy H1a sets out the criteria for assessing the location of new housing including the availability of previously developed sites and use of empty or under utilised buildings.

*The Cherwell Local Development Framework (LDF)* is in preparation following the publication of the Options for Growth document. Early in this process the Council's Executive took the decision not to progress RAF Bicester as a location for an urban extension. The Core Strategy will set the broad planning framework for the District, including the future of this site, over the period to 2026. The Council consulted on general issues and options for the Core Strategy in 2006 and carried out further consultations on site specific allocations between July 2006 and February 2008. Further evidence gathering is currently being carried out before the publication of a Preferred Options Core Strategy in late 2009. It is currently anticipated that the Core Strategy submission will be in Spring 2010 with adoption later in 2010. It may also be necessary to review the Local Development Scheme (work programme / timetable) following the announcement on the Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS) which is expected in July 2009.

The LDF is the place where a full formal update of policy as it impacts on the future of the site will be required. Of course this work is seen by Defence Estates as an opportunity to promote a redevelopment of the site. The informal guidelines document can explain that the Council's emerging strategy for development at Bicester will not support redevelopment in this location, but this approach can only be applied with full effect after the LDF is tested through the full Examination and approval process.

## 2.5 Community Liaison Group

Bicester Town Council is coordinating a Community Liaison Group, which aims to enable community use of the Technical site and flying field. Such uses include

- Community use of the flying field for low key recreational purposes
- The continued use of the flying field for gliding
- The use of the technical site for community and museum / heritage centre purposes.

The vast open flying field is currently used by local people, who are social members of the Windrushers Gliding Club, for dog walking, kite flying, jogging etc and the Club has stated that its vision would be to expand this to include, for example, adventure courses for young people, golf putting etc. At the same time the Windrushers Gliding Club, which is a civilian club operating on a lease from Defence Estates, also has aspirations to become one of the UK's largest gliding centres and "the first major national gliding centre" that embraces other activities as well. The museum / heritage use could potentially, subject to funding and other matters, such as compatibility of land uses, be enabled through an organisation such as Bomber Command Heritage (BCH). BCH is an association of volunteers which has the aim of raising awareness of RAF Bomber Command, establishing a Heritage Centre on the subject and creating a themed 1930s / WW2 "time capsule" environment at RAF Bicester. BCH is seeking charitable status, which will enable it to apply for Heritage Lottery Funding.

It is anticipated that the next meeting of the Community liaison Group will be arranged by Bicester Town Council during the consultation period on the Draft Planning Brief.

## 2.6 Bomber Command Heritage

Over the past 18 months, The Economic Development Officer has been involved in:

- Advising on BCH's business plan via Raymond Cook, an Oxfordshire Business Enterprises adviser co-ordinated by CDC. This is on-going and helping to ensure commercial viability is a key consideration.
- Introducing a potentially complementary heritage body (Colin Chapman Trust) to BCH to consider potential co-operation / synergy.
- Identifying other interests in RAF Bicester e.g. Mr Hayes youth training project.
- Contacting Tourism South East (Tourist Board) to identify potential developmental support via a feasibility study. Contacts and details of potential funding sources have been gained. The Bidding Team Manager considers of BCH's outline proposal "such a venture would be most welcome".

## 3 **Conclusion**

It is considered that, at present, the Council is not empowered legally to take any direct action against Defence Estates in respect of the Buildings At Risk. However, once the site is sold, the Council will seek to work with the new owner on a programme of repair to bring the buildings initially back to a wind and weather tight condition and, ultimately, into a productive use.

The Council is doing all it can at present to assist with the sale of the site by establishing future use through the LDF process and, in advance of this timescale, through the preparation of a Planning Brief, which is out for consultation with Stakeholders at present. It is to be hoped that Defence Estates engages fully in this process as requested by the Under Secretary of State for Defence.

## **Implications**

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**Financial:** There are currently no financial implications on the Council, as the Planning Brief has been prepared within existing budgets.

Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant 01295 221552

**Legal:** The residual current Crown immunity in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 prevents the Council from taking action against Defence Estates in respect of listed buildings. Once the property is in private ownership, the full provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 apply. The Council will strive to reach agreement with the new owner(s) to ensure the repair of the protected buildings and structures.

