

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 24 July 2012
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)	Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Colin Clarke	Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath	Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Kieron Mallon	Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill	Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Leslie F Sibley	Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitutes

Councillor Andrew Beere	Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE	Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Alaric Rose	Councillor Rose Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson	Councillor Sean Woodcock

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 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2012.

5. Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future (Pages 5 - 12)

Summary

At the 19 June 2012 meeting, the Committee noted that at their May meeting the Executive had resolved to contact the Department for Central and Local Government to explore the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city. The Committee agreed it would be useful to receive a briefing on the proposal to enable consideration of any areas the Committee could add value.

The Eco-Bicester Project Manager will be present at the meeting to discuss the initiative.

A copy of the report considered by Executive is attached to the agenda.

Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider the evidence and information presented and determine if there are any areas the Committee can add value and should be added to their work programme.

6. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 (Pages 13 - 32)

Report of Head of Law and Governance

Summary

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To note the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance in consultation with the former and current Chairmen of the two scrutiny committees, to complete the foreword and to make any minor amendments to the annual report before submission to Council.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13 (Pages 33 - 46)

Report of Head of Law and Governance

Summary

This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme 2012/13.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the work programme.
- (4) To endorse and adopt the Mission Statement detailed in Section 4 to the report.

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01327 322365 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.

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.

Evacuation Procedure

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections dave.parry@cherwell-dc.gov.uk,
01327 322365

Sue Smith
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 16 July 2012

Agenda Item 4

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 19 June 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitute Members: Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Colin Clarke)

Apologies for absence: Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Kieron Mallon

Officers: Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Dave Parry, Interim Democratic and Elections Officer

3 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items.

5. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13.

Councillor Nigel Randall, Personal, as a trustee of Cherwell Community & Voluntary Services Ltd.

4 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

5 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 13 March 2012 and 6 May 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance which presented the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13.

Members discussed the existing and possible new items for inclusion on the Work Programme, with several service areas / topics being suggested:

- **Banbury Brighter Futures**
The Chairman had suggested this as a possible work programme item for the Committee to consider if they could contribute to the project. The Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures and Director of Community and Environment would be attending the September Committee meeting to brief Members on the project.
- **Commissioning of Services to Banbury CAB**
The Committee noted that in November 2011 a Contract for the Provision of the following Voluntary Services to Cherwell District Council: 1) Debt and Money Advice; 2) Services to Increase Volunteering; 3) Voluntary Driving Service, had been awarded to Banbury CAB for a period of 3 years from 1 April.

Members agreed that a review of this arrangement should be added to their work programme for the Committee to monitor performance, how that transition has taken place and the effect on residents in the district.

- **Crime and Disorder Partnership**
The Committee commented that they were keen to know what CDC was doing to reduce crime, how measurable this was and to receive information on the Council's role in the Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- **New Health Partnership Arrangements**
Members requested that the Lead Member and officer be invited to a future meeting to provide an overview of the new health partnership arrangements to enable Members to have an understanding of the structure and the role CDC plays.
- **RAF Bicester**
Members noted that this had previously been on the Committee work programme but there had been no developments.

The Chairman advised the Committee at their June meeting, the Executive had approved the establishment of a strategic partnership (Cherwell District Council, Bomber Command Heritage and other key agencies and interested parties) to investigate the potential of securing the site for heritage purposes, to enable the provision of an education centre and museum.

The Committee agreed that it was important they monitor the involvement of CDC to ensure value for money and that the project was being managed properly. It was requested that key officers and the Lead

Member be invited to a meeting to brief the Committee on the current position with regards to RAF Bicester.

It was also requested that the planning background and a briefing document be circulated to all Members.

- **Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future.**
The Chairman reported that at their May meeting the Executive had resolved to contact DCLG to explore the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city. The Committee agreed it would be useful to receive a briefing on the proposal to enable consideration of any areas the Committee could add value.
- **Housing Strategy**
The Chairman reported that at their April meeting the Executive had approved the Housing Strategy 2012-2017. An annual delivery plan for each year of the strategy that will prioritise actions in line with resources and opportunities. An annual delivery plan for each year of the strategy that will prioritise actions in line with resources and opportunities.

The Committee agreed it would like the opportunity to review the annual delivery plan at the appropriate time.
- **Empty Homes Policy**
During 2011/12 the Committee had received briefings on the work to date and determined that it should be retained on the work programme to monitor the implementation of the Empty Homes Policy.
- **Concessionary Fares**
The Committee requested that a briefing on the effectiveness of the transition of responsibility for concessionary fares to Oxfordshire County Council be submitted to the Committee for consideration.
- **Air Quality across the District.**
Members queried if the Council had an air quality supplementary planning document and requested that they be advised
- **Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride**
The Committee requested that a briefing note be submitted to advise Members on the outcomes the district's residents attained as a result of the additional funding the CDC paid to the County Council.
- **Welfare Reforms and National Benefit Change**
The Committee noted that the Head of Finance and Procurement would be attending their July meeting to present a briefing a benefit changes, what they will mean for CDC service delivery and the impact upon CDC residents.

Members requested that Housing Officers also be invited to attend to advise on the potential impact of the reforms on tenants and homelessness.

- **Draft Local Plan**
During 2011/12 the Committee had received briefings on the development and the draft Local Plan. And retained the item on their work programme to receive an update following the public consultation.

In discussing the potential work programme items, it was acknowledged that some might fall within the remit of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board and requested that officers liaise with the Chairmen of the scrutiny committees to ensure these were added to the work programme of the appropriate committee.

The Committee then gave consideration to the Forward Plan and, noting the scheduled September decision date in respect of the Banbury Museum Trust proposals, suggested this might be slipped to October to allow an opportunity for the Committee to be briefed. The Democratic and Elections Team Leader undertook to investigate whether this would be possible.

