

Committee: Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board

Date: Tuesday 15 June 2010

Time: 7.00 pm

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

Membership

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)	Councillor David Hughes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Alyas Ahmed	Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Maurice Billington	Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Tim Emptage	Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Carol Steward	Councillor Patricia Tompson
Councillor Douglas Webb	Councillor Martin Weir

Substitutes

Councillor Nick Cotter	Councillor Mrs Diana Edwards
Councillor Lawrie Stratford	Councillor Douglas Williamson

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 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board held on 16 February 2010 and 19 May 2010.

5. Disabled Facilities Grants ~ Briefing

The Strategic Director, Planning Housing and Economy and officers from Housing Services will be present at the meeting.

This is an opportunity for the Board to find out more about Disabled Facilities Grants and to question officers on the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants service.

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. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10 (Pages 9 - 20)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

The report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10.

Recommendation

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10.

7. Appointment of Working Group Members (Pages 21 - 24)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

To consider the appointment of Members to the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

Recommendations

The Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Confirm the membership of the Finance Scrutiny Working Group.

- (2) Confirm the membership of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

8. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11 (Pages 25 - 34)

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary

To provide the Board with the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2010/11, to update Members on work programme items from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme and to consider items for inclusion on the 2010/11 work programme.

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board element of the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11.
- (2) To note the update on items carried forward from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme.
- (3) To nominate Members to participate in the fees and charges policy review group.
- (4) To consider the items suggested for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.

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 7 June 2010

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 16 February 2010 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Colin Clarke (Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Devena Rae
Councillor Carol Steward
Councillor Patricia Thompson
Councillor Douglas Webb

Also Present: Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor Nigel Morris
Sandie Dancer, Chair, Residents' Voice
Harj Lota, Managing Director, Charter Community Housing
Jacky Clacken, Housing Management Team Leader, Bromford Living
Susan Dell, Bromford Living

Apologies for absence: Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Victoria Irvine
Councillor Keith Strangwood
Councillor Martin Weir

Officers: Gillian Greaves, Head of Housing Services
Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager
Kate Winstanley, Strategic Housing Officer
Craig Forsyth, Communications Officer
Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

44 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

45 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

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Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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Registered Social Landlords' Management Group

The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, the Head of Housing Services, the Strategic Housing Manager, the Strategic Housing Officer and the representatives from Charter Community Housing, the Bromford Group and Charter Residents' Voice to the meeting.

The Chairman explained that this was 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. Following the discussion the Board would reflect on the evidence presented and if there were any issues that they wished to explore further, these should be added to the 2010/11 Work Programme.

The Strategic Housing Officer began by setting the overall context for Cherwell's Housing Services work with the Registered Social Landlords (RSL). As part of its strategic housing function, the Council still has a role to play in how the former "council houses" are managed, as well as other social housing in the district. Most of the day to day operation is undertaken by the Registered Social Landlords and in doing so they are accountable to and monitored by the Tenant Services Authority (a government appointed national organisation).

There are 16 Registered Social Landlords operating in the district with stock holdings ranging from just four properties to over 5000 homes. The Council works closely with these Registered Social Landlords to ensure the effective management of social housing in the district. The Council chairs and facilitates the quarterly Cherwell RSL Housing Management Group meetings, and undertakes an annual appraisal with each Registered Social Landlord. The Council recognises that this approach does not suit the smaller Registered Social Landlords and so it is looking at other ways to engage them, possibly through a "buddy" system or attendance on a rota basis.

The Strategic Housing Officer explained that the main duties of the Registered Social Landlords can be described as:

- Rents, repairs and maintenance
- Allocation of homes
- Addressing worklessness
- Promoting neighbourhoods

The Board heard that over the last twenty years the focus of attention had moved from the traditional activities of allocations and rent, repairs and maintenance. The emphasis was now on addressing worklessness amongst social housing residents and introducing measures to promote neighbourhood

and community. The involvement of residents and tenants was a key aspect of this approach.

In response to questions from the Board the Strategic Housing Officer explained that although the management of social housing is undertaken by the Registered Social Landlords, the Council maintains a housing register and nominates (i.e. decides on) applicants to move into Registered Social Landlord homes. The Council normally secures full nomination rights on the majority of properties with the Registered Social Landlords typically retaining rights on about 10% for emergency cases. Properties are advertised through the Choice Based Lettings scheme and people can bid for up to 3 properties during each fortnightly advertising cycle and modify their bids according to the popularity of the properties.

