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Committee: **Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board**

Date: **Tuesday 16 February 2010**

Time: **7.00 pm**

Venue **Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA**

Membership

Councillor Colin Clarke (Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed

Councillor Margaret Cullip

Councillor Devena Rae

Councillor Keith Strangwood

Councillor Douglas Webb

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Maurice Billington

Councillor Victoria Irvine

Councillor Carol Steward

Councillor Patricia Tompson

Councillor Martin Weir

Substitutes

Councillor Nick Cotter

Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Councillor Mrs Diana Edwards

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 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 January 2010.

5. Registered Social Landlords' Management Group (Pages 7 - 12)

This is an opportunity for the Board to learn more about the Registered Social Landlords' Management Group, including its links to the Council's corporate priorities, the national standards that apply and to explore strategic and operational issues relating to the management of housing stock across the district. A background briefing on the management of social housing in the Cherwell district is attached at appendix 1.

The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, Strategic Director Planning, Housing and Economy and Housing Officers will be present at the meeting. Representatives from Charter, Bromford and Residents' Voice have also been invited to attend the meeting.

The Board will wish to reflect on the presentation and evidence and if there are any issues that they wish to explore further, these should be added to the 2010/11 Work Programme.

6. Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (Pages 13 - 48)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

To consider the outcomes of the scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and to agree the recommendations to Executive.

The draft report will be circulated separately to Members.

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the briefing on the review of representation on Outside Bodies.
- (2) Consider the draft report (circulated separately to Members of the Board) and agree the draft report be circulated to Officers for comments.

- (3) Agree that the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be delegated to agree any amendments to the report prior to submitting to the Executive.

7. **Work Programme** (Pages 49 - 56)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

To provide the Board with an update on the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10.

Recommendations

The Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2009/10 as set out at Appendix 1.
- (2) Note the update on the Bicester Vision Partnership.

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or (01295) 221589 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 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 Natasha Clark, Legal and Democratic Services natasha.clark@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221589

Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 8 February 2010

Agenda Item 4

Cherwell District Council

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 12 January 2010 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Colin Clarke (Chairman)
Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Devena Rae
Councillor Carol Steward
Councillor Patricia Tompson
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Martin Weir

Also Present: Councillor James Macnamara

Apologies for absence: Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Victoria Irvine
Councillor Keith Strangwood

Officers: Karen Curtin, Head of Finance
Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

37 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

38 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

39 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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Fees and Charges Update Report 2

The Board considered a report of the Head of Finance which detailed progress on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Fees and Charges scrutiny review in December 2008 with a particular focus on car park income against budget.

In response to Members questions, the Head of Finance assured the Board that measures had been put in place to ensure future income implications of planned events, developments and redevelopments were included in capital bids. The Board was advised that this was currently part of an Internal Audit review.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of introducing more long term parking options in Bicester and Banbury and introducing evening parking charges. The Board commented that this could be considered as part of the 2011/12 budget process. Members also asked officers to provide supplementary information on the income of Cherwell District Council car parks in comparison to privately owned car parks.

Resolved

- 1) That the contents of the report be noted.

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Update on Budget Scrutiny 2010/2011

The Portfolio Holder Resources and Organisation Development and Head of Finance were present to update Members on the status of the 2010/2011 budget process. They paid particular regard to the outcome of the Executive's consideration of the 14 recommendations (attached at appendix 1 to these minutes) submitted by the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in December 2009 following their budget scrutiny work in the autumn.

The Head of Finance reported that on 11 January 2010 the Executive had agreed the second draft of the 2010/2011 budget which included the Board's 14 recommendations. With regard to the Capital Programme, the Head of Finance advised Members that all bids with 21 points or lower had been deleted, unless they were necessary or commitment had previously been given. There were currently 36 bids which would be further considered by the Capital Investment Delivery Group against the following criteria: necessary, mandatory, points criteria basis.

With regard to recommendation 9: "That the potential for savings on Christmas Lights (£66K 2009/10) should be considered as part of the 2011/2012 budget process. The process should include early consultation (in Q1 2010) with Banbury Town Council, Bicester Town Council and Kidlington Parish Council", Members requested that officers write to each of the town/parish councils to confirm the current situation.

The Portfolio Holder Resources and Organisational Development advised the Board that the second draft budget had illustrated significant progress in

securing further efficiency savings to reduce the funding gap identified in the first draft from £349,623 to approximately £32k.

The Portfolio Holder Resources and Organisational Development highlighted the draft targets for 2010-2011 within the Corporate Plan. The Board noted that, as in previous years, a set of council tax promises will be drawn from the Corporate Plan targets.

The Board noted that the Executive would consider the third draft of the budget in February 2010. The final version of the budget and the final Corporate Plan targets and promises would be presented to Council on 22 February 2010.

In response to questions, the Head of Finance updated Members on the current situation regarding the Council's investments with the failed Icelandic bank Glitnir. The Board was advised that the Council had been informed that all Local Authority claims would not receive priority creditor status. Under the revised status the Council would recover a significantly reduced amount of investment than previously anticipated.

The Head of Finance informed the Board that the Local Government Association, which was representing a number of Local Authorities, including Cherwell District Council, had lodged an appeal challenging the decision.

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Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which updated Members on the progress to date of the scrutiny review of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and presented the emerging conclusions for consideration.

The Board considered a briefing paper on alternative delivery methods for Oxfordshire Rural Community Council services (excluding the housing element). Members discussed the options put forward in the briefing paper and agreed that the best option was to maintain the partnership. Members commented that throughout the course of the review it had been apparent that the partnership was critical to the delivery of the Council's rural agenda. Members of the Board noted that as the demand for services varied each year the partnership offered a higher degree of flexibility than an in-house service would be able to offer. However, Members agreed that it was important that a more formal arrangement for the partnership be developed, which could be achieved through the adoption of a Service Level Agreement for the urban/rural and community transport elements of the partnership.

The Board discussed the importance of the role and involvement of elected Members in the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council specifically, and with all of the Council's partnerships and outside bodies to which the Council appoints a representative in general.

Members noted that whilst the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural had regular briefings with Cherwell District Council Officers, he did not have regular meetings with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

representatives or attend any meetings arranged by ORCC. The elected Member who had been appointed to ORCC as an outside body representative had not had any contact with the Portfolio Holder, the Cherwell District Council Officers or ORCC.

The Board agreed that it was important for elected Members to be involved in the Council's partnerships/outside bodies. Members were unable to come to a view as to whether the elected representative on the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council should be the Portfolio Holder or a rural ward Member. There were arguments in favour of both options and Members agreed that there were general issues that needed to first be considered relating to the role and involvement of elected Members in the Council's partnerships and as appointed outside body representatives:

- The need for clear guidelines about the roles and responsibilities of elected Members appointed to outside bodies and partnerships, including clarification of Members' interests
- The need for guidelines for partners and outside bodies

The Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer advised the Board that the Head of Improvement was leading a project team undertaking a review of member representation on partnerships and outside bodies on behalf of the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Environment, Recreation and Health. The Board agreed that the Chairman should meet with the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager and Scrutiny Officer, who were on the project team, to discuss the review and report back to the Board.

Resolved

- 1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- 2) That the issues arising from the briefing on alternative delivery methods for Oxfordshire Rural Community Council services (excluding the housing element) be noted.
- 3) That the following recommendations be agreed:
 - a) That it be noted that the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is an important partnership which should continue and be regarded as critical to the delivery of the rural agenda.
 - b) That a Service Level Agreement for the urban/rural and community transport elements of the partnership be adopted.
 - c) That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2010.
- 4) That the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny meet with the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager and Scrutiny Officer regarding the review of member representation on partnerships and outside bodies and report back to the Board.

- 5) That agreement of the following draft recommendations be deferred subject to further clarification regarding the role and involvement of elected Members on the Council's partnerships and as appointed representatives on outside bodies:
 - a) That an annual programme of aims/objectives (aligned to the Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Council's corporate priorities) be agreed with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and regularly reviewed and monitored.
 - b) That the role and involvement of elected Members in the Council's partnership be clarified and strengthened.
 - c) That the elected Member representative should work closely with urban and rural services officers and community transport officers to provide overall steer and direction

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the overview and scrutiny work programme 2009/10.

Bicester Vision Partnership

The Vice-Chairman, who had been a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it had carried out a review of the Bicester Vision Partnership, advised Members that there were a number of further issues to be considered before the Board could consider proposals to review the Council's continued involvement with Bicester Vision Partnership.

The Board agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor Steward would arrange a meeting with the Leader of the Council to discuss the Council's involvement with Bicester Vision Partnership and report the outcomes of this meeting to the Board.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Board noted the contents of the report and the existing work programme 2009/10. Members noted that the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing and Housing Officers would be invited to the Board's February meeting to brief Members on the Registered Social Landlords' Management Group. The Board noted that the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural, the Head of Improvement and the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development would be invited to the Board's February meeting to brief Members on the initial findings of the value for money review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership. This would also be an opportunity for the Board to consider the approach to a scrutiny review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership.

Resolved

- 1) That Councillors Clarke, Mawer and Steward will arrange a meeting with the Leader of the Council to discuss Bicester Vision Partnership and update the Board on the outcomes of this meeting.

- 2) That the current Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2009/10, including the items scheduled for February 2010 meetings be noted.
- 3) That the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing and Housing Officers be invited to the Board's February meeting to brief Members on the Registered Social Landlords' Management Group
- 4) That the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural, the Head of Improvement and the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development be invited to the Board's February meeting to brief Members on the initial findings of the value for money review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Tuesday 16 February 2010

Management of Social Housing in the Cherwell District – a Briefing Paper

Introduction

At the Performance and Scrutiny Board of 16 February, Members wish to discuss the management of social housing in the Cherwell District – a role also known as “housing management”. In order to prepare for the discussion this briefing paper has been produced to provide Members with a general overview of housing management and the roles of the local authority, registered social landlords (RSLs) and tenant representatives.