The Committee then suggested that, in the future, in addition to appropriate officers, the Lead Member in respect of any topic under consideration should be invited to attend and advise the Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13 be noted.
- (2) That the following items be included in the 2012/13 Overview and Scrutiny work programme: Banbury Brighter Futures, Commissioning of Services to Banbury CAB, Crime and Disorder Partnership, New Health Partnership Arrangements, RAF Bicester, Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future., Housing Strategy, Empty Homes Policy, Concessionary Fares, Air Quality across the District, Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride, Welfare Reforms and National Benefit Change, Draft Local Plan.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Executive

Eco Bicester a Garden City of the Future?

28 May 2012

Report of Head of Public Protection and Development Management

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider the potential to explore garden city designation for Bicester.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To agree that DCLG are contacted to explore the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city.

Executive Summary

Eco Bicester stemmed from the identification of NW Bicester as a location for sustainable development in accordance with the Eco Town PPS standards. Eco Bicester has been used as a banner covering the diverse range of projects taking place within the existing town and as part of the expansion of the town. However the latest government guidance on planning (the National Planning Policy Framework) no longer refers explicitly to Eco Towns (although the Eco Towns supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 is still in existence) but does encourage development that meets garden city principles.

This report considers the implications of this change in the governments approach in relation to Eco Bicester

Introduction

- 1.1 The government, particularly through speeches and publications by the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Housing, have supported new development to garden city principles. Garden Cities were planned new settlements that sought to 'provide a balance between town and country'. Recently the Town & Country Planning Association has published 're-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century' which identifies benefits and

lessons in bringing forward comprehensively planned communities.

- 1.2 Eco Towns were similarly envisaged as planned and sustainable settlements, raising standards and being exemplars. The Eco Towns guidance in the supplement to PPS1 also sets clear standards for such places, above those generally achieved in new developments. There are many synergies between the proposals for new settlements envisaged through the garden city movement and the more recent aspirations for eco towns.

Proposals

- 1.3 The government has indicated that there will be consultation later this year about how to apply garden city principles to new developments. The proposal is therefore that the opportunity to identify Eco Bicester with garden cities is explored with government now.

Conclusion

- 1.4 Whilst Eco Bicester is now recognised widely but there may be opportunities arising from also recognising the garden city principles that do not conflict with the ambitions for the town.

Background Information

Government Position on Growth

- 2.1 In a speech on 19 March 2012, the Prime Minister David Cameron announced;

So, yes, we need more housing, but sprawling over the countryside isn't the answer. We must absolutely protect our green belts and national parks, but we also urgently need to find places where we're prepared to allow significant new growth to happen. That is why we'll begin consultation later this year on how to apply the principles of garden cities to areas with high potential growth in places people want to live. And we must get our planning system fit for purpose; it needs to be quick, it needs to be easier to use and it needs to better support growth, jobs and homes.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The NPPF published in March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policy and replaces the majority of previous planning guidance, although the supplement to PPS1 on Eco Towns remains in place at the present time. The NPPF promotes sustainable development identifying three dimensions; an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. The NPPF advises these should not be sought in isolation and that they are mutually dependent.
- 2.3 With regard to delivering large scale housing development the NPPF advises at para 52 that;

The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning

for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, Local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such development.

- 2.4 Much new development is planned to be accommodated in Cherwell by the way of large scale extensions to the existing towns of Banbury and Bicester.

Garden Cities

- 2.5 Garden Cities were a concept developed by Ebenezer Howard through his publication *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898.
- 2.6 The Garden City vision was developed by Ebenezer Howard to combine the very best of town and country living to create healthy homes for working people in vibrant communities. The heart of the garden city ideals are holistically planned new settlements which enhance the natural environment, provide high quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs.
- 2.7 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) grew from the work of Ebenezer Howard and the garden cities movement and continues to promote the principles of sustainable new development.
- 2.8 The TCPA define the garden city principles as
- *Community ownership of land and long term stewardship of assets*
 - *High quality imaginative design including homes with gardens*
 - *Mixed tenure homes which are affordable for ordinary people*
 - *A strong local jobs offer with a variety of employment opportunities within the garden city and easy commuting distance of homes*
 - *Generous green space linked to the wider countryside. Over 60% of Hampstead Garden Suburb is green space, including a mix of public and private networks of well managed, high quality gardens and open spaces.*
 - *Access to strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities*
 - *Integrated and accessible transport systems*
 - *Local food sourcing, including allotments.*
- 2.9 Two garden cities were originally developed, Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, which remain successful places today. The garden cities also inspired other new settlements in the UK and abroad including the post war New Towns developed in the UK.

Eco Towns

- 3.1 The Eco Towns programme launched in 2007 sought to address many of the same issues as the garden cities and new towns. Eco towns are to be exemplar developments *'that encourage and enable residents to live within managed environmental limits and in communities that are resilient to climate change'* (Eco Towns Supplement to PPS1 para 5).
- 3.2 The Eco Towns PPS sets minimum standards for eco towns, these are;
- Zero carbon development
 - Climate change adaptation
 - At least 30% affordable housing, building for life silver, lifetime homes, minimum of code 4 and 5 for water, real time energy monitoring, energy efficiency and carbon reductions
 - At least 1 job per dwelling
 - Priority for walking, cycling and use of public transport to achieve at least 50% of trips originating in an eco town by non car means
 - Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the design of the place
 - Local services
 - 40% green space
 - Protection of the historic environment
 - Biodiversity net gain
 - Reduced water use and water quality
 - Flood risk management
 - Reduction in waste
 - Master plan
 - Detailed delivery and monitoring
 - Community governance
- 3.3 The vision for eco towns was therefore that they would be highly sustainable, planned developments delivering both jobs and housing, sustainable long term governance and community facilities, significant green space and ambitious targets for modal shift, as well as the economies of scale that can come from large scale new development. In addition the Eco Towns are to provide demonstrators of best practice, achieving standards beyond those provided through other developments.
- 3.4 The Town & Country Planning Association also has supported the development of eco towns providing detailed worksheets on delivering the standards. Eco Towns could in many ways be seen as the 21 century interpretation of new settlements, much in the way garden cities informed earlier thinking on sustainable developments.