The Board also heard from representatives from Charter Community Housing (the largest Registered Social Landlord in the district with over 5000 properties) and Bromford Living (responsible for 420 homes in the district). The Managing Director of Charter Community Housing described how its merger with Banbury Homes and the Sanctuary Group had resulted in positive benefits for the residents in Cherwell. Financial stability and economies of scale had enabled Charter Community Housing to retain an in-house maintenance team and to negotiate a new contract for the procurement of kitchens and bathrooms which did not attract an inflationary uplift because of the volumes of business. A potential downside could have been the loss of any local service and identity. This was something that the organisation had worked hard to avoid and they were confident that local residents and tenants still regarded it as a local service.

The Housing Management Team Leader of Bromford Living (Bromford Living manages Bromford Group's general rented housing in the West Midlands and surrounding counties) commented on the importance of partnership working with the Council to ensure the delivery of the Housing Strategy and cited the Development & Housing Management Standards Protocol as an example of effective joint working. Local service delivery is also important to Bromford Group and the Board learnt that there was a locally based housing manager who operates from the community office at Bure Park, Bicester. The Bromford Living Housing Management Team Leader told the Board about the joint work between the Council and Bromford Group in tackling the environmental issues at Bicester Cattle Market. There had been joint visits by Cherwell District Council and Bromford Group staff to issue information packs and brief residents on recycling and their responsibilities. As a result there has been a significant decrease in environmental issues at the Cattle Market.

The Chairman of the local Charter Residents' Voice group thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the views of the tenants and residents. She explained that Residents' Voice operated at both local and national level within the Charter/Sanctuary Housing group and that it was a well established and recognised means of consultation and dialogue with tenants and residents. Charter/Sanctuary Housing are positive supporters of the Residents' Voice groups and use them to develop and consult on new policies and responses to legislation, contribute to proposals for new build housing and inspect service departments as well as a means to mediate and resolve

practical and operational problems facing particular housing estates or individual tenants.

The Chairman of the local Charter Residents' Voice group told the Board that she had always found the Charter/Sanctuary staff and managers to be approachable and responsive. There were regular formal meetings and good informal communications. She was pleased to note that this was also apparent in the relationship with Cherwell's Housing Services where there had been a marked improvement in recent years. She cited a recent "skip day in Banbury" as an example of a successful joint project between the residents, Charter and Cherwell to tackle littering and flytipping and promote recycling.

The Chairman thanked the guests for their comments which had been informative and a valuable basis for the Board's consideration of the partnership between Cherwell's Housing Services and the Registered Social Landlords.

In conclusion the Board noted that there was a strong working relationship between the Council's Housing Services and the main Registered Social Landlords which was focused on common objectives which supported the Council's corporate priorities. This was underpinned by a formal structure to manage and measure the effectiveness of the partnership. As a result, the partnership was delivering practical benefits to those residents living in social housing. On the basis of the information presented the Board confirmed that there was no need to undertake any further scrutiny of this subject.

The Board determined that a brief report summarising the information presented should be submitted to the Executive commending the Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing and the staff of Cherwell's Housing Services for their work, in partnership with the Registered Social Landlords, on the management of social housing in the district.

Resolved

- 1) That no further scrutiny of Registered Social Landlords and the management of social housing should be undertaken at this time.
- 2) That a report be submitted to the Executive commending the Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing and the staff of Cherwell's Housing Services for their work, in partnership with the Registered Social Landlords, on the management of social housing in the district.

Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

The Board reflected on the outcomes of its scrutiny review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and discussed the draft recommendations to the Executive. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural was present at the meeting and participated in the discussion.

The Board confirmed that the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council was a valuable and important partnership for Cherwell District Council without which it would be difficult to deliver the Council's rural agenda.

The Board discussed the role of elected Members in the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and agreed that the current arrangement should continue but that it should be strengthened and the respective role and responsibilities of the Portfolio Holder and the elected ward member should be clarified. The Board felt that it was important to distinguish between the role of the Portfolio Holder in shaping the strategic direction of the partnership and determining funding and service level agreements and that of the elected member providing knowledge and experience of rural issues within the district. The Board agreed that the elected member should represent a rural ward.

Throughout the course of the Review the Board had raised some general issues about the role and responsibilities of elected Members who represent the Council on partnerships and outside bodies. The Board noted that in spring 2009 the Executive had requested further information setting out how the Council would effectively support member representatives on partnerships and outside bodies. The Chairman reported that a project group had been established to review representation on outside bodies. The Board agreed that the review addressed the issues that they had raised and commented that it was important for there to be a defined role for elected Members representing the Council on outside bodies and partnerships and that the responsibilities for this role should be defined and strengthened.