The meeting of the 16 February will include representation from both Council and RSL officers, and will be structured to give Members the basic general information to allow consideration of which aspects could be explored in further detail at future meetings.

To discuss any aspect of this report in further detail in advance of the meeting please contact the Strategic Housing Team on (01295) 227991.

General Context

The role of Cherwell District Council (“the Council”) in terms of housing is that of the strategic housing authority – and all local authorities perform this role. Housing Services are structured to incorporate all aspects of strategic housing which include:

- Private sector housing functions – including enforcement, grants for vulnerable households such as disabled people and energy efficiency
- Housing needs – including homelessness and temporary accommodation, housing options and housing advice
- Strategic housing – including affordable housing provision and identifying the housing requirements (investment, access to housing, support) in the District and devising solutions to these needs.

Local authorities that still own their housing stock (known as “council housing”) also have the further role of housing landlord. However, many authorities have transferred their housing to an RSL (also known as housing associations). Those that have transferred, such as the Council, no longer have the role of

housing landlord for those properties. The former “council housing” in Cherwell is now managed by the RSL Charter Community Housing – this locally based organisation is part of the Sanctuary Group, which is one of the largest RSLs nationally. The Banbury Homes housing stock is also managed by Charter Community Housing – thus bringing together all of the former council housing. A number of other RSLs own and manage social housing in the District.

As part of its strategic housing function, the Council still has a role to play in how these homes are managed. Most of the day to day operation is undertaken by the RSLs, and in doing so the RSLs are accountable to and monitored by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) which is a national organisation set up to help ensure the effective performance and customer focus of RSLs. However, effective management of social housing is crucial to the Council and its partners in ensuring the Cherwell Sustainable Communities Strategy priorities are supported – the Council therefore plays a proactive driving role in taking forward housing management in the District.

Definitions

Many terms exist to describe social housing and affordable housing which only serve to confuse the public. The basic terms are described below:

Social housing or social rented housing – these are the terms that describes the formerly owned Council properties (“council housing”) in the District. They also cover all RSL properties that are let for rent. Because the rents are less expensive than privately renting, the properties are known as social housing or social rented housing.

Shared ownership – many RSLs run shared ownership schemes. With shared ownership, the tenant buys part of their home and pays rent to the RSL on the other part of their home. Shared ownership is classed as intermediate housing – that is, it lies between social housing and full home ownership. There are other types of intermediate housing, but shared ownership is the main example within the Cherwell District.

Affordable Housing – this is an umbrella term for both of the above. Local authorities used to focus mainly on social housing. However, as income levels have failed to keep pace with house prices, local people who would not historically have applied for a council house on the waiting list (now called a housing register) are now helped to get their foot on the property ladder through shared ownership. In this sense, the Council is supporting the needs of people in a wider range of income brackets.

RSL providers in the District

The main RSL in the District is Charter Community Housing, and the Council has Member representation on its management board. A number of other RSLs also own and manage stock, and the main ones are:

- A2 Dominion – which now own the former Cherwell Housing Trust properties
- Bromford Group
- Oxford Citizens Housing Association
- Sovereign Vale Housing
- Paradigm Housing Association
- A number of smaller RSLs also operate in the District

The Council works closely with these RSLs. It chairs and facilitates the quarterly Cherwell RSL Housing Management Group, and undertakes an annual appraisal with each RSL. The Council has also agreed and signed a protocol with each RSL designed to clarify the way that RSL providers work with the Council to improve outcomes for residents in social housing in the District.

Housing Management

The management of social housing is undertaken by the RSLs in the District. However, the Council maintains a housing register and nominates (i.e. decides on) applicants to move into RSL homes. The Council normally secures full nomination rights on new social housing vacancies and then nominates most future tenants once properties become vacant – although the RSL normally chooses a percentage of the future allocation of properties. This explanation is important since the decision on who moves into properties has a clear relationship with the future management of the home and the local community.

The main duties undertaken by the RSLs include:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Allocation of homes
- Estate/area inspections
- Caretaking – communal areas
- Rental income
- Enforcing tenancy conditions
- Tenant involvement

The Government expects local authorities to move away from mono-tenure areas (i.e. including old style Council estates) and to create mixed and balanced communities. Whereas Councils historically would manage whole Council owned estates, RSL housing stock tends to be more dispersed. This means housing management does not always involve large numbers of homes grouped together.

Housing management has a direct link to a wide range of local priorities, and hence RSLs work closely with the Council and its partners to ensure that local aims are being addressed and that RSLs are playing full and positive roles in local engagement mechanisms. These priorities include:

- Community safety
- Antisocial behaviour
- The environment
- Affordable warmth and energy efficiency
- Homelessness prevention
- Tenancy sustainment
- Taking leadership during the recession
- Overcrowding and under occupation
- Deprivation and regeneration
- Community development

Relative importance of housing management

The Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005-11 lists housing management as the seventh strategic housing priority in the District – hence this area has been developed during more recent times following the addressing of earlier priorities such as the promises (housing improvements) to Charter tenants, the delivery of affordable housing, and the progression of homelessness. The Housing Strategy will be reviewed during 2010-11. The more recent Cherwell Sustainable Communities Strategy identifies many housing-related actions that require resources and input from RSLs to move forward.

Housing management relates strongly to the Council's commitment to housing within the Local Area Agreement (LAA2) through NI155 on affordable housing delivery, and NI156 on the reduced use of temporary accommodation. Affordable housing delivery must be sustainable and not threaten or undermine an existing community, whilst well supported tenants are less likely to become homeless and present themselves as in housing need to the Council.

As described the Government has set up a Tenant Services Authority (TSA) to regulate RSLs and social housing. In that sense, it would be duplication for the local authority to place extensive monitoring requirements on RSLs. However, we do need to know how they are performing, how they are working for the benefit of local people and how they can best work with the local authority. Also, the TSA has praised the Council for its role in working jointly with RSLs on housing management initiatives through its RSL Management and Development Protocols.

It has become clear from the recently introduced annual appraisals with RSLs that they are undertaking more initiatives than we had understood before housing

management was developed by the Council. There is an opportunity for the leverage of resources into the District if these relationships are developed further (e.g. grants for disabled people, financial inclusion initiatives etc...)

Tenant involvement

RSLs are expected to work with their customers to understand tenant views, and to develop and deliver services in partnership with them. Residents Voice is the collective group of Charter Community Housing's tenant representatives. Other RSLs also work closely with tenants, although with more dispersed stock this involvement is not necessarily through residents associations. The TSA expects tenant involvement to be integral to the work of RSLs.

The Council has recently begun working more closely with Residents Voice and an agreement is being developed to show how the Council and Residents Voice will work in partnership on strategic housing functions.

Further research

The two links below may prove useful perusal, but are not essential for the Scrutiny Board of 16 February 2010.

Charter Community Housing website:
<http://www.cchousing.co.uk/>

The Government's overview of housing management:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/>

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Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Partnership Scrutiny – Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

16 February 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the outcomes of the scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and to agree the recommendations to Executive.

The draft report will be circulated separately to Members.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the briefing on the review of representation on Outside Bodies.
- (2) Consider the draft report (circulated separately to Members of the Board) and agree the draft report be circulated to Officers for comments.
- (3) Agree that the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board be delegated to agree any amendments to the report prior to submitting to the Executive.

Details

1 Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

- 1.1 The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board has been undertaking a scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.
- 1.2 All evidence gathered throughout the review has been circulated separately to Members. It will form Volume Two of the final report. The evidence has been gathered through: background briefings; site visits;

question and answer session with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and Cherwell District Council' Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural and Strategic Director Environment and Community.

- 1.3 At the Board's January meeting Members agreed the following recommendations:
 - a) That it be noted that the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is an important partnership which should continue and be regarded as critical to the delivery of the rural agenda.
 - b) That a Service Level Agreement for the urban/rural and community transport elements of the partnership be adopted.
 - c) That the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board should monitor progress against each of the above recommendations and review the situation, initially in September 2010.
- 1.4 At the meeting Members deferred agreement of the following recommendations subject to further clarification regarding the role and involvement of elected Members on the Council's partnerships and as appointed representatives on outside bodies:
 - a) That an annual programme of aims/objectives (aligned to the Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Council's corporate priorities) be agreed with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and regularly reviewed and monitored.
 - b) That the role and involvement of elected Members in the Council's partnership be clarified and strengthened.
 - c) That the elected Member representative should work closely with urban and rural services officers and community transport officers to provide overall steer and direction.

2 Review of Representation on Outside Bodies

- 2.1 In spring 2009 the Executive requested further information setting out how the Council will effectively support member representatives on partnerships and all outside bodies, including providing appropriate training, strengthening staff support for members, advice on council policy with regard to issues within the remit of partnerships and outside bodies and providing feedback mechanisms from issues raised on partnerships on outside bodies.
- 2.2 In response to the specific issues raised by the Executive, a project group was formed. The objectives of the group are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In addition, in advance of 2010/11 the Leader of the Council has

commissioned a review of the current councillor representation on outside bodies to establish if this is an appropriate level of commitment and a good use of resources.

2.4 The Chairman will brief the Board at the meeting on the current state of this work.

3 ORCC Report on Community Transport Provision

3.1 As a further piece of evidence, Members will wish to note that as a result of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of Concessionary Travel in spring/summer 2009, the Portfolio Holder commissioned 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. The research was conducted by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and the report is attached at Appendix 2.

3.2 The piece of work is an example of the move towards a more proactive role that the Council is taking in the partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council.

4 Conclusion

3.3 This completes the work of the Board's scrutiny review into the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. Subject to Member's agreement, the Board's report will be submitted to Executive in April 2010.

Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

A district of opportunity; A safe and healthy Cherwell

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Nigel Morris
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Review of Representation on Outside Bodies – Objectives
Appendix 2	Report on community transport provision in Cherwell district (Report of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)
Background Papers	
Draft Report:	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Review of representation on Outside Bodies

Objectives of review

1. To agree a definitive list of those Outside Bodies (including partnerships) where CDC appoints a representative
2. To identify those Outside Bodies where CDC should no longer appoint a representative
3. To establish Modern.gov as the definitive data source for information on Outside Bodies
4. To agree a protocol for the annual review of, and appointment to, Outside Bodies
5. To agree guidance for Councillors (and Officers) on the role and responsibilities as the CDC representative on Outside Bodies

Approach

Review team	Cllr Reynolds (replaced by Cllr Atack), James Doble, Claire Taylor, Elizabeth Hawkins and Catherine Phythian
Timescale	December 2009 – March 2010
Implementation	Start of municipal year 2010/11

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Report on community transport provision in Cherwell District



Results for and
on behalf of
Cherwell District Council

By Alix Michaelis and Emily Lewis
Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

December 2009



Oxfordshire Rural Community Council is registered in England as a company limited by guarantee (no.2461552) and as a charity (no.900560). Its registered office is Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 4SZ

Report on existing community transport provision in Cherwell District and possible ways of enhancing this provision

Summary

A key finding from this research is that awareness of the work of formal car schemes (and particularly Banbury Volunteer Bureau) is extremely limited in the district, particularly in comparison with the more widespread awareness of Cherwell District Dial-a-Ride.

This lack of awareness is evident amongst residents (including those with mobility impairments) and amongst local councils, who were also rarely aware of the existence of the scheme. Conversely parish councils and meetings were very likely to say that informal lift-giving is taking place within their communities, and were also commonly willing to help recruit volunteers in meeting the needs of their residents.

The recent transport needs surveys in the area highlight that accessing medical appointments is a common problem for a minority of people in rural Cherwell, particularly when GP practices are themselves in a rural location. In these circumstances public transport is unlikely to be able to meet these needs, and it is in this area that further work could yield results through the enhancement of existing community transport provision.

If awareness of the work of volunteer driving were to be increased, and more volunteers recruited in villages where there currently are none, there would be an improvement in the accessibility of services for those who are experiencing isolation.

Recommendations

As parish councils and parish meetings have now been informed through the survey, that work is being carried out in this field, some will be more receptive to further contact in an attempt to recruit more volunteer drivers in their villages.

A simple exercise such as writing an article for publication in local village newsletters in parishes identified in section 4.4 below could yield some results: experience has shown that this method of recruitment is much less successful than face to face recruitment, although it can provide a limited number of new volunteer drivers. This type of article, would in any case also go some way to raising awareness of the existence of volunteer car schemes (and Banbury Volunteer Bureau in particular).

It is also important that the findings of the project are reported back to the parishes and the community transport schemes who have provided information, and this could be achieved at the same time as carrying out the further work carried out in meeting the objective of recruiting further volunteers.

1.1 Introduction

The overall objective of this project is to improve access to services for residents in Cherwell, particularly those in rural communities.

The focus was to identify current provision of community transport within Cherwell district and also to carry out a needs assessment to come up with recommendations to enhance provision in Cherwell.

The project was commissioned by Graham Helm, Head of Safer Communities and Community Development, Cherwell District Council and was carried out by the Community Transport Advisers at ORCC. The time of the Community Transport Advisers was the main resource available. Support was also given by Daniel Messer, Geographical Information Systems Officer, at Cherwell District Council, who created the district maps used to show responses to the parish questionnaire.

1.2 What we already knew about Community Transport in the District (baseline)

This district differs from the others in Oxfordshire in that it is served by two large community transport providers and now has very few of the village-based schemes which characterise the other districts (particularly, for example, South Oxfordshire, which is chequered with these smaller scale volunteer car schemes).

BCTA provides dial-a-ride services to the whole district and is a long-established example of a community transport provider of significant size. Dial-a-ride provision for the villages is focussed on one of the three service centres: Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington and passengers would not be able to travel across the district using this service. It may be that the effectiveness of this scheme (and its ability to cover dispersed needs across the district) is the reason for a lack of village schemes. There are also two recent examples which indicate that this is the case: the operations of both the Deddington surgery minibus scheme, and Age Concern Banbury are now being carried out by BCTA who were able to take on the work when the individual ventures were no longer viable.

Less well-known (as confirmed by transport needs surveys in the area) is the Banbury Volunteer Bureau Car Scheme. However, this volunteer car scheme provides a vital (and widespread) service for those needing to get to medical appointments and day centres - including hospital appointments in the Horton and the John Radcliffe. This scheme has in recent years expanded into the Bicester area and is now serving villages further to the south of the district.

1.3 Methodology and limits of the report

Within the time frame an efficient method of consultation and analysis needed to be carried out. Parish Councils and meetings were considered the best means of achieving consultation throughout the district although responses will not necessarily give as precise a picture of usage of services as if residents themselves are consulted.

Nevertheless, a questionnaire (Appendix 1) asking communities for more information on usage and availability of community transport options was sent to all parishes. Responses were collected and collated to assess whether there were any trends in terms of difficulties accessing services and in relation to community transport provision. If any particular gaps in community transport provision were identified, further work could be recommended in these areas to enhance provision and

improve access to services within the district. The gaps in provision might be geographical, or might be in relation to certain types of journey which are causing particular problems.

In 2008, during the review of bus services by OCC in the Banbury area, several parishes undertook transport needs surveys and data for these reports is obtained via questionnaires which are circulated directly to households within the villages. In 2009 further parishes within the district – those in the Bicester and Kidlington area, also carried out transport needs surveys. Relevant conclusions from these surveys have also been used to inform this report.

Finally, the two major providers of Community Transport in the District were also consulted and information from them on perceived gaps was also obtained.

2.1 Transport Needs Surveys.

As stated above, two reviews of subsidised bus services were recently carried out by Oxfordshire County Council in the district. During the consultation period, the Community Transport Adviser at ORCC offers assistance to parishes who may be affected by any changes with carrying out a transport needs survey. A study such as this allows the parish council (or meeting) to obtain information on which destinations are important for residents and for which purpose, in addition to enabling them to flag up any serious problems accessing services or isolation within their community. A copy of the questionnaire which is distributed is included in Appendix 2.

The following parishes carried out such a survey.

Banbury area:

1. Mollington
2. Drayton
3. Shutford
4. Sibford Ferris
5. Sibford Gower
6. Wroxton and Balscote
7. South Newington

Bicester area:

8. Bucknell
9. Hampton and Gay Poyle
10. Mixbury
11. Oddington
12. Souldern
13. Weston-on-the-Green
14. Upper Heyford
15. Wendlebury

Within the questionnaire residents are asked whether they are aware of the community transport schemes which serve their village. This information can then be cross-tabulated with information on the respondent's mobility to see if those who have mobility issues are aware of the schemes which could help them.

Respondents are also asked in the survey whether they would be willing to act as a volunteer for community transport schemes within their village.

2.2 Awareness of Community Transport Provision obtained in transport needs surveys

	Knowledge of BCTA	Knowledge amongst those with mobility impairments (number who are aware/number with impairments)	Knowledge of BVB	Knowledge amongst those with mobility impairments (number who are aware/number with impairments)	Volunteer nominated in survey?
1. Mollington	21.1%	$4/9 = 44.4\%$	1.8%	$0/9 = 0\%$	
2. Drayton	63.3%	$3/3 = 100\%$	20.0%	$1/3 = 33.3\%$	
3. Shutford	16.7%	$4/7 = 57.1\%$	6.4%	$0/7 = 0\%$	1
4. Sibford Ferris	42.2%	$1/1 = 100\%$	19.2%	$0/1 = 0\%$	
5. Sibford Gower	42.2%	$10/14 = 71.4\%$	13.8%	$1/14 = 7.1\%$	
6. Wroxton and Balscote	21.8%	$2/6 = 33.3\%$	3.6%	$0/6 = 0\%$	
7. South Newington	14.8%	$1/3 = 33.3\%$	6.6%	$0/3 = 0\%$	2
8. Bucknell	35.7%	$6/11 = 54.5\%$	0%	$1/11 = 9.1\%$	
9. Hampton and Gay Poyle	17.6%	$0/0 = 0\%$	0%	$0/0 = 0\%$	
10. Mixbury	0	$0 = 0\%$	0	$0 = 0\%$	1
11. Oddington	2.45%	$0/2 = 0\%$	n/a	n/a	
12. Souldern	33.3%	$2/3 = 66.6\%$	n/a	n/a	
13. Weston-on-the-Green	64.7%	$3/3 = 100\%$	0%	$0/3 = 0\%$	
14. Upper Heyford	11%	$3/10 = 30\%$	0%	$0/10 = 0\%$	
15. Wendlebury	20.7%	$3/8 = 37.5\%$	3.4%	$0/8 = 0\%$	
AVERAGE	30.3%	52.5%	5.8%	3.8%	

From this table it can be seen clearly the stark comparison in terms of awareness of BCTA as compared with awareness of Banbury Volunteer Bureau (where applicable). It is to be expected that respondents would be more aware of a dial-a-ride service using clearly marked vehicles, but the lack of knowledge of voluntary car scheme services amongst people who are responding to a transport questionnaire (and also amongst those with mobility impairments who are more likely to be the elderly) is marked. So where an average of 30.3% of all respondents are aware of Dial-a-Ride

services, only 5.8% are aware of Volunteer Bureau services. Similarly, where an average of 52.5% of those with mobility issues are aware of Dial-a-Ride, only 3.8% of the group are aware of Volunteer Bureau services.

2.3 Information on access to doctors' appointments obtained in Transport Needs Surveys

The following information on each village's responses in relation to accessing medical appointments has been collated for the purposes of this report.