Comments checked by Sue Christie, Solicitor 01295

221690

**Risk Management:** The technical site is currently at high risk, including the Bomb Stores Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is reported to be in a state of imminent collapse.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221556

### **Wards Affected**

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All Bicester wards, Caversfield, Launton and Fringford wards

### **Corporate Plan Themes**

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A District of Opportunity  
A Cleaner Greener Cherwell

### **Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Michael Gibbard**  
**Portfolio Holder for Planning and Affordable Housing Policy**

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	Letter from Tony Baldry MP to the Under Secretary for Defence dated 8 June 2009
<b>Background Papers</b>	
RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal (copy available in the members Room)	
<b>Report Author</b>	Linda Rand, Design and Conservation Team Leader
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221845 Linda.Rand@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

## APPENDIX A

Kevan Jones, Esq., MP  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State  
Ministry of Defence  
Old War Office Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2EU

8 June 2009

### RAF BICESTER

I am very grateful for you seeing myself and colleagues from Cherwell District Council and English Heritage on 20<sup>th</sup> May. It was a helpful and constructive meeting for which many thanks.

I look forward to hearing from you on the issue of whether any Defence Estates' land at MOD Bicester (beyond RAF Bicester) is likely to become surplus to requirements in the near future.

I understand now that the Treasury has asked for all options for DSDA to be considered and this is clearly the reason why Cherwell District Council has been getting mixed messages recently.

It was also useful to understand that Savills are not representing DSDA. As I think was explained to the meeting, Cherwell District Council is publishing its Local Development Framework Core Strategy in Autumn 2009 for adoption by the end of 2010. If the forthcoming Eco Town PPS confirms North West Bicester as an Eco Town location then this, with a small additional allocation at South West Bicester, will fulfil Bicester's South East plan requirements until 2026.

The fact that some Defence Estates' land may be available at MOD Bicester needs to be considered again and other issues such as sustainability.

It would be very helpful to get some quick clarification on this point. It may be more appropriate to await a full review of Defence Estates' land until the next round of allocation but you will appreciate that this will not happen for some considerable time. It will clearly be helpful going forward, if Defence Estates', DSDA and Cherwell District Council can work closely on this and make sure representatives of both Defence Estates and DSDA are present at any meetings.

In terms of RAF Bicester, I found our meeting very helpful in providing clarification on a number of points. I thought it was worth noting the areas we covered:

Accompanied access to the technical site for Cherwell District Council's conservation officer and consultant surveyor on 5<sup>th</sup> June had been agreed the day before our meeting. This will have allowed a full assessment/record to have been made by the Council on the condition of the buildings. This assessment is essential to allow for

future planning decisions to be made in light of necessary information about the key conservation works required and their likely costs.

It was made clear that the Quadrennial Inspections will be undertaken in the second half of 2009 and that reports will influence the valuation of the site. There is no money available to Defence Estates for further repairs to the buildings on the technical site and it is “highly unlikely” that further repairs will be undertaken. There will be no “MOD dowry” available to any potential future owner.

The valuation of the technical site will also be informed by the outcome of the Crichel Down process and any subsequent legal challenge. This process is expected to be completed in Spring 2010 and no decision on the future of the site can now be made until then. You asked the Crichel Down and Quadrennial Inspections processes to be speeded up as much as possible.

You considered it to be appropriate that Cherwell District Council, working closely with Defence Estates and English Heritage, should now seek to produce a Planning Brief for the whole of RAF Bicester site and ask that a Working Group be established to get on with this.

Colleagues at the Council will now coordinate the setting up of this group, which needs to start work quickly in light of Defence Estates’ plans to dispose of the domestic site this financial year.

Tony Baldry

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

### Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

14 July 2009

### Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with an update on the work programme for 2009/10.

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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- (1) That the Committee notes the current overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 (Appendix 1) and agrees to:
  - a) remove Emergency Planning from the monitoring section;
  - b) invites the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing to attend a meeting in the autumn (October or November) to report on further progress on Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites;
  - c) retain Concessionary Travel in the monitoring section of the work programme to review progress against recommendations.