Resolved

- 1) That the briefing on the review of representation on Outside Bodies be noted.
- 2) That the following recommendations to the Executive be included in the report on the Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council:
 - 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 by officers, the elected Member representative from a rural ward and reported to the Portfolio Holder.
 - b) That the role and involvement of elected Members (the representative from a rural ward and the Portfolio Holder) in the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council be clarified and strengthened.
 - c) That the elected Member representative from a rural ward should work closely with rural community development officers and safer communities and community development officers to provide overall steer and direction for the partnership.
- 3) That the draft report Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council be circulated to Officers for comment.

- 4) 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 draft report on the Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council prior to its submission to the Executive.

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Work Programme

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

The Board agreed that a report on the Contracts Review and a monitoring report on Past Year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations should be considered at the June meeting.

Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership

The Board was informed that the value for money review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership had been delayed but that work was now starting on the scoping of the project. The Board confirmed that this was an important subject area and agreed that it should remain on their work programme for scrutiny in 2010/11.

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had yet to meet the Leader of the Council to discuss the arrangements and timing for the further scrutiny of the Bicester Vision Partnership. The topic would remain on the work programme for 2010/11.

The Board noted that this would be their last meeting until the new municipal year and expressed concern about the absence of a formal meeting date in March. They agreed to review the schedule of meetings for 2010/11 at their June meeting with a view to adding an extra meeting if necessary.

Resolved

- 1) That the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the work programme for 2009/10 as detailed above be noted and carried forward to the work programme for 2010/11.
- 2) That the update on the Bicester Vision Partnership be noted.
- 3) That the dates for the Board meetings in 2010/11 be reviewed at the Board meeting in June 2010.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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 19 May 2010 at 7.30 pm

Present: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)
Councillor David Hughes (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Patricia Thompson
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Martin Weir

Apologies for absence: Councillor Carol Steward

1 Appointment of Chairman

Resolved that Councillor Nicholas Mawer be elected Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for the 2010/11 Council year.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved that Councillor David Hughes be elected Vice-Chairman of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board for the 2010/11 Council year.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10

15 June 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10.

Details

- 1.1 The draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10 is attached at appendix 1. The annual report contains information relating to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board and task and finish groups.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a constitutional obligation “to produce a unified annual report for the whole scrutiny process” and to present it to Council.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10 at its meeting on 22 June 2010. This is an opportunity for members of the Resources and Performance Board to comment on the draft Annual Report before it is considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Implications

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Comments checked by Denise Westlake, Service Accountant, 01295 221982
Legal:	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor 01295 221691
Risk Management:	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer, 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

The Corporate Plan themes addressed by each scrutiny review are detailed in the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10.

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10



Foreword

DRAFT

Councillor Daniel Sames
Chairman,
Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2009/10

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Dan Sames (Ch)
Councillor Ann Bonner
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart (V Ch)
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Paul O'Sullivan
Councillor Chris Smithson
Councillor Trevor Stevens

Youth Engagement

The Committee considered that undertaking a review into how the Council engages with young people was timely given the growing emphasis placed on involving young people in decision making and national concerns about electoral apathy.



The review encompassed a visit to Westminster as part of Local Democracy Week, attendance at local Youth Councils and discussions with representatives from the local Youth Councils and the Youth Parliament. On the basis of these observations the Committee concluded that the Council should introduce a formal policy for youth engagement, which encouraged more involvement with local schools and youth groups.

2012 Olympics

In the autumn of 2009 the Committee reviewed the Council's involvement with the 2012 Olympics and in particular the links to tourism in the district. They noted that the latest projections indicate that there would be 900,000 more visitors to Britain and in the period 2007 – 2017 some £2.1 billion additional income to tourism businesses.

The Committee noted that the 2012 Olympics presented a unique opportunity for the district to increase participation in sport and the arts and to maximise the economic benefits from tourism. However, the Council would need to take positive action in 2010 or it would be too late. They agreed that this was a significant issue which needed to be properly and professionally managed. They felt that, notwithstanding the budgetary and resource constraints facing the authority the Council should identify someone to take the lead on promoting and co-ordinating the Council's interests in the 2012 Olympics in order to maximise the potential benefits to the district.