Bicester

- 3.5 NW Bicester was identified as an Eco Town location with the publication of the Eco Town supplement to PPS 1 in 2009. In addition to seeking higher standards for new development at NW Bicester the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board identified a need to ensure the existing town was not left behind and to use the new development as a catalyst to bring about change in the existing town. To that end a vision setting out the ambitions for the town was produced and adopted. The vision is entitled 'Eco Bicester One Shared Vision'.

- 3.6 The Eco Towns PPS aims were used to inform the One Shared Vision for Bicester which is based around three themes of Community First, Employment, Transport and Environmental Sustainability and sets out the long term aims for the town as a whole, including existing and proposed development. The Shared Vision has been adopted by Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Bicester Town Council, Homes and Communities Agency, Environment Agency and Bicester Vision. Eco Bicester has been used as the banner under which a diverse range of projects promoting sustainable low carbon living in the town have taken place.
- 3.7 Since 2009 work has been underway to deliver highly sustainable new development at NW Bicester and improvements within the town such as energy efficiency schemes, work on travel behaviour and exemplar buildings. Some of the work has been funded through Eco Town grant received from the Dept. of Communities and Local Government. However, it is evident that the government is no longer directly promoting 'eco towns' and hence the reference in the NPPF to garden cities.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

1. Through the Bicester Master Plan and Local Plan, Bicester will be identified to grow, accommodate new homes as well as substantial land for employment by 2031. With the very significant levels of growth proposed at Bicester it is important to think not just in terms of new buildings but how the town and its existing population can grow in a holistic way to accommodate the change, retaining the strengths of the existing town and addressing its current weaknesses. The Shared Vision has sought to provide this over arching vision for the town.
2. The Eco Town standards are helpful in identifying clear requirements for delivering sustainable new developments. However the Eco Town PPS supplement is clear that it also relied on advice that at the time of publication was provided in other planning policy statements which have now been replaced by the NPPF. In seeking opportunities for further funding for the growing town it is helpful to ensure that the local approach is consistent with government's current thinking on new development. This supports consideration of a garden cities approach in which sustainability is central, as remains the case with the NPPF.
3. In many ways Bicester meets many of the garden city aims. As a market town it has housing, employment and local facilities. Much development of the town has taken place in the second half of the 20th century at relatively low densities with individual gardens and significant areas of open space. Proposals to expand the town similarly seek a sustainable balance between employment, housing and open space. The NPPF provides the opportunity to consider green belts to provide long term limits for growth in connection with large scale development designed to garden city principles.
4. Given the governments approach to promoting garden cities and the clear synergies with the Eco Bicester approach, that seeks to transform the town into a sustainable community of the future, it is recommended that additional branding of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city is explored with DCLG.

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

Option One Explore the requirements for garden cities and explore the opportunities of identifying Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City

Option Two Do not explore Garden City identification

Consultations

None, but extensive engagement with stakeholders will be required if future designation is to be pursued.

Implications

Financial: None arising directly from the report. If there were to be a significant re branding then costs would be incurred and funding for this would need to be further considered.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement Telephone 0300 0030106

Legal: None arising directly from the report

Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance 0300 003 0107

Risk Management: Eco Bicester is recognised as the umbrella under which projects in Bicester, contributing to making the town a more sustainable place, are being carried out. There is a risk that a change to the name would confuse the identity.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager 01295 221563

Wards Affected

Bicester Town, East, South, West & North Wards

Corporate Plan Themes

District of Opportunity

Lead Member

**Councillor Barry Wood
Leader of the Council**

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
Eco Bicester One Shared Vision	
Eco Town Supplement to PPS 1	
National Planning Policy Framework	
Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21 st Century – TCPA	
Report Author	Jenny Barker , Eco Bicester Project Manager
Contact Information	01295 221828 Jenny.Barker@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12

24 July 2011

Report of Head of Law and Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To note the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Head of Law and Governance in consultation with the former and current Chairmen of the two scrutiny committees, to complete the foreword and to make any minor amendments to the annual report before submission to Council.

Details

- 1.1 The draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 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 Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board will consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report at its meeting on 17 July 2012. This is an opportunity for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the draft Annual Report.

Implications

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

Comments checked by Sarah Best, 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 James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager, 01295 221587

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 2011/12.

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/11
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Cherwell



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report
2011/12**

DRAFT

June 2012

Foreword

This annual report for overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council outlines the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Resources and Performance Board and individual Task & Finish Groups over the last year.

We have continued to build on the work that has been done over the last few years and we have sought to minimise the turnover of committee membership establish in order to develop an experienced group of councillors who are building up a strong skill base and understanding of the principles of good scrutiny and at the same time a knowledge of scrutiny case history.

This year, overview and scrutiny work has attempted to be as much about policy development as it has been about reviewing what has already taken place. In the main this has been successful with many recommendations being made to the Executive that have subsequently been acted upon.

Over the coming year both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board will continue their work to ensure that relevant topics will be reviewed and challenged thus providing checks and balances as well as helping the Executive to make decisions.

We firmly believe that overview and scrutiny continues to make a valuable contribution to make to the continuing success of this Council.

Councillor Kieron Mallon
Chairman,
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2011/12

Councillor Nick Mawer
Chairman,
Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board
2011/12

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Ch)
Councillor Ann Bonner
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Neil Prestidge
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Councillor Lynn Pratt (V Ch)
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Rose Stratford

Private Sector Housing Strategy

In July 2011 the Committee discussed the progress made by the Council against the targets set by the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 -14. The Committee focused on four main areas: the inspection programme for licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); the different enforcement powers at the Council's disposal and their relative cost and success rates; the reduction in the number of private sector landlords following changes to the national benefits system; and the increase in the number of complaints which was believed to be a reflection of the financial and social pressures caused by the current economic climate as there were no other underlying themes or trends in the type of complaint. The Committee noted that the Housing Services team were actively pursuing options for dealing with non-compliance and to improve the level of enforcement as part of the Private Sector Housing Development Project.