#### Details

##### 1 Existing work programme

1.1 Appendix 1 sets out the existing work programme for both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, as agreed at the committee meetings in June 2009.

1.2 The Committee will wish to note that the Portfolio Holder, Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural will be present at the October meeting to report on progress against the scrutiny recommendations on the district's markets, and in particular the status of Banbury market.

## **2 Monitoring items**

2.1 The following items are scheduled for review:

### **Emergency Planning**

2.2 The Committee considered the Council's emergency planning arrangements in November 2008. Appendix 2 summarises the status of these recommendations and provides further information on other emergency planning activities. In particular the Committee will wish to note that planning and preparation work for pandemic influenza is in progress; and that all members of the Council will be kept informed of developments over the coming months.

2.3 As all of the scrutiny recommendations are complete the Committee may wish to remove this item from the work programme. It is suggested that any on-going or future concerns about pandemic influenza should be treated as a separate scrutiny topic if, and when, appropriate.

### **Rural Affordable Housing**

2.4 The recommendations of the scrutiny review into Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites are detailed at Appendix 3. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented the conclusions of the review at the Parish Liaison meeting on 17 June 2009. In general the scrutiny report was well received and parish councils were supportive of the recommendations.

2.5 The Executive requested some additional reports (see recommendations 6 – 8) and these are due to be considered at their August meeting. Copies of the reports will be circulated to this committee when published.

2.6 Given the reasonably long lead time on some of the recommendations it is suggested that the Committee invites the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing to attend a meeting in the autumn (October or November) to report on further progress.

### **Concessionary Travel**

2.7 The Executive will consider the report of the Task & Finish Group and this Committee's recommendations regarding Concessionary Travel at their meeting on 6 July 2009. The Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Manager will brief the Committee on the outcome of the Executive discussion.

2.8 It is suggested that this item remains on the work programme and is scheduled for review in November or January (or on an earlier timescale if the government decision on the future administration of concessionary travel becomes available sooner).

## Residents Parking

- 2.9 The Executive will consider this Committee's recommendation regarding Residents Parking at their meeting on 6 July 2009. The Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Manager will brief the Committee on the outcome of the Executive discussion.

## Implications

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- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.  
Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221559
- Legal:** There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific legal issues.
- Risk Management:** If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are overstretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.  
Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer 01295 221566

## Document Information

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Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Latest work programme 2009/10
Appendix 2	Emergency Planning update
Appendix 3	Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites scrutiny review recommendations
Appendix 4	Concessionary Travel scrutiny review recommendations
<b>Background Papers</b>	

	James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221587 James.doble@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

## Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting				
			July	Sept	Oct	Nov	Later
<b>Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny</b>							
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Suggestion from Tony Baldry MP Assess briefing document as potential scrutiny topic	✓				
Youth Facility Provision	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Possible joint scrutiny with other Oxfordshire authorities. Assess scoping document as potential scrutiny topic	✓				
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential in the district	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July</b> Suggestion from staff. Assess Executive report as potential scrutiny topic	✓				
Registered Social Landlords' Management Partnership and related standards	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 22 September</b> Referral from Overview & Scrutiny Committee. To consider as possible topic for partnership scrutiny		✓			
<b>Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings</b>							
Sustainable Communities Strategy	OSC	<b>Agenda item for 14 July</b> Claire Taylor to present	✓				
Partnerships	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 21 July</b> To agree scoping documents for partnership scrutiny.	✓	→			
2010/2011 Budget	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 21 July</b> To agree approach/topic for budget scrutiny.	✓	→			

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	July	Sept	Oct	Nov	Later
<b>Task &amp; Finish Groups</b> – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings							
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Cllr Rose Stratford (Ch) Cllr Stevens (VC) Cllr Smithson Cllr Rae Cllr Tompson Cllr Sibley	Policy development work on the private sector housing strategy.					✓
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Ahmed Cllr Billington Cllr Cullip Cllr Tompson Cllr Smithson Cllr Sibley	Active – final report scheduled for Executive in autumn 2009		✓			
<b>Monitoring</b> – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations							
Concessionary Fares	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcome of discussion at Executive in July 2009	✓				
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcomes of Parish Liaison discussion in June 2009	✓	✓			
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	<b>Review October 2009</b>			✓		
Bicester Vision Partnership	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 21 July meeting</b> Background briefing Review in July 2009 and early 2010	✓				✓
Emergency Planning	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To review progress	✓				