Older Person's Housing Strategy

In their consideration of the Older Person's Housing Strategy the Committee was conscious of the projected increase in the number of older people living in Cherwell District, which would be significantly higher than other parts of the county. In particular the Committee recognised the importance of ensuring that suitable accommodation is provided for elderly residents to allow them to continue living in rural areas. The Committee suggested that the Council should promote mixed housing provision in all new housing developments, for example via the Local Development Framework and in North West Bicester.

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Membership

Councillor Colin Clarke (Ch)
Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Devena Rae
Councillor Keith Strangwood
Councillor Doug Webb

Councillor Nick Mawer (V Ch)
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Victoria Irvine
Councillor Carol Steward
Councillor Pat Thompson
Councillor Martin Weir

2010/11 Budget scrutiny

As part of the 2010/11 budget process, the Board undertook a review of the Council's prioritisation matrix, revenue expenditure by service and reviewed the capital bids received as part of the 2010/11 process. Relevant officers and Heads of Service attended each meeting to answer Members' questions.

Group 1 met twice to consider non-consulted service areas, including Member Services, Democratic Services and Communications. Group 2 met on one occasion and focused on services areas that had been raised by Members at the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board meeting on 22 October 2009 and were not related to the non-consulted services or capitals bids. Group 3 met on three occasions to consider the capital bids 2010/11.



The Board met formally on 1 December 2009 to consider the 15 draft recommendations that had evolved from the working group meetings. The Board agreed to submit 14 of these recommendations to the Executive, 10 related to non consulted and miscellaneous services and 4 to the capital programme.

All of the Board's recommendations and observations were welcomed and accepted by the Executive and Council as part of the 2010/11 Budget.

Partnership Scrutiny – Registered Social Landlords and the management of social housing

In February 2010 the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board undertook a "light touch" review of the partnership between the Council's Housing Services and the Registered Social Landlords responsible for social housing in the district. In particular the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board wanted to explore strategic and operational issues relating to the management of housing stock across the district.

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board concluded that this was an excellent example of effective partnership working. They saw evidence of significant progress on the provision of decent homes and the delivery of the traditional elements of local authority housing (rents /repairs). They were pleased to note that the group was now turning its attention to the wider housing agenda and looking at community based issues such as availability, affordability, deprivation and regeneration.

Partnership scrutiny ~ Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Cherwell District Council's Constitution delegates responsibility for the scrutiny of partnerships to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board. As part of its annual work programme the Board will scrutinise at least one partnership per year.

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny decided to focus their first partnership scrutiny review on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, a 'medium priority' partnership.¹

The Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council covers three service areas: housing; rural community development; and, community transport. As the housing element of the partnership had been the subject of a scrutiny review early in 2009,² the Board agreed that they would consider rural community development and community transport. The Board chose to focus their review on a number of issues principally pertaining to establishing a better understanding of the relationship between Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, reviewing the funding arrangements, determining whether the partnership provides value for money for Cherwell and meets the goals of both partners and determining the extent to which the partnership meets the needs of the residents, businesses and parish councils in the rural areas

The review included briefing and witness sessions. These were supplemented by 3 site visits to meet with Parish Council representatives to obtain their views and experience of working with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. Representatives from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council also joined each of the site visits.

The Board observed that the Council and Oxfordshire Rural Community Council have a shared vision of rural community development and community transport provision which is delivered by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council with support from Cherwell District Council. The partnership plays a significant role in the delivery of services to rural communities across Cherwell district.

The Board's recommendations focused on the actions Cherwell District Council could take to improve the partnership, such as the development of a Service Level Agreement for the rural community development and community transport elements of the partnership, an annual programme of aims and objectives for the partnership and for the role and involvement of elected Members in the partnership to be clarified and strengthened. The Executive accepted the Board's recommendations in April 2010 and agreed that they would add value to the partnership.



¹ Cherwell District Council Partnership Register 2009

² 'Rural Affordable Housing and Exception Sites', Overview and Scrutiny Committee, April 2009

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board ~ Working Groups

The members of the Board have divided into two informal working groups that each meet about five times per year to undertake more detailed assessments of the Board's areas of responsibility, in particular, review of the management of resources and scrutiny of the financial management, treasury management, property and asset acquisition and disposal, capital programme and monitoring of year-on-year performance indicators.

Finance Scrutiny Working Group

Membership: Cllr Clarke (Chairman), Cllrs Mawer, Rae, Strangwood, Tompson, Webb, Weir.