- 1) **Mollington** – Destinations for doctors appointments are dispersed for this village with residents going to Cropredy, Banbury and Fenny Compton. Of the 25 people getting a lift or a taxi to their GP practice, 18 are aged under 25 and 7 are aged over 60. The two people who rely on taxis to get to appointments cannot drive.
- 2) **Drayton** Residents of this village largely go to Banbury for doctor's appointments. Amongst these, there are individuals who are unable to drive and who rely on lifts and taxis to get to medical appointments.
- 3) **Shutford**, Most residents go to Shennington for doctors appointments although a substantial amount go to Banbury. Of those who need a lift to see their GP 7 are over the legal age of driving.
- 4) **Sibford Ferris** Most respondents here use the Sibford surgery although it still requires most to drive to do so. Those who need a lift to go to their GP, 3 are over the legal age of driving.
- 5) **Sibford Gower** – In this village, most respondents are lucky enough to have their surgery within the village and to be able to walk to appointments. Of those who need a lift to go to their GP 3 are over the age of 75.
- 6) **Wroxton** - Shennington is the most popular destination for doctors appointments, although around a fifth of residents go to Banbury to see their doctor. Of those respondents getting a lift, 6 are going to Shennington, 3 to Banbury and 1 to Woodlands. Comments suggest that bus services to Banbury are not the right times for GP appointments.
- 7) **South Newington** – For residents here Bloxham is the most common destination for GP appointments although a significant minority go to Deddington. Of 9 respondents who need a lift to get to appointments, 4 are aged over 60.
- 8) **Bucknell** – All residents here go to Bicester for doctors appointments, and of 17 who need a lift to get there, 7 are aged over 60. 3 people also use taxis to get to appointments and one uses dial-a-ride.
- 9) **Hampton and Gaye Poyle** – Residents here go to either Islip or Kidlington, and all respondents are able to drive to get to appointments.
- 10) **Mixbury** – Residents of this village go to Brackley ad Buckingham for GP appointments. Of the 7 respondents who need a lift, 1 is aged between 46 and 60 and two are aged over 75.
- 11) **Oddington** – Islip was the only surgery cited in this survey and of those who need a lift to GP appointments, 3 are aged between 17 and 45 and one is over 75.

- 12) **Souldern** – Deddington and Bicester were the two destinations for respondents in this village and 5 of them needed a lift to get to appointments and 3 take a taxi. All three taking a taxi for this purpose are aged over 61, and two live in a household with no cars.
- 13) **Weston-on-the-Green** – Islip is the surgery used by the vast majority of residents in Weston and 9 need a lift and 2 need a taxi to get there. Of nine needing a lift, 5 are aged over 75 and three are aged between 61 and 75.
- 14) **Upper Heyford** – Banbury is the most common destination for GP appointments and 5 people over the age of 60 take lifts to get there.
- 15) **Wendlebury** – Bicester is the primary destination for doctor's appointments for this village. 11 relied on lifts to get to appointments, 3 get taxis and one uses Dial-a-Ride.

2.4 Issues arising from the transport needs surveys.

The results in relation to doctor's appointments, when assessed together, confirm that in most villages there are minorities of, by-and-large, elderly residents who are relying on lifts or taxis to get to medical appointments. Even in villages that have their own doctor's surgery, there are those who will need a lift because the walk may be too far.

In the Bicester review, a new question was added to ascertain whether a respondent was living in a house with no car, and as expected, those who are using taxis to get to medical appointments are mostly those who live alone and do not drive.

There are also some villages where residents are travelling in several directions to get to medical appointments and this makes these needs particularly difficult to address with public transport (which, as could be seen from responses to the Wroxton questionnaire, may anyway not be convenient because of timing issues). So, for example, in Mollington, residents travel in 3 different directions to surgeries in Cropredy, Banbury and Fenny Compton. In some villages, respondents are travelling quite a distance to appointments, as, for example, in Upper Heyford where most respondents travel to Banbury to see their doctor.

3 Information obtained from existing Community Transport Providers

3.1 Banbury and District Volunteer Bureau

The scheme currently has volunteer drivers located in the following parishes (see diagram below for mapping of volunteers):

Banbury	14
Adderbury	2
Twyford	1
Byfield *	1
Wardington	1
Kings Sutton*	1
Horton	2
Cropredy	2
Little Bourton	1
Greatworth*	1
Sibford Ferris	1
Deddington	1
Bicester	5
Newton Purcell	1

* parishes outside the district

Most of these drivers are willing to take clients from other parishes. However if the distance between the home of the client and the volunteer is too great, the costs of the journey becomes prohibitive as the “dead mileage” between the two must still be paid for.

Although there are now a handful of drivers in Bicester, the availability of these volunteers is limited and there is tension between the needs in the area and the driver time on offer.

3.2 Banburyshire Community Transport Association (BCTA)

BCTA has recently seen a slight decrease in passenger numbers in rural areas, and in the Kidlington area. The latter may be attributable to the ability of the elderly to use their bus passes on high frequency, low-floor public transport provision which may negate the need for BCTA's services.

It does not get requests from Charlton-on-Otmoor, Mixbury, Finmere and Muncott (this ties in with the results obtained from these parishes as seen below).

There is scope for BCTA to provide more group transport in the district.

3.3 Good neighbour schemes

Good neighbour schemes are local voluntary groups which offer a service in their community for those in need of help and support which cannot be supplied through Social Care and Health and other professional care agencies. These groups will sometimes offer transport in addition to these other tasks. In Cherwell District the current list of good neighbour schemes includes:

- Banbury WRVS. WRVS nationally is currently running a campaign to increase volunteer driving and more information on this scheme is available on the website:
<http://www.giveusalift.org.uk>

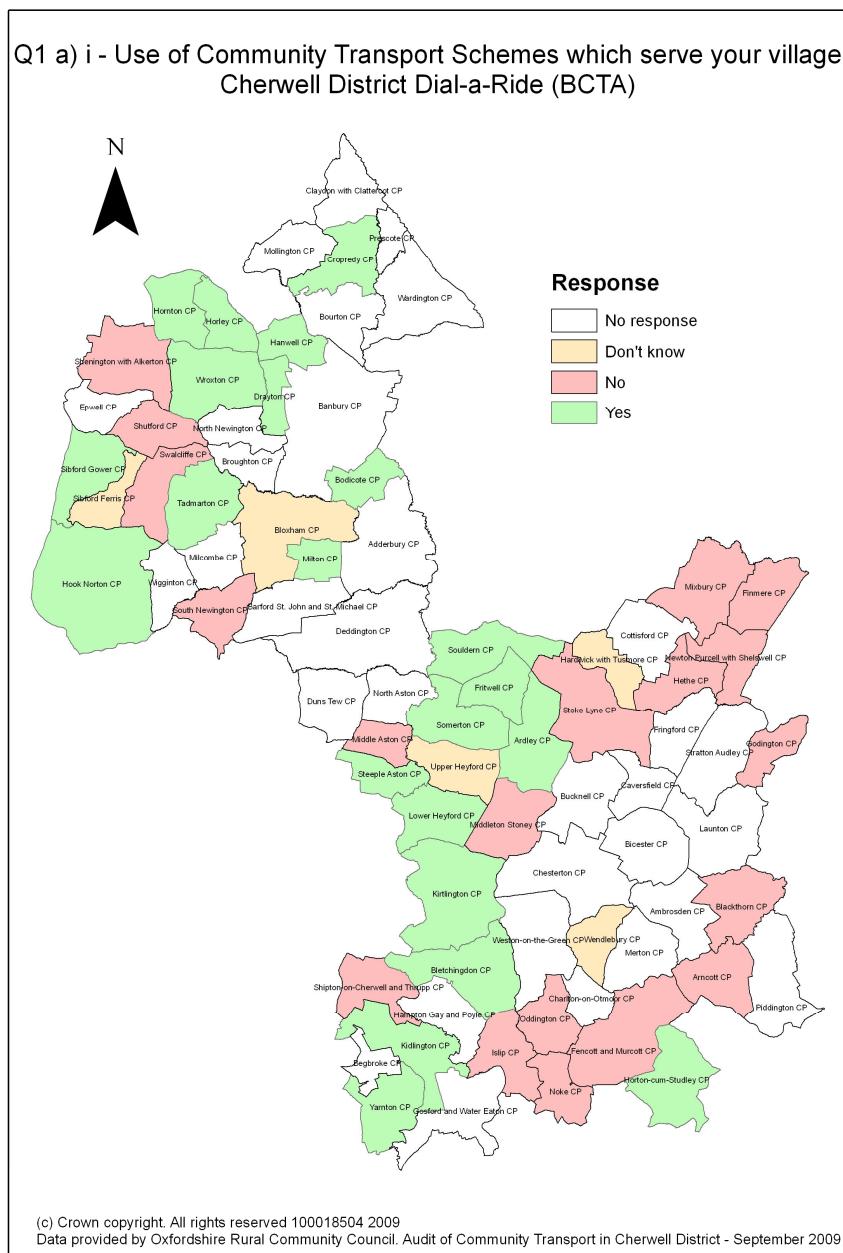
- Bicester Resource Centre – this is a good neighbour's scheme, but it does not include the provision of transport.
- Bodicote Good Neighbours Scheme – this new scheme hopes to be able to offer transport when it is fully established.
- Deddington – a good neighbours scheme but one which does not offer transport.

There is currently a Good Neighbours Scheme Stakeholder group, administered by Social and Community Services - the aim of which is to enhance and support this area of voluntary work in the County. Although these schemes are not carrying out a great deal of transport work in the district at present, experience has shown that many good neighbours schemes find that the primary need in their communities is transport and so become primarily transport providers over time. This will not necessarily be the case with these schemes as those supported by the Stakeholder Group are encouraged to offer a range of services, but it may be that if more of these schemes are encouraged to develop, they may offer some further transport options to communities.