Empty Homes Policy

The Committee considered this topic as part of their policy development remit to learn more about the steps being taken by the Council to bring empty homes into use and to consider proposals for the strategic approach to empty homes; and in particular to provide guidance on how far the Council might go in adopting the more stringent enforcement powers available to tackle empty properties and homelessness. The Committee noted the significant success of the Housing Services staff in reducing the levels of homelessness and improving housing standards in the district over the last few years was at risk of being eroded due to a recent increase in the numbers on the homeless register and that a further rise was anticipated in 2012-13 as the government's changes to the benefit system took effect.

The Committee endorsed the following four principles, which it was proposed, would underpin the Council's approach to empty homes in the future:

1. The Council wants empty homes to be used.
2. The Council will encourage and facilitate their re-use (e.g. by providing advice, grants and loans).
3. The Council will take action to resolve specific issues caused by empty homes (where powers permit).
4. The Council will take action to secure re-use of empty homes where a business case exists.

The Committee confirmed their support for these four principles as an excellent, pragmatic and low risk approach to tackling one of the housing issues in the district. They agreed that it was important to prioritise the cases and use the measures to address properties which had been empty for some time or which posed other economic and social issues and were identified as suitable to address a particular housing need. In addition the Committee recommended that the Council should seek to complement its work on tackling homelessness and empty properties by pressing for stronger powers to ensure the faster delivery of new homes by developers. Finally the Committee urged the Lead Member and officers to ensure that the work was publicised to residents.

Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment

In the autumn of 2011 the Committee reviewed the Council's work on equalities in the context of the Self Assessment and the evolution of the Council's approach from an original focus on legal compliance and "box-ticking" to the current ethos of ensuring that business processes, performance management and service delivery were appropriate for the needs of all residents and flexible in response to people's requirements. The Committee noted that equalities work is embedded in teams across the Council supported to a limited extent by the Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager and the Equalities and Diversity Officer; that although still complex the legislation is now consolidated in the single 2010 act which is better suited to the Cherwell approach (i.e. focusing on a holistic and locally appropriate approach to equalities rather than a limited set of characteristics); and that the focus is on using customer feedback and service testing to produce practical results. In conclusion the Committee resolved that the Council's Self Assessment against the Achieving Standard under the Equality Framework for Local Government should be referred to the Executive for approval.

A Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service

In December 2012 the Committee considered the financial, legal and staffing implications of a business case for a shared ICT for Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). The Committee noted that the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board had looked at the budgetary implications for CDC if the shared IS/IT service was not implemented and had concluded that implementation of the shared IS/IT service should be supported as it would reduce the pressure on Cherwell District Council's capital budget. The Committee noted that the future harmonisation of specific service related software across the two councils was not included in this business case, but that as an area of potential savings it would be explored as part of a future work strand. In conclusion the Committee agreed that the implementation of a shared IS/IT service for both sovereign authorities should be supported.

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Membership

Councillor Nick Mawer (Ch)
Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Andrew Fulljames
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Doug Webb

Councillor Douglas Webb (V Ch)
Councillor Maurice Billington
Councillor Margaret Cullip
Councillor Melanie Magee¹
Councillor Pat Tompson
Councillor Martin Weir

2012/13 Budget scrutiny



The budget scrutiny process began in September 2011 when the Board received a briefing from the Corporate Systems Accountant, Technical Accountant and the Community and Corporate Planning Manager gave a brief presentation on the context and background to the 2012/13 budget, including budget pressures, future funding, Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions, 2012/13 building blocks, budget guidelines and the draft 2012/13 budget.

The budget scrutiny process for 2012/13 involved a review of the current budget for 2011/12 of £15.8m with a detailed review of discretionary areas of spend, a review of staff savings suggestions and the capital bids received as part of the 2012/13 process.

The Board met formally on 22 November 2011 to reflect on the areas considered as part of the budget scrutiny process and the draft recommendations, conclusions and comments based on the outcomes of the budget scrutiny working group meetings. At this meeting the Board made 7 recommendations and 15 conclusions/comments. There were a number of areas where the Board had deferred making recommendations and had instead requested further information. These areas were considered at the 10 January 2012 meeting of Board during which a further 4 recommendations were made.

Capital Programme 2011/12: Of the seventeen capital bids, Members were satisfied with the evidence for nine and agreed that these should be recommended for inclusion of the Capital Programme 2011/12. Members recommended that one bid should not be included and that consideration of five bids relating to ICT should be deferred pending the ICT Insource and Shared Service Business Case.

Discretionary Spend: The Board noted that discretionary spend for Cherwell District Council in 2011/12 totalled a net expenditure of £3.1m (27% of the Council's net budget). During the budget scrutiny working group meetings, which had involved relevant Lead Members and officers, the Board had considered in detail the following areas: Street wardens; communications;

¹ Councillor Melanie Magee was appointed to the Board on 26 July 2011. Councillor Carol Steward was a Board member between May and July 2011.

community transport; economic development; Woodgreen Leisure; Spiceball Sports Centre; Banbury Museum; Council's Administration Function; Tourist Information Centre/Courtyard; Support Cost Trends; Communications – Controllable/Uncontrollable Costs; and, Distribution of Cherwell Link with Electoral Registration forms / Council Tax Bills (linked to communications). In terms of discretionary spend greater than £200,000, the Board made three recommendations to the Executive and a further seven comments/conclusions.

Staff Savings Suggestions: During the summer 2011, staff had submitted a list of 44 money saving suggestions which had been considered during the Budget Scrutiny Working Group meetings. Members recognised the value of the suggestions and concluded that whilst some had already been implemented or were being addressed through other forums, there were nine suggestions they considered in detail: Reduce Stationery Spend; Cease Distributing Free Dog Waste Bags; Councillors Blackberry Provision; Cease Webcasting; Staff Holiday / Pay Freeze / Change in Working Week; Fast Tracking Licensing Applications; Fast Tracking Planning Applications; Remove Street Warden Service; Review CCTV Operation and Costs; Review Opening Hours of Link Point. In terms of staff savings suggestions, the Board made two recommendations to Executive and a further seven comments/conclusions.

