

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 24 September 2013
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)	Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Alyas Ahmed	Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Alastair Milne Home	Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Lynn Pratt	Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Lawrie Stratford	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 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2013.

5. **Welfare Reform Update** (Pages 7 - 16)

Report of Interim Head of Finance and Procurement

Summary

This report provides an update on welfare reform.

Recommendation

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to

- (1) Note the contents of this report.

6. **Customer Insight Report** (Pages 17 - 32)

Report of the Corporate Performance Manager.

Summary

To review the quarter 1 Customer Insight Report with a view to picking up any issues for further consideration, review or addition to the Committee's work programme.

Recommendations

- (1) To highlight any issues from the Customer Insight Report for further investigation or addition to the Committee's work programme.
- (2) To review the Customer Insight Report and request any improvements for future versions for the document.

7. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14** (Pages 33 - 46)

Report of Head of Law and Governance

Summary

This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny work programme 2013/14 for consideration.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2013/14 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.

- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Work programme and consider whether to include them on the work programme 2013/14.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the work programme.

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@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01327 322365

Sue Smith
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 16 September 2013

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 6 August 2013 at 6.30 pm

- Present: Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)
Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)
- Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Sean Woodcock
- Substitute Members: Councillor Nicholas Mawer (In place of Councillor Rose Stratford)
- Also Present: Councillor Nicholas Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customer
Councillor James Macnamara (for agenda item 8)
- Apologies for absence: Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Rose Stratford
- Officers: Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager
Bob Duxbury, Development Control Team Leader
Kevin Larnar, Rural Development and Countryside Officer
Louise Tustian, Senior Performance & Improvement Officer
Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections
Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer

15 **Declarations of Interest**

Members declared interests in the following agenda items:

8. Work Programme Briefing Note - Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride.

Councillor Alastair Milne Home, Non Statutory Interest, as he had sat on the board of the former BCTA.

Councillor Nigel Randall, Non Statutory Interest, as a trustee of a charity that had also bid for the contract.

16 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

17 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 July 2013 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

18 **Performance Monitoring - Q1 2013/14 Exceptions Reporting**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Turner, Lead Member for Performance and Customers, the Corporate Performance Manager, the Community Intelligence and Performance Analyst, and the Development Control Team Leader to the meeting.

The Lead Member for Performance and Customers advised that there were currently only two performance indicators reporting red exceptions. These were Processing of minor planning applications within 8 weeks (target 65%; actual 55%) and Planning appeals allowed against decision of Committee (target 30%; actual 33%)

With respect to the processing of minor planning within 8 weeks, the Committee was advised that, in the previous quarter, the indicator had been green at 75%. However, the current slip in performance had occurred due to a general increase in applications and, in particular, an increase in the number of major applications received. These generated additional work and drew resources that would otherwise be used to progress minor applications (there had been a corresponding improvement in the figure for processing major applications within 13 week; target 55%, actual 68.75%).

Measures were in-hand to address the back-log, and it was believed resources were sufficient to maintain the standard, once the back-log had been addressed. The Committee agreed to re-visit the issue at a future meeting and, if felt necessary at that time, recommend that the Lead Member look at additional measures. The Lead Member undertook to report the Committee's comments at the September meeting of the Executive.

Regarding the number of Planning Appeals allowed the Committee acknowledged that due to the small number of appeals, one appeal against a decision made by Planning Committee being allowed would have a significant impact on the performance figure. The Committee considered that this was essentially a matter for the Planning Committee and it was acknowledged that an independent Planning Committee would, on occasion, make decisions against Officer advice. It was also acknowledged that, once adopted, the Local Plan would support decisions of the Planning Committee challenged at appeal.

The Committee was pleased to acknowledge a number of areas of improved performance. These included Households living in temporary accommodation; time taken to process new Housing Benefit claims, and time taken to process a change in circumstances to an existing claim (Housing Benefit). All had previously reported red, but were now showing green.

Responding to a query regarding the amber status, the Lead Member for Performance and Customers undertook to look at the point where an indicator changed from green to amber, as this would help identify where a service was just beginning to drop in performance.

The Chairman thanked the Lead Member for Performance and Customers and Officers for their presentation and advice.

19

Business Planning and Service Plan Process 2014/15

The Corporate Performance Manager gave an overview of the Business Planning and Service Plan process.

The Committee was advised that key elements would be the new Medium Term Financial Strategy, outcomes from the Customer Satisfaction and Budget consultation processes, impacts from the census, and any other known impacts on services.

The results of the customer insights feedback would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September, with a draft of both the Business Plan and Service Plan being submitted to the November meeting. Development of the Service Plan would overlap with the Business Plan process and be completed in January.