Fees and Charges	R&PSB	<b>Agenda item for 21 July meeting</b> Review of progress against recommendations and in advance of next budget round	✓				
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.					✓
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Refurbished centres due to open summer 2009; new Spiceball due to open winter 2009. FSWG to review at July 2009 meeting.	✓				
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note outcome of discussion at Executive in July 2009	✓				
RAF Bicester	OSC	<b>Work programme item for 14 July meeting</b> To note current position	✓				

<b>Review Title:</b>	<b>EMERGENCY PLANNING</b>		
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee (11 November 2008)</b>	<b>Date of report to PfH:</b>	21 November 2008
<b>Scrutiny Officers:</b>	James Doble		

<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Officer Response (Grahame Helm)</b>	<b>Scrutiny Comments June 2009</b>
1.	That the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development should provide a written explanation of the variance between the Emergency Planning budget and outturn in 2007/08;	The 2007/08 budget was set with Geoff Bell in post as Community Safety/Emergency Planning Officer. Geoff was then seconded to HR as Staff Liaison Officer which left the employee costs underspent in the emergency planning budget.	<b>Completed</b> The 2008/09 budget was based on the 2007/08 outturn.
2.	That the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development should prepare a briefing note for the Committee to illustrate variances between this Council's Emergency Plan and those of the other Oxfordshire local authorities;	This will be subject to other work pressures but should be completed in time for the next OSC discussion in May 2009 (see recommendation 5 below).	<b>Completed</b> Circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 April 2009
3.	That the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development should arrange for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to visit the Oxfordshire County Council emergency planning unit at		<b>Completed</b> Cllrs Donaldson, Atack and Atkinson visited OCC emergency planning unit Wood Eaton on 27 January 2009.

	Woodeaton;		
4.	That one or two of the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should act as observers at the next Emergency Plan exercise;	Scheduled for 3 February 2009 ~ postponed due to adverse weather (snow). Rescheduled for 24 April 2009.	<b>Completed.</b> No O&S Councillors were able to attend.
5.	That the Scrutiny Officer should circulate copies of the Oxfordshire County Council scrutiny report on an influenza pandemic.		<b>Completed</b>
6.	To note the current status of the Council's emergency planning arrangements and to conduct a six month review of the service in May 2009.		<b>Completed</b> On agenda for review at 14 July OSC meeting.

## **Emergency Planning – Update**

### **Exercise Fastball**

This is an exercise to test how quickly an incident management centre could be set up at Bodicote House in the event of an emergency. An exercise was held at 7.45 pm on 12 March 2009 when the security officer telephoned members of the management team. The call-round took 14 minutes and sufficient officers were available to have been able to open a centre within one hour.

### **Table-top Emergency Planning Exercise**

A table-top exercise was provided to the Council's Extended Management Team on 24 April 2009. Facilitated by the County Council's emergency planning team, the exercise was designed around an escalating incident of a fatal plane crash occurring in a village setting.

### **Rest Centre Training**

Following a review of rest centre provision across the county, the County Council team is putting together a training package for any staff involved in these arrangements.

### **CDC Emergency Plan Update**

Keyholder details for all village halls and community centres is currently being collated. This information will be included in the Emergency Plan (Part B) for use when local facilities may be required.

### **Community Emergency Plans**

The County Council has produced a Community Emergency Plan template and guidance. Its aim is to support town and parish councils in establishing a local emergency management team which can identify the risks to the community and identify available community resources. They will then be able to write a self-help plan based on the model template.

The template can be downloaded from the County Council website and a link will also be created from the CDC website.

### **Pandemic Flu Planning**

The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) has produced a Pandemic Influenza Multi Agency Strategy. Currently there has been no call on local authorities to support the front-line work of the health services and therefore the CDC focus has been on business continuity planning. A Pandemic Flu Plan is being finalised which identifies the Council's essential services and how they can be sustained. The TVLRF is holding a training and exercise day for all partners on 13 July.