The Group's role is to carry out detailed consideration of the Council's finances and budgets. At every meeting the Group reviews the Council's performance against a range of financial indicators covering income, debt, investment, creditors and risk. In 2009/10 the Group continued to focus attention on the Council's response to the Icelandic banking crisis and to the recession. It also reviewed the impact of the recommendations from the scrutiny review into the Council's fees and charges in 2008/09.

Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Membership: Cllr Clarke (Chairman), Cllrs Ahmed, Billington, Cullip, Irvine, Steward.

The Group carries out detailed scrutiny of corporate and service performance, considers performance where targets are not being met or over performance, considers targets, their relevance and future targets considers performance based on what it means to the public. At every meeting the Group reviews the Council's performance, using the Performance Management Framework data as its baseline evidence. During 2009/10 the Group looked at the Council's performance across a number of areas including: customer service standards, CO₂ emissions from Council activities, fly tipping and the mobile camera unit.

Task and Finish Groups

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Membership: Cllr Irvine (Chairman), Cllrs Ahmed, Billington, Clarke, Cullip, Sibley, Smithson, Tompson

The Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Task and Finish Group was formed to gain a better understanding of the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the District. A fundamental issue that Council faces is that whilst crime levels in the District are low the level of fear of crime is high and the perception of young people in the District contributes to this issue. The Group felt that this review was a starting point in addressing the fear of crime and the perception of young people.

The review encompassed briefings with Officers, walkabouts with the Street Wardens in Bicester and Banbury, meetings with representatives from Banbury Youth Forum and Bicester Youth Council, who also produced a video project on their perspectives of anti-social behaviour, meetings with Age Concern, a visit to the Bicester Youth Bus

and a round table discussion with representatives from the National Youth Agency, Banbury Youth Forum, Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council.

The review identified some key issues including: the need to challenge the negative perception of young people, the role of the media in forming the fear of crime and the relationship between different generations and how this contributes to the fear of crime. The scope and timing of the review did not allow the Group to look in any great detail at youth engagement and the provision of facilities for young people. The Group acknowledged that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to look at these issues in more detail.



Private Sector Housing Strategy

Membership: Cllr Rose Stratford (Chairman), Cllr Stevens (Vice-Chairman), Cllrs Rae, Sibley, Smithson, Lawrie Stratford, Tompson

In April 2009 in response to a request from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to contribute to the production of the Private Sector Housing Strategy. This represented an opportunity for scrutiny to get involved in policy development from the outset of the project.

The approach taken differed from the normal Task and Finish Group approach in so far that members of the Task and Finish Group worked directly with officers to help develop the strategy and policies. This was done through a series of meetings on specific topics with the conclusions from these sessions consolidated into the overall report. The whole process was managed by the Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering Group chaired by the Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing. This Steering Group was responsible for the delivery of the strategy.

The Task and Finish Group met on two occasions and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended meetings of the Steering Group. Members of the Group also attended the public consultation events. Given the strategic importance of this topic the Task and Finish Group felt that it would be appropriate to discuss the draft document at a full Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting prior to its consideration at Executive.

In January 2010 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Private Sector Housing Strategy and Action Plan prior to Executive approval in February 2010. The Committee added the item to its work programme for review in spring 2011.

Call-in

There were no Call-ins during the municipal year 2009/10.

Training and Development

There were 2 scrutiny related training events for members in 2008/09:

- 6 councillors attended the introduction to overview and scrutiny on 30 June 2009 as part of the induction programme.
- 14 councillors attended one of the two questioning skills sessions held on 19 January 2010. 6 councillors from other districts also

In addition members and officers attended a number of conferences and seminars during the year:

Event (start from June 2009)	Members	Officers
Centre for Public Scrutiny Conference (CfPS) June 2009	1	2
LGA seminar October 2009 (CDRP Scrutiny)		1
CfPS seminar October 2009 (CDRP Scrutiny)		1
Scrutiny visit by Oxfordshire councillors to Select Committee seminar in December 2009	1	1
CfPS / Parliamentary Select Committee seminar	1	1
CfPS seminar January 2010 (Performance Management)		1

Statistics

Statistic	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Number of scrutiny committee meetings	25	20	20	17
% attendance at scrutiny committee meetings	76%	78%	82%	76%
Number of completed reviews	7	6	6	5
Number of committee reviews undertaken	1	1	4	6
Number of Task & Finish Groups established	12	2	2	1
Number of Call-ins	0	1	0	0
% scrutiny recommendations accepted by Executive or other body	-	90%	97%	100%

Corporate priorities checklist

How does the overview and scrutiny function contribute to the Council's corporate priorities?