As part of the budget scrutiny process, the Board also considered the council tax figures for Cherwell District Council and compared them to West Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and South Northamptonshire Council. The comparative data included a breakdown of the cost of services and the split between statutory services and discretionary services. The Board had noted that each Local Authority structured their accounts and cost centres differently. Members agreed that the comparative figures with other authorities was very important and useful information.

The Board thanked the Finance Team for their hard work in providing all information requested and Lead Members and officers for attending the budget scrutiny working group meetings.

All of the Board's recommendations and observations were welcomed and accepted by the Executive and Council as part of the 2011/12 Budget.

Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)

The Board had undertaken a review of the Council's partnership with Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership and met with the Chairman of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP), the Cherwell Local Police Area (LPA) Commander, the Portfolio Holder Community Safety, Urban and Rural, the Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services and the Community and Corporate Planning Manager in September 2010. The Board had noted there was a strong working relationship between the Council and the CSCP which supported the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and strategies, which was underpinned by a formal structure to manage and

measure the effectiveness of the partnership and as a result, the partnership was delivering practical benefits to residents in the district. The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services attended the June 2011 meeting to update Members on the CSCP.

The Board learnt that due to budget cuts the CSCP had reviewed its priorities at the end of 2010 and agreed five priorities for the District: Anti-Social Behaviour; Reducing serious acquisitive crime; Young people; Domestic abuse; and, Violence against the person. The prioritisation had been agreed at the March 2011 CSCP meeting and the final budget allocations would be submitted to the June 2011 CSCP meeting. There was ongoing uncertainty within the Partnership as the funding for 2012/13 remained unclear.

Members of the Board noted the importance of the CSCP in bringing agencies together. The performance of the CSCP is monitored through the Performance Management Framework and Members noted in March 2012 that performance remained green.

Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)

The Board had undertaken a review of the Council's partnership with Oxfordshire Rural Community Council in 2009/10. The six recommendations arising from the review had been accepted by the Executive in April 2010. The Board had received an update on progress against the recommendations in September 2010 and requested a further update in summer 2011. The Head of Safer Communities, Urban and Rural Services and Councillor Atack, the Council's appointed outside body representative, attended the June 2011 meeting to provide this update.

The Board noted that the Council's relationship with ORCC had been strengthened through the signing of a Service Level Agreement which contained five key objectives, each with various measures which were monitored regularly: 1. Encourage community led planning; 2. Retaining and improving rural retail services; 3. Improving village halls; 4. Rural transport option – ORCC to promote and support five volunteer schemes; and, 5. Innovating rural development. The Board commended the progress in signing the Service Level Agreement and noted that the objectives broadly covered the vast range of work undertaken by ORCC.

The Board noted that proposals regarding the future funding of ORCC to deliver services better and in a more financially viable way were currently under consideration. These proposals were subject to a detailed review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee through a Task and Finish Group (see page 13).

Members noted that CDC had a small Urban and Rural Services team and as a consequence relied on ORCC to deliver a number of services on behalf on the Council. In conclusion, the Board was satisfied with the progress that had been made since their review of the partnership.

Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)

The Board had agreed that the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) be added as a potential topic for scrutiny in light of its inclusion on the Council's 2011/12 risk register. The Head of Environmental Services and the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Coordinator attended the Board's July meeting to brief Members on the council's partnership with OWP.

Members noted that the OWP included all of the Oxfordshire district councils and Oxfordshire County Council, OCC, (one member per partner authority) and had been established under a Memorandum of Understanding in 2003 and formed as a Statutory Joint Committee in April 2007. The vision of the OWP was to work in partnership to reduce waste and to maximise reuse, recycling and composting. In January 2007 the partnership agreed a Joint Municipal Waste Strategy which set out plans for dealing with Oxfordshire's municipal waste through to 2030. In terms of performance monitoring, a three year rolling action plan was established to deliver against the objectives of the Strategy.

The Board considered the financial arrangements and noted that each partner contributed to the OWP. It was noted that OCC was legally required to pay recycling credits to the District Councils as the collection authorities. However, as OCC had to make substantial budget savings and had indicated that a saving could be to reduce the landfill reduction credits it pays, which could mean a potential loss of significant income for CDC. The Board noted that the overall Joint Municipal Waste Strategy was due for review in 2011/12 and that the opportunity would also be taken to review the financial arrangements.

The Board concluded that there were three key areas that remained uncertain in the council's partnership with the OWP: budget/financial implications; environmental impact of any future changes; and, the need for new targets for the Joint Municipal Waste Strategy. It was agreed that the Board should receive an update in due course.

Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council

In March 2011 the Board had considered the cost and use of external consultants by Cherwell District Council. In light of the discussion, Members agreed that the item should be added to their work programme. At their September 2011 meeting the Corporate Systems Accountant and Corporate and Community Planning Manager gave a presentation which covered the following areas: why consultants may be used; different types of consultancy; how the Council procures consultancy; how consultants are managed; which services use consultants; consultancy spend 2011/12 to date; and, private contractors and consultants spend 2011/12 to date.

The Board noted that the Council's spend on consultants had reduced in 2011/12 but acknowledged that in certain circumstances the use of consultants was the best approach. Members stressed the importance of the process for procuring consultants being robust and noted that whilst the council did not have a single policy for procuring consultants as usage and

costs were so diverse, the council did have a Procurement Strategy which must be complied with.

The Board agreed that the Council's expenditure on consultants should continue to be monitored by the Finance Scrutiny Working Group.

Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team

In December 2012 the Committee considered the financial, legal and staffing implications of a business case for a shared Finance and Procurement Team for Cherwell District Council (CDC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC).

The Board noted that a number of options had been considered in relation to finance and procurement functions at both Councils. The joining of services and locations was pursued as the preferred option that would best support the Joint Management Team in a timely manner, deliver the required savings and permit further review once the impact of the Local Government Resources Review, welfare reform and Localism Act 2011 became clear. As part of the extensive consultation process the business case had also been considered by the SNC Community and Resources Review and Development Committee. A final version of the business case would be considered at CDC Executive and SNC Cabinet in April 2012.