<b>Review Title:</b>	<b>Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites</b>		
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of report to Executive:</b>	<b>11 May 2009</b>
<b>Scrutiny Officers:</b>	Catherine Phythian		

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Executive Response</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1.	That Cherwell District Council should encourage a more pro-active approach to rural affordable housing and exception sites and that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing be invited to fully investigate all opportunities for the provision of rural affordable housing through the Local Development Framework. This should include a review of the relevant policies for the location of general rural affordable housing (including the potential to generate opportunities for some integral affordable provision), and of the criteria against which exception sites are assessed.	<b>Accepted</b>	
2.	That Cherwell District Council should encourage an open and transparent approach to communications associated with the delivery of rural affordable housing and exception sites.	<b>Accepted</b>	
3.	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorses and recommends the proposed Rural Affordable Housing Improvement Plan to the Executive.	The Executive considered this report on 11 May 2009 and all of the Committee's recommendations were accepted.	<b>Completed</b>
4.	That the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and	PfH presented the conclusions of the review at Parish Liaison on 17 June	<b>Completed</b>

	Housing should be asked to present the conclusions of this scrutiny review and the Executive/Council response at the Parish Liaison meeting in June 2009.	(see attached)	
5.	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2009.	N/A	Add to OSC agenda for Oct or Nov
6.	That Officers be requested to produce a further report on the potential advantages and disadvantages of employing directly an Enabling Officer	Additional recommendations from Executive	Reports on agenda for Executive in August (Rural Improvement Plan update)
7.	That Officers be requested to produce a further report requesting relevant outside bodies to release land for rural exception sites		
8.	That Officers be requested to produce a further report explaining how the work of the Rural Housing Trust has been taken up by other organisations		

<b>Review Title:</b>	<b>Concessionary Travel</b>		
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Date of report to Executive:</b>	<b>6 July 2009</b>
<b>Scrutiny Officers:</b>	Catherine Phythian		

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Executive Response</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1.	<p><b>Smart Card Reader Scheme</b> That Cherwell District Council should not pursue the introduction of a Smart Card Reader scheme at this time due to the significant financial investment required and reservations about the current technical capacity of such schemes to meet the Council's needs. The government consultation on the future administration of concessionary travel schemes compounds the uncertainty.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Mis-ticketing</b> That the Portfolio Holder should publicise the importance of checking bus tickets and encourage bus pass holders to submit examples of mis-ticketing. The Portfolio Holder should follow-up examples of mis-ticketing with the bus companies; monitor the scale and value of the problem for the remainder of the financial year; and report on the results and proposed actions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the spring of 2010.</p>		
3.	<p><b>Management Information</b> That the Portfolio Holder should encourage the concessionary fare service providers to move to a monthly rather than quarterly claim and settlement cycle.</p>		

4.	<p><b>National Travel Tokens</b> That the current arrangements for the issue of national travel tokens should continue for 2009/10 and that the Portfolio Holder should monitor the take up and use of the national travel token scheme. The Council's continued participation in the national travel token scheme should be reviewed against the findings of the independent research into the provision of community transport schemes in the district (see recommendation 5).</p>		
5.	<p><b>Community Transport</b> That Cherwell District Council should continue to support and promote the provision of community transport schemes across the District. In support of this corporate priority the Portfolio Holder should commission research into the feasibility of introducing alternative community transport schemes in those parts of the district where residents do not benefit from the concessionary bus pass, national travel tokens or the Dial-A-Ride service.</p>		
6.	<p><b>Consortium approach</b> That the Portfolio Holder should open discussions with colleagues at the County Council and the District/City councils with a view to promoting a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of the national concessionary travel scheme, subject to the outcome of the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.</p>		
7.	<p><b>Government Consultation</b> That the Portfolio Holder should be invited to use the work of this Task &amp; Finish Group and the conclusions and recommendations in this report to inform the Council's response to the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.</p>		
8.	<p><b>Concessionary Travel Scheme</b> That the start time for the concessionary travel scheme in Cherwell should not be reviewed again and should remain at 09.30 am, in line with the statutory scheme, until April 2011 when the new arrangements for the administration of the concessionary travel scheme will come into force.</p>		