Strategic priority: aim	Completed reviews 2009/2010							
	Youth Engagement	Olympics 2012	Older Persons Housing Strategy	Budget 2010/11	Registered Social Landlords	ORCC	Anti Social Behaviour	Private Sector Housing
A district of opportunity								✓
• Balance employment and housing growth by developing businesses and homes that meet local need within an overall robust planning policy framework.								
• Provide business land and premises opportunities to support local economic development.				✓				
• Support business success by fostering innovation and helping businesses to recruit and retain skilled employees								
• Make it easier for you to get where you need to go			✓					
• Secure housing growth that meets Government targets and the needs of the District through an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing.			✓	✓		✓		✓
• Give you advice and support to find a home if you are without one.					✓			✓
• Improve the standard of housing particularly for vulnerable people.			✓		✓			✓
• Improve local services and opportunities in rural areas.	✓			✓		✓	✓	
• Develop safe and pleasant urban centres which provide you with good facilities.				✓	✓		✓	
A safe and healthy Cherwell							✓	
• Help you feel safe in your home and community, working to reduce further our very low level of crime			✓	✓	✓			
• Involve you in making your community stronger through Neighbourhood Management								
• Help to deliver improved healthcare for Bicester and Banbury.			✓					
• Make it easy for you to lead a healthy and active life through our countryside, leisure facilities and tourist attractions		✓		✓		✓		

Strategic priority: aim	Youth Engagement	Olympics 2012	Older Persons Strategy	Budget 2010/11	Registered Social Landlords	ORCC	Anti Social Behaviour	Private Sector Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make big improvements to our sports centres. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide community facilities and activities to meet local need. 	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
A cleaner, greener Cherwell								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep streets and open spaces clean and free from litter, graffiti and abandoned vehicles and well maintained 	✓			✓			✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help you recycle so we can reduce the amount of landfill waste. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect our environment, wildlife habitats and the country side, by working with others. 		✓						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise energy efficiency and minimise carbon emissions in our own buildings, and developments. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep you informed about climate change and what we can all do to help. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly improve green spaces and public places so that you really notice the difference where you live and work. 								
An accessible, value for money Council	✓							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be easy to contact, approachable and responsive. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always treat everyone with dignity and respect and meet the specific needs of young people, older people, disabled people and ethnic minorities. 	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put things right quickly if they go wrong. 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver value for money by achieving the optimum balance between cost, quality and customer satisfaction for all services. 				✓				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce financial burden to local taxpayers. 				✓				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how your council tax is spent and why. 				✓				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with others to provide you with local services and access to information about them. 	✓		✓					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate that we can be trusted to act properly for you 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the way we communicate with the public, partners and other stakeholders in order to explain what the Council is doing and why. 	✓	✓			✓		✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to your views and comments, however you want to make them 	✓		✓	✓			✓	

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Appointment of Working Group Members

15 June 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the appointment of Members to the Finance Scrutiny Working Group and Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

- (1) Confirm the membership of the Finance Scrutiny Working Group.
- (2) Confirm the membership of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group.

Details

Finance Scrutiny Working Group Membership

- 2.1 The purpose of the Finance Scrutiny Working Group is to carry out detailed scrutiny of budgets and finance, consider variances and exceptions and to examine profiled spends and outturn. In short, to consider finance in terms of what it means to the public.
- 2.2 Changes to the membership of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in 2010/2011 have resulted in two vacancies on the Finance Scrutiny Working Group. It would be appropriate for the Board to invite the two new Board Members to sit on the Finance Scrutiny Working Group. Alternatively the Board may wish to consider a change to the membership of the two working groups.

Current Finance Scrutiny Working Group Membership
Councillor Nicholas Mawer
Councillor Patricia Thompson
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Martin Weir
Vacancy
Vacancy

Performance Scrutiny Working Group

- 3.1 The Performance Scrutiny Working Group carries out detailed scrutiny of corporate and service performance, consider performance where targets are not being met or over performance, considers targets, their relevance and future targets considers performance based on what it means to the public.
- 3.2 Changes to the membership of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in 2010/2011 have resulted in two vacancies on the Performance Scrutiny Working Group. It would be appropriate for the Board to agree to maintain the current membership of the Committee. Alternatively the Board may wish to consider a change to the membership of the two working groups

Current Performance Scrutiny Working Group Membership
Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Carol Steward
Vacancy
Vacancy

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 221982

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 over-stretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk and Insurance Manager, 01295 221566

Legal

No comments to make. Report checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor 01295 221691

Wards Affected

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

2010/11 Draft Work Programme

15 June 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Board with the draft overview and scrutiny work programme for 2010/11, to update Members on work programme items from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme and to consider items for inclusion on the 2010/11 work programme.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board is recommended:

- (1) To agree the Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board element of the draft work programme for 2010/11 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note the update on items carried forward from the 2009/10 overview and scrutiny work programme.
- (3) To nominate Members to participate in the fees and charges policy review group.
- (4) To consider the items suggested for inclusion on the 2010/11 Work Programme.