In conclusion the Board unanimously agreed that the business case should be supported and they commended the work of the officers across both authorities for their hard work in bringing the case forward.

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board ~ Working Groups

The members of the Board have divided into two informal working groups that each meet about four 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: Councillor Mawer (Chairman), Councillor Webb, Councillor Ahmed, Councillor Cartledge, Councillor Stratford, Councillor Tompson and Councillor 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 2011/12 there were no meetings of the Finance Scrutiny Working Group as the time was used for budget scrutiny. The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board considered the relevant finance monitoring reports at full Board meetings.

Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Membership: Councillor Mawer (Chairman), Councillor Webb, Councillor Billington, Councillor Cullip, Councillor Fulljames, Councillor Magee² and Councillor Williamson

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. In 2011/12 there were no meetings of the Performance Scrutiny Working Group as the time was used for budget scrutiny meetings. The Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board considered the relevant performance monitoring reports at full Board meetings.

² Appointed in February 2012. Councillor Carol Steward was a member of the Group from May – July 2011.

Task and Finish Groups

Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services

Membership: Councillors Mallon, Emptage, Pratt, Stevens, L Stratford and R Stratford

This Task & Finish Group was convened in June 2011 in response to a suggestion by the Executive to review the Council's intention to move from grant aid to the commissioning of voluntary sector services, in particular for Advice, Volunteering and Voluntary Car Transport Schemes. Members of the Task and Finish Group met with officers on three occasions to consider each area in detail before presenting their findings to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Committee endorsed the views of the Task and Finish Group and identified three clear issues for the Executive: (i) that the project was about commissioning not cost cutting; (ii) that the commissioning project would offer improvements to service delivery; (iii) that funds needed to be channelled to relevant services. The Committee confirmed their support for the commissioning project and agreed that it was important that it progressed according to the set timetable to ensure that no residents were disadvantaged in April 2012 because contracts and suppliers were not in place. The Executive accepted the Committee's conclusions in September 2012.

Joint Meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Car Parking Provisions and Charges

Cherwell District Council introduced new car parking provisions and charges in April 2011 which had led to a high volume of complaints from members of the public and extensive local press and media coverage. The proposed introduction of these charges had been previously considered by the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in the autumn of 2010 as part of the 2011/12 Budget preparation; as the subject of a Call-in held in January 2011; and by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 14 June 2011.

At this joint meeting members of the Committee reviewed the Council's budget position and noted the continuing pressure to find savings and/or raise income as a consequence of the significant reduction in Government grant. They also reviewed and discussed a number of alternative options for parking policy and charging.

Following a lengthy discussion the Committee agreed 11 draft recommendations for the Executive which could be accommodated within the budget and which would have no impact on any other service area:

- (1) That there is a need to make some adjustments to the new car parking charges and policies in recognition of concerns raised by Councillors and the public.
- (2) That any adjustments must try to balance real benefit to car park users and town traders with the accepted effects on the Council's limited and reducing finances.
- (3) That the current charges for evening parking be changed to charging to 1900hrs only on current hourly tariffs and free thereafter.
- (4) That there should be free parking for blue badge holders in designated disabled spaces but blue badge holders should be charged in all general parking spaces.
- (5) That there should be a 10 minute maximum period of grace for parking period expiry and non purchase of tickets.
- (6) That the discount for early payment of excess charge notices within 14 days be increased to 50% for all contraventions.
- (7) To note the withdrawal of the current £16 administration charge for appeals which are upheld but where the ECN was issued correctly.
- (8) That the effects of the redevelopment of Bicester Town Centre warrant an adjustment to the current charging regime until the new development is complete (anticipated summer 2013) by reducing the current charges by 10p per hour.
- (9) That officers determine the earliest implementation of the changes agreed by the Executive according to the appropriate legal processes.

- (10) That a detailed communications plan be compiled to signify these changes which takes into account the lessons learnt from the April changes.
- (11) That the Executive consider funding the loss of income of 4 and 6 above (estimated to be £93,000 per annum) from the additional income and lower cost arising from the transfer of some treasury management functions in house; and the fixed term Bicester loss of income from 8 above (estimated to be £80,000 per annum over two years) from the additional interest secured from the later £10m investment of the Council's contribution to the Bicester Town Centre Redevelopment Scheme due to the delay in its start.

The recommendations were considered at a special meeting of the Executive on 26 July 2011 and were all accepted without amendment. In addition the Executive also recommended that Sunday and Bank Holiday parking be charged at £1 for all day and that parking on Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day remain free.

DRAFT

Call-in

The right to Call-in a decision of the Executive was not used during the municipal year 2011/12.

Training and Development

There were no specific scrutiny related training events for members in 2011/12, however a number of other Member development events supported the role of councillors on the scrutiny committees:

- 6 councillors attended the Treasury Management training on 2 June 2011, which relates to the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in undertaking budget scrutiny.
- 5 councillors attended the Meeting Procedures and Chairing Skills training on 21 June 2011, which supports all Members on procedures and processes at meetings.
- 12 councillors attended the Local Government Finance training on 28 October 2011, which relates to the work of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board in undertaking budget scrutiny.