An important aspect would be reviewing how the delivery of a service plan progressed during the year and, in this respect, a Service Manager could be invited to advise the Committee accordingly.

In light of this and the Committee's previous consideration of the Enforcement Service Plan in January 2013, Members agreed that the Head of Development Management be invited to the November meeting to advise the current position.

The Lead Member for Performance and Customers suggested that, in light of the work that would be done by the Budget Planning Committee on the budget, consideration might be given to holding a joint meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Work Programme be amended to reflect that the Head of Development Management would be invited to attend the November meeting of the Committee to advise on the delivery of the Enforcement Service Plan.

20 **Work Programme Briefing Note - Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride**

The Chairman welcomed the CDC Countryside and Communities Manager and the Oxfordshire County Council Transport Coordinator (Community Transport and Concessionary Fares) to the meeting.

The Countryside and Communities Manager advised on the operation of the 'Dial-a-Ride' service, the development of Community transport, and the operation of the Oxfordshire Community Transport Advisory Group (OCTAG).

The Committee noted that the Dial-a-Ride service was well used across the district, and that the top-up provided by the Council for the years 2012/13 and 2013/14 was helping to maintain the service at the level required by users. However, following advice from the Transport Coordinator that, during the autumn, the County Council would be reviewing the future of the service as part of its overall budget setting process, concern was expressed that any future additional contribution by the district council could only be considered if it was known the service as a whole was to continue.

The Chairman thanked the Countryside and Communities Manager and the Transport Coordinator for their advice, and requested that they attend a future meeting of the Committee to advise on the outcome of the County Council's review.

Resolved

- (1) That the item be retained on the Work Programme, and that the CDC Countryside and Communities Manager and the Transport Coordinator (Oxfordshire County Council) be invited to attend a future meeting to advise on the future of the scheme.

21 **Concessions Policy - Scoping Document**

The Committee considered a scoping document prepared by Councillor Randall proposing a Scrutiny Review with respect to the value or otherwise of the Council adopting a formal concessions policy.

In presenting the scoping document Councillor Randall commented that, in light of the relatively small sums involved, the first question to address would be whether a policy was actually required. If deemed desirable, then having a single clear policy would be of benefit to residents accessing services.

The Democratic and Elections Team Leader advised that, following advice from the Corporate Finance Manager, it would be appropriate for the recommendations of any Scrutiny Review to be subsequently referred to the Budget Planning Committee when it considered Fees and Charges.

Resolved

- (1) That an informal working group comprising Councillors Jon O'Neill, Nigel Randall and Lawrie Stratford, together with appropriate officers,

undertake a Scrutiny Review regarding the introduction of a Concessions Policy.

- (2) That the findings and recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review be submitted to the Budget Planning Committee for consideration as part of that Committee's deliberations regarding fees and charges.
- (3) That progress be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee through the regular Work Programme report.

22

Wind Turbines - Scoping Document

The Committee considered a scoping document prepared by Councillor O'Neill proposing a Scrutiny Review with respect to the introduction of a robust policy regarding the future development of wind farms in the district.

In presenting the scoping document, Councillor O'Neill advised that it was vital that the Council had a policy that would stand up to the planning appeals process, and thus protect communities throughout the district.

The Democratic and Elections Team Leader advised that the revised Local Plan was due to be considered by the Executive and then Council in October. It would then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for final adoption. This would set the framework for any subsequent revised policy regarding wind turbines. A Scrutiny Review would take into consideration what other authorities had in the way of policy guidance and, with input from appropriate officers, a draft revised policy could be subsequently put before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

At the discretion of the Chairman Councillor Macnamara addressed the Committee and reminded Members that the Council had been one of the first authorities to address the issue of wind turbines when the current policy had been adopted in February 2011. However, there had been considerable policy change since that time and a revised document was now needed. He hoped the Committee would undertake a Scrutiny Review, and that this would produce a new policy that was both reasonable in terms of guidance, and sat with and complimented the adopted Local Plan.

Some Members suggested that no action should be taken until after the Local Plan had been adopted, and there was some evidence that a revised policy specific to wind turbines was required. It was however agreed that action was required and there should be a Scrutiny Review on the issue.

Resolved

- (1) That a Scrutiny Review be undertaken to review the Council's current policy in respect of wind turbine developments, with a view to developing and subsequently introducing an updated policy.

- (2) That the Scrutiny Review be undertaken by Councillors Ann Bonner and Jon O'Neill supported by other Members, Planning and other officers as appropriate.
- (3) That progress be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee through the regular Work Programme report.