Details

Overview and Scrutiny Draft Work Programme 2010/11

- 1.1 The overview and scrutiny work programme as at the year end 2009/10 is attached at Appendix 1.

Update to the Work Programme Items 2009/10

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.
- 2.2 The scrutiny review was intended to link in with a value for money review of the Partnership. The Board was advised that value for money review had been delayed and agreed in February 2010 to roll the item forward to the 2010/11 work programme.
- 2.3 The Board will wish to note that the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services will be invited to the Board's July meeting to brief Members on the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership. This will also be an opportunity for the Board to consider the approach to a scrutiny review of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership.

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 July 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: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

- 2.5 In 2009/10 the Board scrutinised the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. The Board's report was submitted to the Executive in April 2010. The Executive commended the report and accepted all of the recommendations. A report updating Members on progress against the recommendations will be submitted to the Board's September meeting.
- 2.6 Although the review focussed on the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, it flagged up some general issues about the role and responsibilities of elected Members who represent the Council on partnerships and outside bodies. Members noted that the Leader of the Council had commissioned a review on the current councillor representation on outside bodies. The outcome of this review will be considered by the Executive on 7 June 2010.
- 2.7 Members will wish to note that as an outcome of the review on councillor representation on outside bodies, a training session on 'Elected member representation on partnerships and outside bodies'

will be held on Wednesday 7 July. This session offer guidance and support for members appointed to serve as a Cherwell District Council representative on a partnership or outside body.

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

- 2.8 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.

Partnerships: Bicester Vision Partnership

- 2.9 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.

- 2.10 The Board agreed that they should review the Council's involvement in the Bicester Vision Partnership in 2010. The Chairman, will brief Members on recent developments and suggest how to proceed.

Past Year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The Head of Finance attended the Board's XX meeting to update Members on progress on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the fees and charges review. The Head of Finance explained that officers had carried out research into the charging, discount and concession policies of other local authorities and that they were now ready to work with members of the Board to formulate similar policies for Cherwell District Council ahead of the 2011/12 budget process. Councillors Rae, Steward and Weir were nominated to work with officers on the formulation of charging, discount and concession policies for Cherwell District Council ahead of the 2011/12 budget process. As Mrs Rae stood down as a District Councillor at the 2010 elections, the Board will wish to nominate another Member to the fees and charges review group.
- 2.13 At the Board's July meeting the Head of Finance will update Members on further progress against the recommendations of the 2009/10 and 2010/11 budget scrutiny reviews.

Food Waste Processing

- 2.14 The Performance Scrutiny Working Group will review this in autumn 2010.

Sports Centre Modernisation

- 2.15 The Strategic Director Environment and Community has submitted a report which provides an end of project appraisal for the Sports Centre Modernisation Programme to the June meeting of the Executive. The Finance Scrutiny Working Group will review this in summer 2010.

Deleted Items – items no longer on the work programme

Partnership Scrutiny: Registered Social Landlords' Management Group

- 2.16 This was on the Board's 2009/10 Work Programme. The Portfolio Holder Planning and Housing, the Head of Housing Services, the Strategic Housing Manager, the Strategic Housing Officer and the representatives from Charter Community Housing, the Bromford Group and Charter Residents' Voice attended the Board's March meeting to participate in a discussion about the Registered Social Landlords' Management Group, including its links to the Council's corporate priorities, the national standards that apply and strategic and operational issues relating to the management of housing stock across the district.
- 2.17 Following the discussion, the Board concluded that there was a strong working relationship between the Council's Housing Services and the main Registered Social Landlords which was focused on common objectives which supported the Council's corporate priorities. This was underpinned by a formal structure to manage and measure the effectiveness of the partnership. As a result, Board agreed that there was no further scrutiny of this partnership should be undertaken at this time.
- 2.18 The Board agreed that a brief report summarising the information presented should be submitted to the Executive commending the Portfolio Holder, Planning and Housing and the staff of Cherwell's Housing Services for their work, in partnership with the Registered Social Landlords, on the management of social housing in the district. This report was completed and submitted in May 2010.