Statistics

Statistic	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of scrutiny committee meetings	25	20	20	17	17	16
% attendance at scrutiny committee meetings	76%	78%	82%	76%	71%	72%
Total Number of completed reviews	7	6	6	5	9 + Joint case = 10	6 + 1 Joint
Number of committee reviews undertaken	1	1	4	6		2
Number of Task & Finish Groups established	12	2	2	1	1	1
Number of Call-ins	0	1	0	0	1	0
% scrutiny recommendations accepted by Executive or other body	-	90%	97%	100%	100%	100%

Corporate priorities checklist

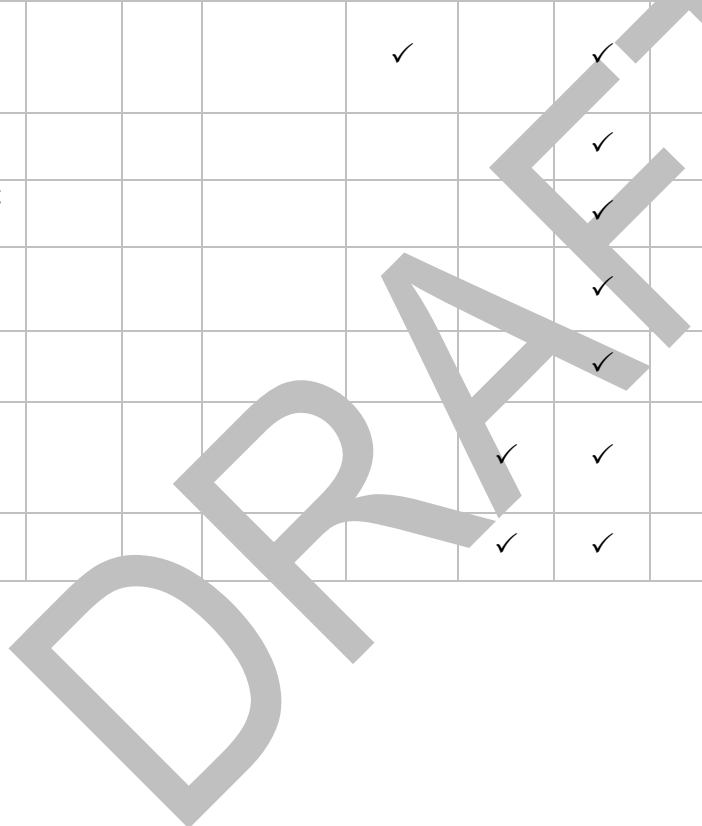
How does the overview and scrutiny function contribute to the Council's corporate priorities?

	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Policy	Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment	Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service	Car Parking Provisions and Charges	2012/13 Budget scrutiny	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)	Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)	Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council	Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team	Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services
Break the Cycle of Deprivation and address inequalities across the District			✓									✓
Work to support the development of the Northwest Bicester Eco-Town, using the Eco-Town as an opportunity to develop a centre of excellence in terms of sustainable living												
A district of opportunity												
1. Balance employment and housing growth by developing businesses and homes that meet local need within an overall robust planning policy framework.												
2. Provide business land and premises opportunities to support local economic development.												
3. Support business success by fostering innovation and helping businesses to recruit and retain skilled employees												
4. Help and support Cherwell's residents through uncertain times	✓	✓				✓						✓
5. Make it easier for you to get where you need to go												✓
6. Secure housing growth that meets Government targets and the needs of the District through an appropriate mix of market and affordable housing.												

	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Policy	Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment	Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service	Car Parking Provisions and Charges	2012/13 Budget scrutiny	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)	Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)	Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council	Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team	Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services
7. Give you advice and support to find a home if you are without one.	✓	✓										✓
8. Improve the standard of housing particularly for vulnerable people.	✓	✓										
9. Develop safe and pleasant urban centre which provide you with good facilities												
10. Improve local services and opportunities in rural areas.								✓				
A safe and healthy Cherwell												
11. Help you feel safe in your home and community, working to reduce further our very low level of crime							✓					
12. Involve you in making your community stronger through Neighbourhood Management												
13. Help to deliver improved healthcare for Bicester and Banbury.												
14. Make it easy for you to lead a healthy and active life through our countryside, leisure facilities and tourist attractions												
15. Make big improvements to our sports centres												
16. Provide community facilities and activities to meet local need								✓				✓

	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Policy	Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment	Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service	Car Parking Provisions and Charges	2012/13 Budget scrutiny	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)	Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)	Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council	Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team	Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services
A cleaner, greener Cherwell												
17. Keep streets and open spaces clean and free from litter, graffiti and abandoned vehicles and well maintained							✓					
18. Help you recycle so we can reduce the amount of landfill waste.								✓				
19. Protect our environment, wildlife habitats and the country side, by working with others.												
20. Maximise energy efficiency and minimise carbon emissions in our own buildings, and developments.												
21. Keep you informed about climate change and what we can all do to help.												
22. 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												
23. Be easy to contact, approachable and responsive.			✓									
24. Always treat everyone with dignity and respect and meet the specific needs of young people, older people, disabled people and ethnic minorities.			✓									✓
25. Put things right quickly if they go wrong.					✓							

	Private Sector Housing Strategy	Empty Homes Policy	Equality Framework for Local Government 'Achieving' Self Assessment	Shared Information Service / Information Technology Service	Car Parking Provisions and Charges	2012/13 Budget scrutiny	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership (CSCP)	Partnership Scrutiny: Update on Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC)	Partnership Scrutiny: Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP)	Engagement of External Consultants by Cherwell District Council	Business Case for a Shared Finance and Procurement Team	Commissioning of Voluntary Sector Services
26. Deliver value for money by achieving the optimum balance between cost, quality and customer satisfaction for all services.				✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
27. Reduce financial burden to local taxpayers.						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28. Explain how your council tax is spent and why.						✓						
29. Work with others to provide you with local services and access to information about them.						✓		✓	✓			✓
30. Demonstrate that we can be trusted to act properly for you						✓						
31. Improve the way we communicate with the public, partners and other stakeholders in order to explain what the Council is doing and why.					✓	✓						✓
32. Listen to your views and comments, however you want to make them					✓	✓						



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13

24 July 2012

Report of Head of Law and Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme 2012/13.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the work programme.
- (4) To endorse and adopt the Mission Statement detailed in Section 4 to the report.

Details

- 1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13**
 - 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13 is attached at appendix 1.
 - 1.2 At the request of Overview and Scrutiny Committee members and members of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, the work programmes of the two scrutiny committees have been separated.

Members are invited to make any suggestions to improve the appearance of the work programme.