4 Results of Questionnaire sent out to Parishes

4.1 Use of Community Transport in your village.

4.1.1 Cherwell District Dial-a-Ride – map of responses



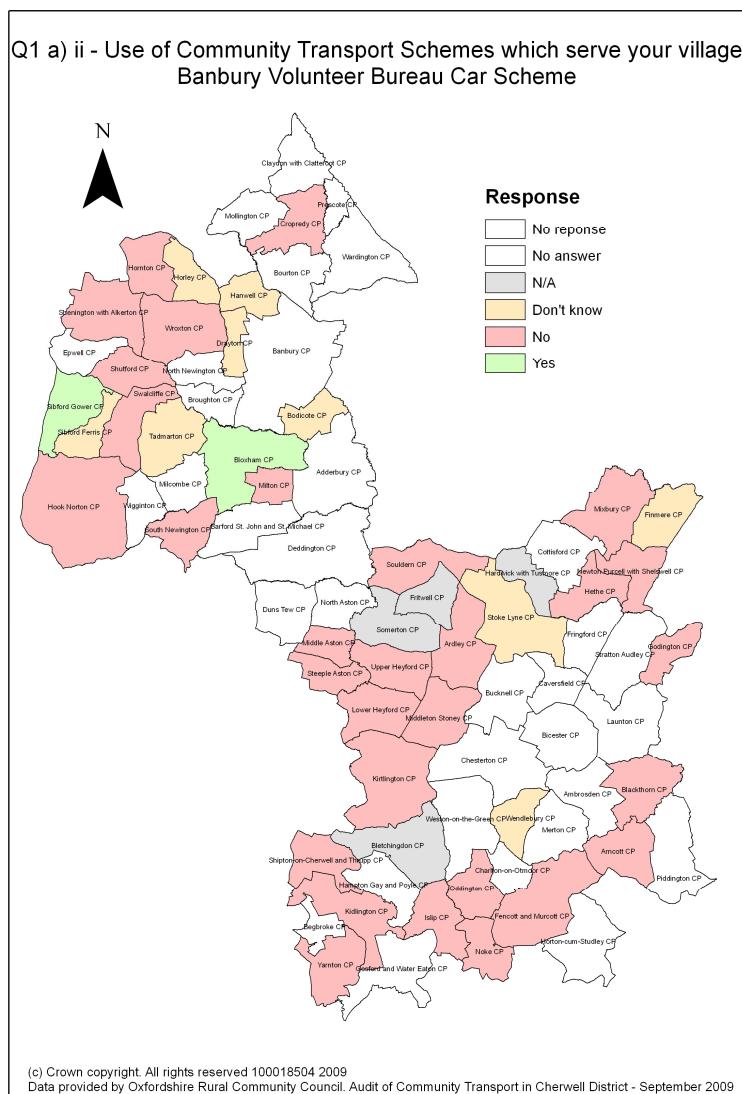
Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
24	20	0	6

4.1.2 Use of Cherwell District Dial-a-Ride

The answers to this question need to be qualified by the fact that it is likely that in some instances the parish council or meeting is unaware of the usage of Dial-a-Ride services. More accurate figures would be available from BCTA.

The map of responses to this question illustrates that there is a split between the parishes in the south east of the district, and those in the the east and north: those in the former are less likely to think that there is usage of BCTA's services whereas, those in the latter more commonly think that they are being used. Throughout the district, more parishes think Dial-a-Ride is used than do not. There are a handful of parishes who do not know whether or not BCTA is used and there appears to be a cluster of parishes including Mlxbury, Finmere and Newton Purcell who have stated that services are not being used. This concurs with the information gleaned from BCTA on parishes where their services are not being used.

4.1.4 Banbury and District Volunteer Bureau Car Scheme – Map of responses

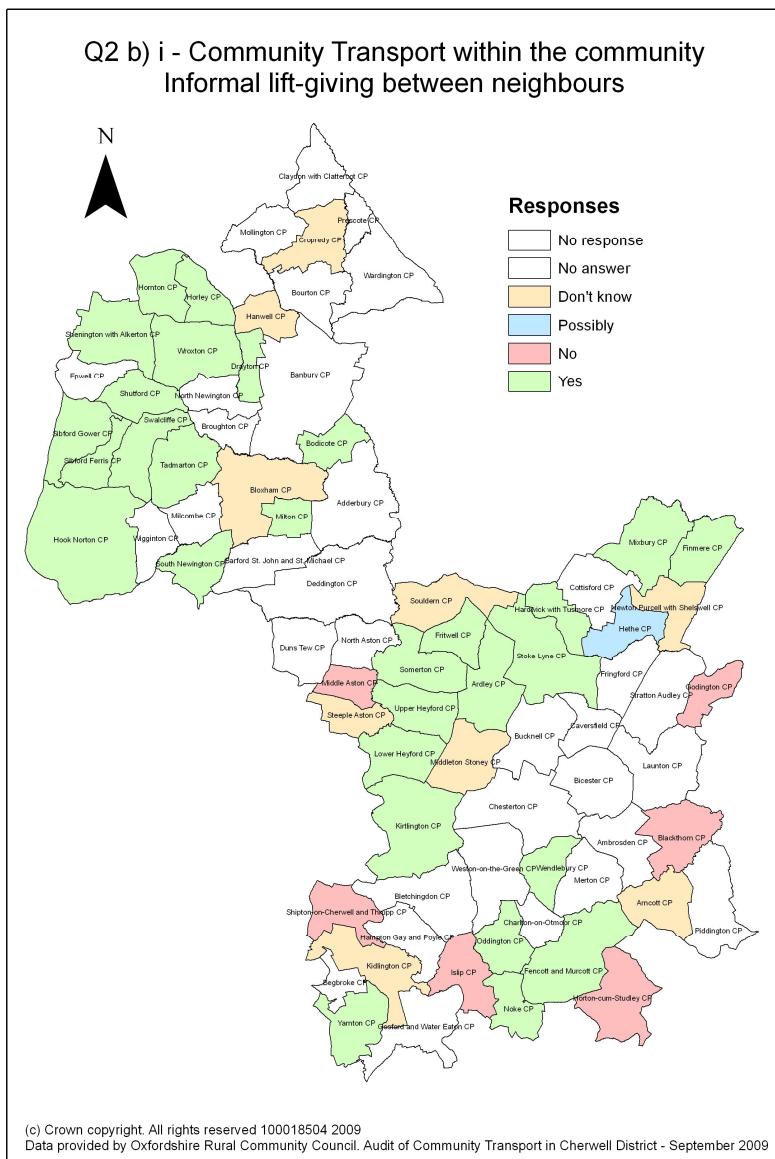


Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
3	32	4	10

4.1.5 Use of Banbury Volunteer Bureau Car Scheme

The responses to this question illustrate how knowledge amongst parishes of the volunteer car scheme is significantly lower than that of the Dial-a-Ride service with only 3 parishes stating that there is usage within their village. As stated in 2.2 above, this is likely to be partly attributable to the lack of visibility of this work. However, the responses to this question show that not only is awareness of the work of voluntary car schemes low amongst residents, it is also very low amongst local councils.

4.1.6 Informal lift-giving between neighbours – map of responses

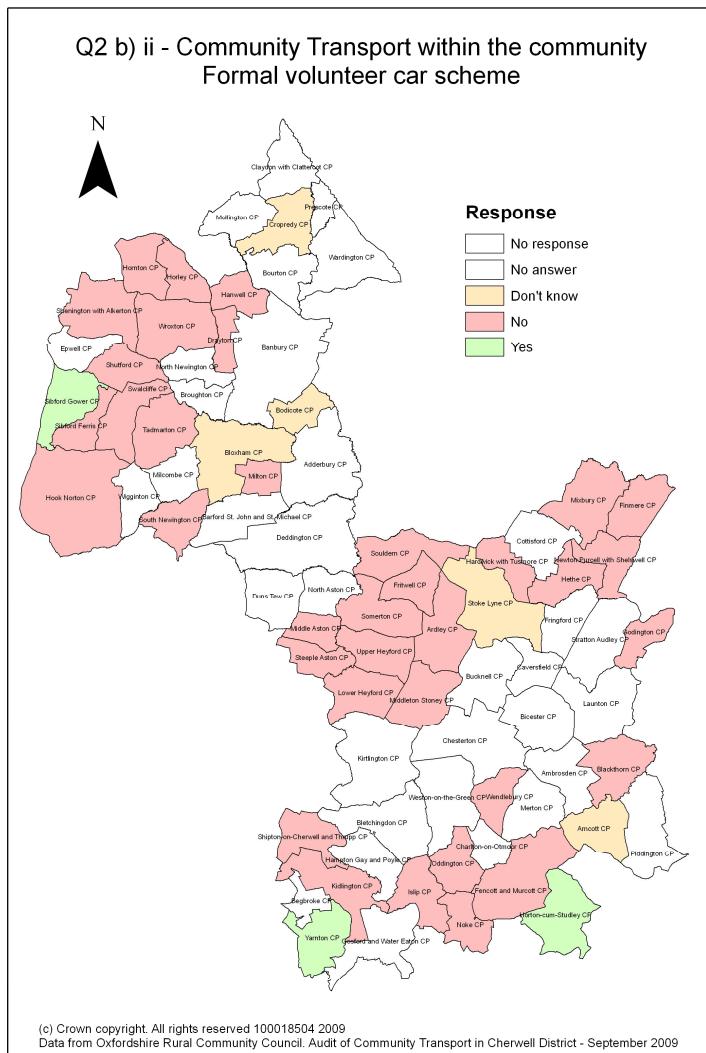


Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
32	6	0	11

4.1.7 Extent of Informal lift-giving between neighbours

The majority of parishes thought that informal lift-giving between neighbours is taking place in their villages, although a few in the south of the district did not think that this was occurring. The responses to this question contrast markedly with the responses to the question on usage of Banbury Volunteer Bureau, and illustrate the likelihood that informal lift-giving is commonly meeting needs in rural parishes.