Work Programme Items 2010/11

Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny

Proposed Scrutiny Topics

- 3.1 In addition to the items carried forward from the 2009/10 work programme, Members of the Board have suggested the following items for consideration for inclusion on the Work Programme 2010/11. The Board will wish to consider these items and decide if they feel they are appropriate for inclusion on the Work Programme.

- Disabled Facilities Grants
 - The cost and length of Planning Appeals
 - The cost of Cherwell District Council employing external consultants
- 3.2 In considering these suggestions for the work programme and prioritising the topics the Board will wish to consider the resources available to support the work and the timescales. The Board should also reflect on the demands that scrutiny reviews place on the resources in the individual service areas.
- 3.3 The Board will also wish to consider the priority checklist. The current, informal criteria applied to all suggestions for a scrutiny review are that it must:
- be of concern to a group of people living within the Cherwell District;
 - relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence;
 - not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months;
 - not relate to an individual service complaint;
 - not relate to an individual planning or licensing application.

Budget Scrutiny 2011/12

- 3.4 The Head of Finance will be present at the meeting on 7 September and together with the Chairman will facilitate a discussion about the approach and schedule for budget scrutiny for 2011/12.

Future Meetings Schedule

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board	20 July 2010, 7.00pm 7 September 2010, 7.00pm 12 October 2010, 7.00pm 7 December 2010, 7.00pm 11 January 2011, 7.00pm 1 March 2011, 7.00pm
Finance Scrutiny Working Group	13 July 2010, 6.30pm 28 September 2010, 6.30pm 30 November 2011, 6.30pm 28 February 2011, 6.30pm
Performance Scrutiny Working Group	29 June 2010, 6.30pm 21 September 2010, 6.30pm 23 November 2010, 6.30pm 9 February 2011, 6.30pm

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	22 June 2010, 6.30pm 27 July 2010, 6.30pm 14 September 2010, 6.30pm 26 October 2010, 6.30pm 14 December 2010, 6.30pm 25 January 2010, 6.30pm 8 March 2010, 6.30pm
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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 CS&R, 01295 221982

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor, 01295 221691

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 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.

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

Wards Affected

Each scrutiny review will identify the wards affected

Corporate Plan Themes

Each scrutiny review will identify the relevant corporate plan themes

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Work Programme 2010/11
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
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Draft Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2010/11

Title	Committee	Comments	Meeting			
			June	July	Sept	Later
Scheduling – <i>to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny</i>						
Youth Services	OSC	Consider as topic for 2010/11. Include outcomes from Young Peoples VFM review	✓			
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC	Consider as topic for 2010/11. Will require more focus and tighter scope	✓			
Scrutiny – <i>agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings</i>						
Kidlington Pedestrianisation	OSC	Confirmed as agenda item for 2010/11. Referral from February Council.	✓			
Conservation Area Policy	OSC	Confirmed as topic for 2010/11. Discuss revised scoping document.		✓		
Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities	R&PSB	Work programme item for 2010/11		✓		
Contracts review	R&PSB	To consider and agree an approach for contract scrutiny		✓		
Task & Finish Groups – <i>agreed topics for review outside committee meetings</i>						
Houses In Multiple Occupancy and Planning Policy	Cllr Bonner Cllr Clarke Cllr Smithson	To identify potential policy guidelines for HMO occupancy & refer to LDF Advisory Panel	✓			
Monitoring – <i>to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations</i>						
Democratic Engagement with young people	OSC	Final report to Executive in June.				✓
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	OSC	Final report to Executive in June.				✓

Title	Committee	Comments	June	July	Sept	Later
Partnerships: ORCC	R&PSB	Final report to Executive in April			✓	
Private Sector Housing Strategy	OSC	Review progress against action plan in spring 2011				✓
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics	OSC	Review progress and work of Member/Officer working group in summer 2010.			✓	
RAF Bicester	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes on progress.				
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes on progress.				
Partnerships: Bicester Vision	R&PSB	Retain on work programme item for 2010/11	✓			
Past year Budget Scrutiny Recommendations Monitoring	R&PSB	Retain on work programme for 2010/11.		✓		
Food Waste Processing	PSWG	Review autumn 2010			✓	
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Review summer 2010.		✓		