- 1.3 Each future agenda item includes an overview of the item and reason for consideration by the Board.
- 1.4 In determining the work programme for 2012/13, the Committee will wish to take into account the terms of reference as laid out in the Constitution (Appendix 2).

2 Executive Forward Plan

- 2.1 As part of the monthly work programme report, the Committee reviews the Forward Plan to consider whether there are any issues which they would wish to look at in more detail in advance of the Executive discussion and decision. To facilitate a thorough consideration of the topic the Committee will need to identify the Forward Plan items at an early stage of the decision making process.
- 2.2 The Forward Plan is updated and published monthly; an electronic copy is available on the council's website and all councillors are sent a prompt containing the website link. Members of the Committee are encouraged to review the Forward Plan outside the committee meetings and to contact the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Democratic Services Officer if there is a topic that they wish to review
- 2.3 The Committee will wish to note any items of interest in the current version of the Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme for 2012/13.
- 2.4 At the time of writing this report, the current version of the Forward Plan is August – November 2012 and can be found at:
<http://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=167&RP=115>
- 2.5 The September – December 2012 Forward Plan will be published on 15 August 2012. All Members receive email notification upon publication.

3 Potential Work Programme Items

- 3.1 Committee Members may wish to suggest other items for inclusion on the work programme 2012/13. Members are reminded that in considering the suggestions for the work programme and prioritising topics, it is important to consider the resources available to support the work and the timescales. The Committee should also reflect on the demands that scrutiny reviews place on the resources in the individual

service areas.

3.2 The Committee 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.

4 Mission Statement

4.1 The Chairman will ask the Committee to note and endorse the following mission Statement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

'In the face of budgetary pressures the role of the Scrutiny Committees is even more important in ensuring the needs of our service users are at the forefront of policy. Instead of being in the main retrospective, we are now moving towards considering key policy proposals as part of the decision making process. Scrutiny must now have a central role in assessing whether the Authority is meeting targets set out in the Core Business Strategy and ensuring savings are delivered in the most effective way.'

5 Future Meetings Schedule

5.1 The future meeting dates for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board are listed below.

5.2 The Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees have agreed that the dates of the October meetings of the Committees be switched to facilitate the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board budget scrutiny process. This is reflected below.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	11 September 2012, 6.30pm 9 October 2012, 6.30pm 27 November 2012, 6.30pm 22 January 2013, 6.30pm 12 March 2013, 6.30pm 23 April 2013, 6.30pm
--	--

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board	4 September 2012, 6.30pm 16 October 2012, 6.30pm 20 November 2012, 6.30pm 15 January 2013, 6.30pm 5 March 2013, 6.30pm 16 April 2013, 6.30pm

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 Sarah Best, Service Accountant, 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 Advocate 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 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 James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager, 01295 221587

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	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13
Appendix 2	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	David Parry, Interim Democratic and Elections Officer,
Contact Information	01327 322365 Dave.parry@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/2013

(Updated: 13 July 2012)

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 24 July 2012				
Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Information/Standing Item – constitutional requirement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce an Annual Report, this is an opportunity for the R&PSB to comment on the draft report	Natasha Clark, Team Leader – Democratic & Elections	
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future	To receive a briefing on the project.	Committee to consider whether any areas where scrutiny might add value.	Jenny Barker, Eco-Bicester Project Manager	

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy;
Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 11 September 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Banbury Brighter Futures	To receive a briefing of the Banbury Brighter Futures Project	Scrutiny review – request of Chairman to receive a briefing to determine if the Committee can contribute to the project	Ian Davies – Director of Community and Environment	Lead Member will also be present for this item
New Health Partnership Arrangements (Health and Wellbeing Boards)	To receive a report providing an overview of the new Health Partnership arrangements to enable better understanding of the new structure and the role of the Council.	Committee request.	Ian Davies – Director of Community and Environment	
National Benefit Change	To receive a briefing on benefit changes and what it will mean for CDC service delivery and what impact it will have upon CDC residents	Scrutiny review	Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement; Belinda Green, Benefits Manager	
RAF Bicester	To receive a briefing on current position.	Committee request	TBC	Lead Member will be invited to attend

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy; Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 9 October 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 27 November 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Empty Homes Policy	The monitor the implementation of the Empty Homes Policy	Monitoring – the OSC have received briefings on the work to date and determined to retain it on the work programme to receive regular review during the year	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Tim Mills, Private Sector Housing Manager; Helen Town, Strategic Housing Officer	
Housing Strategy	To review the annual delivery plan.	Committee request.	Martyn Swann, Private Sector Housing Manager	

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Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy; Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 22 January 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 12 March 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 23 April 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Items to be allocated				
Draft Local Plan 2012	To receive an update following the public consultation	Policy development	Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic	Report likely late 2012/

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Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
			Planning and the Economy	early 2013
Youth Services	To monitor developments in Oxfordshire County Council and CDC Youth Services	Monitoring	TBC	
Concessionary Fares	To review effectiveness of the first year of management by Oxfordshire County Council	Monitoring	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager	Officer recommend ation: remove from Work Programme. No longer responsibilit y of CDC; staff member transferred; no monitoring undertaken.
Banbury Museum Trust	Possible scrutiny review	Committee request – Members requested to review this report before consideration by Executive	Chris Rothwell, Head of Community Services	Democratic & Elections to update at meeting

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Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Commissioning of services to Banbury CAB	Undertake monitoring once new service arrangements in place 12 months.	Committee request	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager	
Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride	Undertake monitoring after 12 months of operation; ascertain value received following addition contribution.	Committee request	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager	
Air Quality	To review monitoring across the District and identify where responsibilities lie.	Committee request.	Mark Harmon, Environmental Protection Manager	
Crime and Disorder Partnership	To appreciate Council's role within the Partnership, and how measurable the Council's involvement was in reducing crime.	Committee request.	Mike Grant, Safer Communities Manager	Primarily matter for Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board; and introduction of Police & Crime

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Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
				Commissioner will impact. Overview item to be published in Members Bulletin.

Key to Reason for Consideration:
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