4.1.8 Formal volunteer car scheme – map of responses

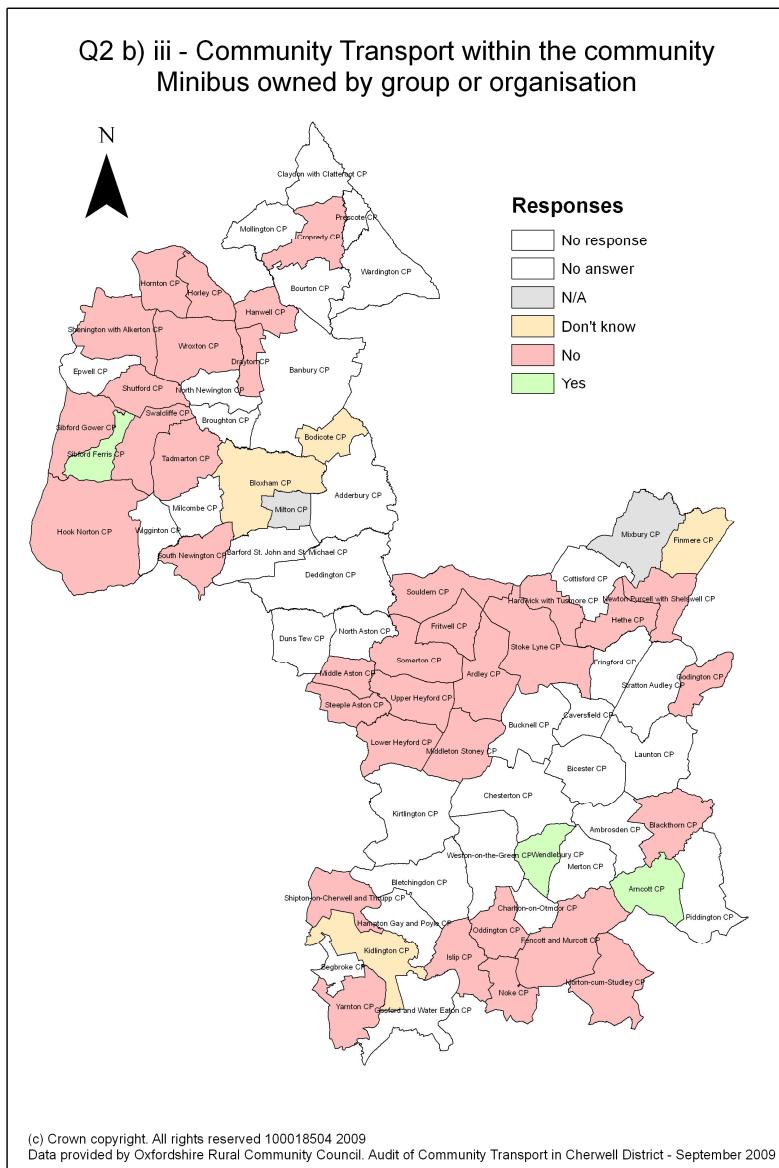


Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
4	39	0	5

4.1.8 Extent of formal volunteer car schemes

This map largely meets with expectations in that the only parishes that have known village-based organised schemes are Yarnton and Horton-cum-Studley. The Sibford Gower scheme is the only one of which ORCC is unaware.

4.1.9 Minibus owned by group or organisation in the village



Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
3	40	1	4

4.1.10 Availability of minibuses in the district

Very few parishes appear to have minibuses within their communities. The Wendlebury Community Minibus would be available for hire to other groups in the area. The other minibuses alluded to (Sibford Feris and Arncott) appear to be for sole use of their organisations.

4.1.11 Comments on question 1

Many comments are made about the limitations of community transport services, including the inability to use passes on dial-a-ride, the fact dial-a-ride does not accommodate hospital and medical appointments easily. There is one comment relating to the lack of awareness of community transport provision, and another on transport difficulties that young people face in rural communities.

Comments

- Bus service recently enhanced - might reduce calls on D-a-R
- BCTA no longer accepts passes
- BCTA difficult for hospital journeys - can get there but not back. Now have a community scheme to take villagers to Drs surgery in Islip at a charge of £4 per car journey round trip and one way out - to hospital appointments in Headington and Bicester.
- Minibus linked to Sibford School. Unsure if available for community use.
- There are problems/ difficulties, but these would be solved by D-a-R however, in general people are not very aware of the great benefit of this provision.
- Not strictly dial a ride - once a week to two destinations. D-a-R suggests a service which one can run to arrange to be taken to doctors surgeries etc.
- Village minibus available to hire
- Transport from village to Oxford. We have a cohort of children moving into their teens who are really "trapped" in the parish unless they can get a "lift" out.
- Though schemes in A are available, their provision is limited in scope.
- There may be a need that is being answered by community transport within the community of Bloxham but the Parish Council is not aware of it.
- We have seen a minibus from the manor care home from Merton
- There is a scheme for medical emergencies but nothing got take people to eg. routine medical appointments
- There are minibuses owned by Glebe house and various schools. I am not certain of the extent to which they are available to others in the community. There almost certainly will be informal lift-giving, but these are private arrangements of which I have no details.
- The parish council provides a mini-bus service upon request to the Deddington Health Centre for Parishioners Appointments.

4.2 Awareness of particular difficulties any residents in parish are experiencing in accessing services (eg. getting to doctor's appointments)?

4.2.1 Summary of responses

On the whole parishes responses are that they are not aware of any particular difficulties which residents have in accessing services (25 comments to this effect).

For those that do think there are problems most believe that they are relating to access to medical services in the district. Particular reference is made to doctors' surgeries in Woodstock, Banbury, Islip, Bicester and hospital and out patient appointments generally. There are also references to the cost of accessing healthcare – including for those who use the Deddington scheme (now operated by BCTA) and in getting to medical appointments. An example is given of a pensioner who receives £30 in tokens but has to spend £10 of that each time he goes to the Horton Hospital for an appointment.

There are further comments relating to the cost of transport generally, particularly for the elderly, and the next most frequently cited issue is the timing of services – when they are infrequent, they meet very few needs.

4.2.2 Responses

- At least one severely disabled person who relies on neighbours
- 3 choices from the village Shennington, Shutford and Banbury. Only one bus to Banbury per day.
- Yes - those without cars (eg. pensioners and teenagers) have to rely on family and friends for transport.
- yes - access to doctor's surgery in Woodstock - see Q's below.
- As a PC have not been made aware of any issues that have not been sorted locally with neighbours
- Bus does not give enough time for appointments and/or/shopping - means sharing a taxi home
- Yes - as raised on recent survey - times of buses not suitable for many needs.
- Some residents have difficulties getting to medical services and into Banbury for other activities including work and entertainment.
- Yes - residents are served by doctors from Woodstock or Islip - those who cannot drive have to ask a friend to take them or hire a taxi. A few people who do not like asking favours of people have been known to catch a bus to Bicester and train to Islip or bus to oxford and bus to Woodstock! That would not be possible in an emergency situation.
- Lower Heyford Relief in Need Charity pays towards the cost of CD Dial-a-Ride - but it is still not free for many parishioners visiting Deddington Health Centre
- Yes, we have had members of the public attend recent PC meetings highlighting difficulties, especially with hospital and out patient appointments.
- Because of restrictions to the user of bus passes pensioners cannot get into Bicester until 10.40am from Arncott, unless they pay.
- No, village also has good bus service Chipping Norton/Banbury
- Replies to Parish Plan have mentioned this but no details to hand. Current problem is introduction of charging for once weekly minibus to Doctors in Deddington.
- No. Many services are located within Kidlington itself. There are frequent commercial bus services to Oxford and subsidised routes covering the outlying parts of the village.
- sorry late completed - the parish is well covered by bus services etc.

- Local service failed to arrive on several occasions - missed appointments or taxis needed.
- Round trip to doctor's in Bicester is 13 miles. People in the village look to Buckingham rather than Bicester for schools, shopping and increasingly doctors.
- Only problem is the very limited bus service that is in and out of the village
- None - everyone has a car. There is no public transport in the village and if there was no one would use it anyway.
- Low income families find transport expensive
- This has always required transport by car and residents are used to this. They either use their own car (usually) or rely on a friend or neighbour. The limited services provided by the Charlton bus company may be occasionally helpful.
- None - assistance between neighbours
- Yes - current bus service to Bicester - very limiting people can't travel in past 11am, no return in pm.
- The buses could come into SoC from the main road.
- All of the transport on offer costs more than what older people can afford. One resident gets £30 tokens and is limited to the number of times he uses DaR - one scheme cost him £10 to get to the Horton Hospital
- None - assistance between neighbours
- Many
- Yes - current bus service to Bicester - very limiting people can't travel in past 11am, no return in pm.
- Yes. It affects a few older residents who cannot drive or who do not now drive. Neighbours give a hand and help.

4.3 Needs within the community for group transport

4.3.1 Summary of Responses

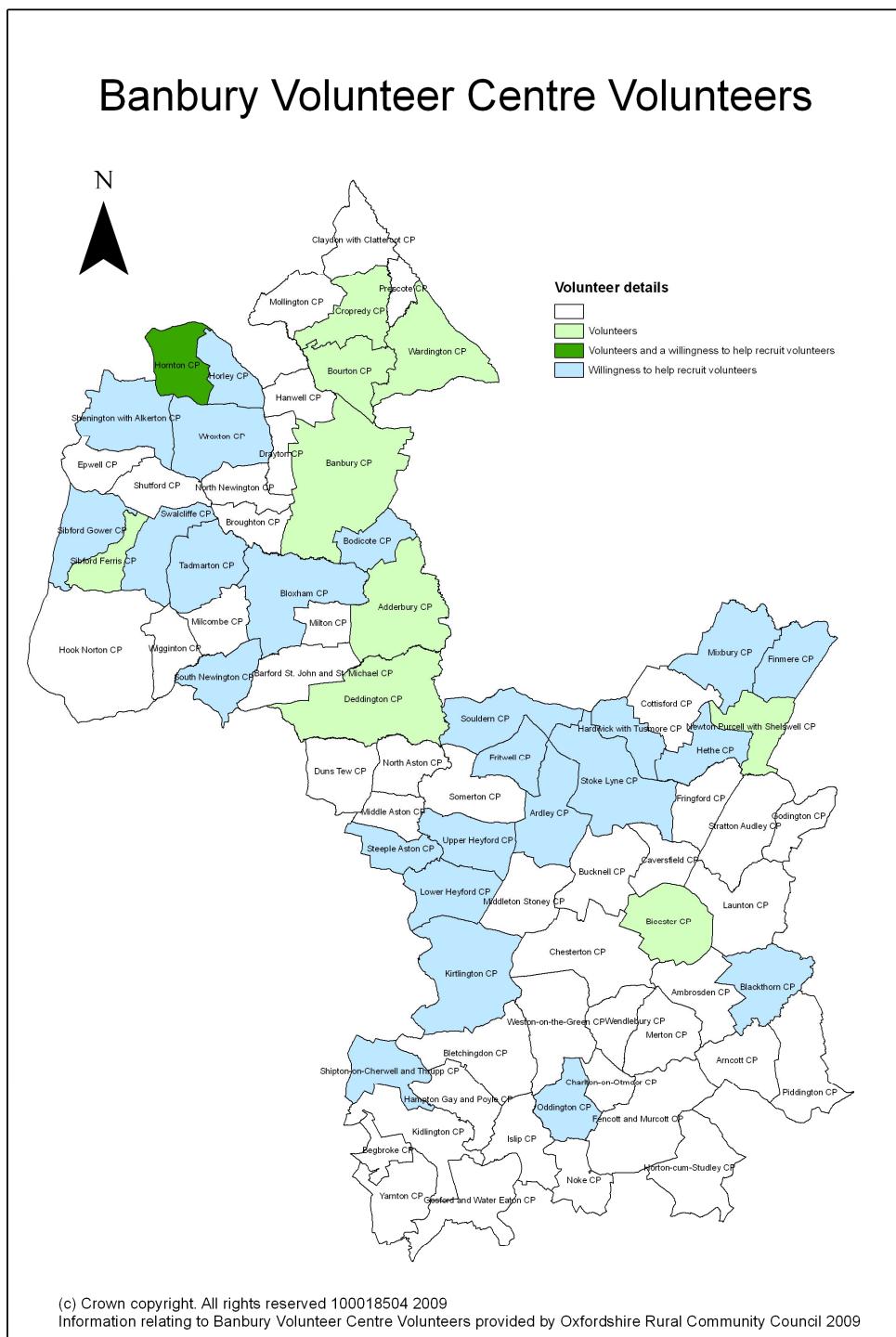
Most parishes did not think that there were any unmet needs for groups within their village, although one did mention that for youth groups private hire is expensive.

4.3.2 Responses

- Lunch club offers informal lift giving to members
- When my father wanted to go to the club in Deddington (10 mins from Bodicote) he had to go round all the villages first which was too long for him to sit in the bus
- Group trips are usually arranged by car sharing or by hire coach or minibus - eg. Garden club visits or "village outings".
- Don't know but our minibus can be used by community groups.
- No the Valentine Club either book a 49-seater coach or use BCTA. However there is some interest in looking into provision of a minibus.
- Youth club has to pay large costs for occasional outings.
- None. The village has only 50 households, so we do things informally.
- School has difficulties to get affordable transport

4.4 Would you be able to assist ORCC with recruitment of volunteer drivers in your village if it is established that there is a need in your area?

4.4.1 Map showing positive responses and where volunteers for Banbury VB are currently located



4.4.2 Willingness to help with recruitment of volunteers

Parishes were on the whole willing to assist with the recruitment of volunteers from within their villages. Apart from one parish, those that are willing to assist do not already have volunteers driving for Banbury Volunteer Bureau.

4.5 Further comments on transport needs, or any other local transport issues

4.5.1 Summary of comments

Most general comments relate to the limited frequency of services and the effect of this in villages. Hornton is an example of a village where residents do find themselves very disadvantaged by virtue of recent decisions, and highlights the very different circumstances people in rural Cherwell can find themselves in when it comes to transport.

- It is a matter of regret that the frequency of the bus service has been reduced
- Improved bus service much valued
- Now that bus passes are no longer accepted on Dial-a-Ride the Parish Council was concerned that elderly residents in Hornton now only receive 10 round trips a year to Banbury based on their allocation of bus tokens (Hornton does not have a bus service other than Dial-a-Ride). This seems unfair on our residents who pay their Council Tax but are not provided with a bus service and are now precluded from free travel throughout the year via the only alternative. The Parish Council agreed to subsidise the transport for the benefit of these elderly residents. This was raised at the Parish Liaison at Cherwell DC last June and Pauline McReady looked in to this for us. As it was not possible to increase the number of tokens, it was suggested that we should liaise direct with BCTA who run the Dial-a-Ride Scheme. The outcome was that as the bus tokens had been used up by the end of June, BCTA invoiced the Parish Council on a monthly basis for the number of passenger journeys undertaken. The Parish Council agreed to pay for those on a trial basis so that its elderly residents are not at a disadvantage. The total cost for the period July - September will be approximately £250. This is approximately 5% of the Parish Precept and regrettably, the Parish Council has concluded that it cannot justify paying this for a further period out of a limited budget. However, it has committed to paying for a further three months next year. No blame is attached to BCTA who are always extremely helpful and clearly have to cover their costs. Kevin Powell at BCTA quickly came up with this suggestion when the Parish Council offered to subsidise. However, it does seem that our residents without their own transport are being unfairly treated. I am aware that Cherwell DC subsidise BCTA so it is unlikely that any further financial support will be available from them. Two or three years ago at a transport review, we asked Oxon CC if one of the Stratford Buses (Johnsons) could be re-routed through Hornton, say once a week on a Thursday, to help resolve this. This was investigated but declined. I presume that a Parish Council donation of £250 would not change this decision. However, as Oxon CC is unable to provide transport, would they consider a contribution of say £250 for

Hornton to match the Parish Council? Elderly residents would then be covered for 9 months of the year including their bus tokens. I have not contacted Oxon CC yet. As other villages must be faced with the same problem, it may be better to consider this as part of your review.

- None reported - local bus service is good.
- This village is currently only served by one bus to/from Bicester 3 days a week
- Our scheme runs on Tuesdays to take villagers to connect with Beckley Bus to Oxford at 10.18 and 14.08. We now have a bus returning from Oxford at 17.35. On Monday to Saturdays. As well as returning from Oxford at 13.30 on Tues. our scheduled service is on Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat. (118) leaving village 10.48 and leaving Oxford at 13.30 for return as well as 17.35 Mon-Sat.
- We anxiously await latest Oxon CC Review
- NA
- Mainly the times never enough for either Bicester or Banbury
- South Newington has a very limited bus service to Banbury and CN during the day Monday to Saturday and nothing in the evening or on Sunday. This severely restricts the travel options of young people and others without cars. *(Letter) Most households have access to a car but the limitations of the public bus services causes a problem for younger people. We have recently publicised BCTA in newsletter - feel BCTA could do more to promote. No info on Banbury VC
- (by PTR Separately) Thank you for your letter and questionnaire. I did liaise with Mrs Bickely in the completion of latter but now enclose the "dial-Ride" time table. It seems as though the problems of getting to Woodstock surger will be resolved as from mid-December but Islip remains a problem.
- Crossing A41 to and from the Bicester/Oxford bus can frequently be dangerous.
- Fencott and Murcott have very limited public transport - just a feeder into Charlton for one bus per day.
- Finemere and Tingewick (Bucks) PCs are currently campaigning for the X5 service to visit the villages. Even a service a few times a day would be invaluable.
- The bus service is poor - the last bus Monday to Staruday is at 7.10pm and there are only two on Sundays.
- Late evening buses from Oxford and Banbury on Friday and Saturday. Restoration of Tuesday shopping trip to Bicester.
- No
- Kidlington is a very large village and the arrangements used in rural villages don't really work here.
- Only concern would be loss of ? Services could be a problem if there are cutbacks.
- Wish to have return bus service Islip to Kidlington village (shops and library) and supermarkets
- Wish to retain public transport provision.
- We live in a rural location and people who live here accept that lack of public transport is a fact of life.

- None
- We need a better bus service for all sectors of the community
- No
- This is a small parish with a mainly affluent population numbering little over 100. We have an hourly bus service and most people have access to a car.
- Community is keen to improve its public/shared transport
- In very small communities, formal transport has limited utility. The weekly bus into Oxford is now used by one or two people, mainly older folk without a car, and is valuable and highly valued by them. As long as the community can act by helping those who need it, things work.

APPENDIX 1 – Consultation with Parish Councils and Meetings

Letter to all parishes

**Somerton PC
Clerk, Mr N Good
Beck Lea, Ardley Road
Somerton
Bicester
Oxon OX25 6LP**

17 September 2009

Dear Mr Good

Re: Access to Services and Community Transport in Cherwell District

Cherwell District Council has requested that the transport team here at ORCC carry out a full analysis of provision of community transport in the district, and to consider ways in which enhancements could be made in the sector to improve access to services.

As part of this project we will be contacting all parishes in the district to carry out a full audit of community transport provision – from the informal lift-giving, to the district-wide Dial-a-Ride service provided by BCTA. We will also be asking for information on any difficulties which parish councils and meetings are aware of in relation to access to services. Some parishes will have recently carried out transport needs surveys and we will also be using the information in these reports. However, we would still request that these parishes also reply to this letter so that we can be methodical in our approach of this audit.

We would therefore be most grateful if you could assist us with this project by completing the form on the attached sheet by **Friday 2nd October 2009**.

A member of the transport team will be at the Parish Liaison Meeting at Bodicote House on 11th November if, having submitted your response you wish to talk further about transport issues in your parish.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this matter.

Yours sincerely

Alix Michaelis and Emily Lewis
Community Transport Advisers (job share)

Reply Slip

Q1 Are you aware of any community transport provision which is being utilised in your village?

a) Use of Community Transport Schemes which serve your village

Cherwell District Dial-a-Ride (BCTA)	Yes	No	N/A	Don't know
Banbury Volunteer Bureau Car Scheme?	Yes	No	N/A	Don't know

b) Community Transport within the community

Informal lift-giving between neighbours?	Yes	No	N/A	Don't know
Formal volunteer car scheme?	Yes	No	N/A	Don't know
Minibus owned by group or organisation in the village (eg. primary school, scouts, care home) and is it available for community use?	Yes - please specify	No	N/A	Don't know

Comments on
Q1.....

Q2: Are you aware of any particular difficulties any residents in your parish are experiencing in accessing services (eg. getting to doctor's appointments)?

.....
.....

Q3: Are you aware of any need that community groups in your village may have for transport (eg. the local lunch club would like to provide day trips for members, but has not been able to find a suitable provider).

.....
.....

Q4: Would you be able to assist ORCC with recruitment of volunteer drivers in your village if it is established that there is a need in your area?

.....

Q5: Any further comments on transport needs, or any other local transport issues?

.....

Xxx Parish
2009
Transport Needs Survey

In association with



Oxfordshire County Council is conducting a review of subsidised bus services in this area.

Xxx Parish Council wants to find out more about your views and practices. We need to hear from you whether or not you use public transport. The more comprehensive the survey the better placed we are to consider the services we need!

Just deliver your completed form to **Xxxx** or put it in an envelope and address it to: FREEPOST RRBZ-CEUH-ZXJY, ORCC, Worton, WITNEY, OX29 4SZ by 8 May 2009.

You can complete this survey for up to 4 members of your household. Please use a tick to answer each question.

Q1 Age and Gender

Resident	16 and under	17-24	25-45	46-60	61-75	75+	Male	Female
1								
2								
3								
4								

Q2 If you or any member of your household has a disability, please indicate how their mobility is affected:

Resident	Mobility not affected	Unable to walk/walk far	Unable to drive
1			
2			
3			
4			

Q3 How many people can drive and how many cars are there in your household?

Resident	Can drive	Cannot drive	Number of cars?				
			0	1	2	3	4
1							
2							
3							
4							

Q4 Do you use local bus services? If so, let us know the route numbers and destinations of up to two buses you use or have used.

Resident	Route (most used)	Route
Example	Xxx to Xxx	Xxx to Xxx
1	to	to
2	to	to
3	to	to
4	to	to

Q5 How often do you and each of the members of your household use local bus services?

Resident	Daily	1 x Week	1 x Fortnight	1 x Month	Occasionally	Never
1						
2						
3						
4						

Q6 If you use local bus services once a month or less, tell us the factors that affect which deter you from using them more frequently.

Resident	Wrong times	Wrong destinations	Don't know about services	Fares too expensive	No weekend/ evening buses	Car is more convenient
1						
2						
3						
4						

For questions 8 to 12 please tick more than one box where appropriate

Q7 Do you think bus services are well publicised in the Parish?

Resident	Yes	No
1		
2		
3		
4		

Q8 Which other types of local public transport do you use ?

Resident	Train	Taxis	Dial a Ride
1			
2			
3			
4			

Q9 Please tell us the destination of your journey to **work or school** and how you get there.

Resident	Destination	Work or school journey?	Drive myself	Lift	School bus	Bus	Cycle	Walk	Train
1									
2									
3									
4									

Q10 Please tell us the destination of your **doctor's surgery** and how you get there.

Resident	Destination	Drive	Get a lift	Bus	Cycle	Walk	Dial a Ride	Taxi
1								
2								
3								
4								

Q11 Please tell us the destination you often visit for **shopping** and how you get there

Resident	Destination	Drive	Get a lift	Bus	Cycle	Walk	Dial a Ride	Internet	Taxi
1									
2									

3								
4								

Q12 Please tell us the destination you most often visit for **social or leisure activities** and how you get there

Resident	Destination	Drive	Get a lift	Bus	Cycle	Walk	Dial a Ride	Train	Taxi
1									
2									
3									
4									

Q13 Are you aware of the services offered by the following Community transport schemes which serve the residents of **Souldern** parish?

Resident	Cherwell District dial a ride	Banbury Volunteer Bureau Car Scheme
1		
2		
3		
4		

Q14 Would you be willing to be involved in supporting one of the above schemes (eg as a volunteer driver) or establishing your own local scheme?
If you would, please provide your contact details

Q15 Do you have any further comments to make on the Transport services provided in our parish?

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Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

16 February 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Board with an update on the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the current Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2009/10 as set out at Appendix 1.
- (2) Note the update on the Bicester Vision Partnership.

Details

1 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

- 1.1 Appendix 1 sets out the existing work programme for both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board.

2 Update to the Work Programme

Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings

Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership

- 2.1 At the June 2009 meeting of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, Members agreed that the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership would be an appropriate subject for partnership scrutiny for the last quarter 2009/10. This would link in with a value for money review of the Partnership in autumn 2009.

- 2.2 The Head of Improvement has advised that the value for money assessment has been delayed. The Improvement Team is currently finalising the draft documentation which will be considered by Strategic Directors. No timescales for this review have yet been agreed.
- 2.3 Members will wish to consider whether to roll this item forward to the 2010/11 work programme.

Contracts Review

- 2.4 The Head of Finance and Strategic Procurement Manager will brief Members on the Council's procurement policy at the Board's June meeting. Members will wish to consider the role the Board could play in monitoring the performance of the Council's key contracts.

Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on implementation of recommendations

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

- 2.5 In February 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the Bicester Vision Partnership and made a number of recommendations. This Committee resolved to pass this to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for monitoring. The Board considered this in July 2009 and January 2010.
- 2.6 The Board agreed that they should review the Council's involvement in the Bicester Vision Partnership in the spring of 2010. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Scrutiny Officer will brief Members on recent developments and suggest how to proceed.

Past Year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring

- 2.7 As part of the 2009/10 budget process the Board undertook a review of fees and charges. As part of the 2010/11 budget process the Board undertook a scrutiny review of the Council's prioritisation matrix, revenue expenditure by service and reviewed the capital bids received as part of the 2010/11 budget process. The Board agreed 14 recommendations which were agreed by Executive in January 2010.
- 2.8 One of the Board's recommendations requested that Officers write to Banbury and Bicester Town Councils and Kidlington Parish Council to confirm and clarify the position with regard to potential funding changes for Christmas lights. That Strategic Director Environment and Community has reported that this has been carried out through the regular clerks meetings Cherwell District Council has with the three urban parishes.
- 2.9 At the Board's June meeting the Head of Finance will update Members on progress against the recommendations of the 2009/10 and 2010/11 budget scrutiny reviews.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Executive Portfolio

All

Implications

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 financial 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 and Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and scrutiny work programme
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10 as @ 26/01/10

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting			
			Feb	Mar	June	Later
Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny						
Deprivation	Raised by Cllr Bonner	Agenda item for 9 March meeting. Initial briefing session.				
Built Environment Conservation Areas	Raised by Cllr Bonner	Agenda item for 9 March meeting. Initial briefing session.		✓	?	
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC (Cllr R Stratford to monitor developments)	Invite representatives of Oxfordshire Health & Well-Being Board to attend future meeting				?
Youth Facility Provision	OSC	Possible joint scrutiny with other Oxfordshire authorities. Watching brief to consider if this is an option.				
Young People's VFM review	OSC	Work programme item for 9 February meeting. To brief on postponement of this VFM.	✓			
Registered Social Landlords' Management Group	R&PSB	Agenda item for 16 February meeting. Q&A session		✓		
Phone Access and Telephony Review	OSC	Agenda item for February or March meeting Review proposals in advance of consideration by Executive (currently scheduled for March 2010)	✓	?		
Scrutiny – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings						
Engaging with young people	OSC	Agenda item for 9 February meeting. Member of Youth Council and officers from other local authorities & UK Youth Parliament to attend. Final report to be agreed at 9 March meeting.	✓	✓		
Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Feb	Mar	June	Later

Partnerships: ORCC	R&PSB	Agenda item for 16 February meeting. To consider & sign off report and recommendations.	✓			
Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities	R&PSB	Work Programme item for 16 February meeting. To brief on postponement of this VFM	✓			
Contracts review	R&PSB	To consider and agree an approach for contract scrutiny				✓
Task & Finish Groups – agreed topics for review outside committee meetings						
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Billington Cllr Tompson Cllr Smithson	Cllr Ahmed Cllr Cullip Cllr Sibley	Active – final report scheduled for Executive in 2010			
Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations						
Private Sector Housing Strategy	OSC	Completed. On Executive agenda for February. Review progress against action plan in spring 2011				✓
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential in the district	OSC	Review progress and work of Member/Officer working group in summer 2010.				✓
Concessionary Fares	OSC	Work programme item for 9 February meeting	✓			
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	Progress noted at 25 January meeting				
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	Work programme item for 9 February meeting	✓			
RAF Bicester	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes to keep OSC informed of progress & developments. Will bring to OSC meeting when appropriate.				

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Feb	Mar	June	Later
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes to keep OSC informed of progress & developments. Will bring to OSC meeting when appropriate.				
Partnerships: Bicester Vision	R&PSB	Work programme item for February meeting To agree scope and project plan for review in 2010.	✓			
Past year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring	R&PSB	Work programme item for June meeting Review of progress against recommendations completed as part of fees and charges 2009/10 budget scrutiny and 2010/11 Budget scrutiny.			✓	
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.				✓
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	FSWG to review on completion in Spring 2010.	✓			

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