23

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Governance, which presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/14.

Executive Work Programme

The Committee agreed that there were no items in the Executive Work Programme for August to November, 2013 that they wished to include on their Work Programme in 2013/14.

Potential Work Programme Items

The Committee noted that the Work Programme would be updated to reflect the decisions earlier in the meeting.

Resolved

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.
- (2) That no items in the current version of the Executive Work Programme (August to November 2013) be included on the Work Programme for 2013/14

The meeting ended at 8.33 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Welfare Reform Update

24 September 2013

Report of the Head of Finance and Procurement

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on welfare reform.

This report is public

Recommendations

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

Background

Current position

- 1.1 In 2010 the government embarked on a series of welfare reforms.
- 1.2 A number of these reforms have already been implemented. Changes to Local Housing Allowance (affecting Housing Benefit claimants in the private rented sector) were introduced in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- 1.3 In April 2013, Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by local Council Tax Reduction schemes.
- 1.4 Also in April 2013 new size criteria (commonly referred to as the “bedroom tax” or “spare room subsidy”) were introduced for Housing Benefit claimants in the social rented sector.
- 1.5 Responsibility for elements of the Social Fund was passed to Oxfordshire County Council from April 2013.
- 1.6 In June 2013, Personal Independence Payments were introduced to replace Disability Living Allowance for working age claimants.
- 1.7 Finally, in July 2013 the Benefit Cap was rolled out nationally.

Moving Forward

- 1.8 In October 2013 the government had intended to start the national roll-out of Universal Credit, which replaces a number of state benefits including Housing Benefit. However, this has now been replaced by a second group of pilots following initial pilots starting between April 2013 and July 2013. Currently, much uncertainty remains about the timing of further roll-outs of Universal Credit or its extension to current benefit claimants.

Impact of the Size Criteria for Social Housing

- 1.9 Analysis undertaken during 2012 identified approximately 900 households that would be affected by this new legislation. The authority wrote to these households in December 2012 explaining the likely impact and the various options open to households affected by this change.
- 1.10 This activity resulted in 42 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments being received up to the end of March 2013 of which 23 were successful. In most cases where an application was refused the reason was that the applicant appeared to have sufficient income to meet the shortfall between their Housing Benefit entitlement and their rent.
- 1.11 Since April 2013 a further 167 applications for Discretionary Housing Payments have been received as a result of this legislative change. An award has been made in respect of 68 applications.
- 1.12 Sanctuary, the largest social landlord in the district, has been proactively encouraging tenants to undertake mutual exchanges between under occupying and over occupying households. They have also undertaken their own publicity.
- 1.13 Anecdotal evidence from Sanctuary is that since April 2013 some of those tenants who were confident that they would be able to afford to pay the additional rent have struggled to do so and that rent arrears have increased.
- 1.14 The authority's officers are meeting with representatives of social housing providers on 8 October 2013. That meeting should give a clearer understanding of how tenants are coping with this change, the impact on levels of rent arrears and recovery activity by landlords, and the effectiveness of downsizing projects.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 1.15 For 2013-14 the Council decided to adopt a local scheme that mirrored the Council Tax Benefit Regulations which applied until 31 March 2013.
- 1.16 The scheme was successfully implemented on time and within cost (based on New Burdens funding received from the government). There was no discernible increase in customer enquiries as a result of the new scheme, and there have been no legal challenges to the scheme.

- 1.17 That part of the cost of the scheme which was not covered by grants from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) was offset through changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions. These changes did result in additional enquiries and two formal complaints, though again there have been no legal challenges.
- 1.18 Work is currently progressing on the authority's scheme for 2014-15. Currently, the favoured option is to carry forward the current scheme, though we are looking at some administrative simplifications that would make the scheme a little easier to operate and simpler for claimants to understand. Continuing with the current scheme is likely to impose a small cost on the authority due to reductions in DCLG grant.
- 1.19 If significant changes are made to the scheme this would trigger a public consultation exercise and an equality impact assessment which would have to be concluded within the next two months. The scheme for 2014-15 has to be approved by the full Council by 31 January 2014 at the latest.

Localisation of Social Fund

- 1.20 Oxfordshire County Council decided to outsource the administration of its Local Welfare Provision scheme to Auriga Services Ltd for a trial period of one year. Concerns were raised about accessibility to the scheme as Auriga would be operating Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.
- 1.21 We have asked the County to exchange key statistics on how the scheme is operating (for example, number of applications made, reasons for applications, number of successful applications and processing times), and these are detailed in the attached appendix.

Introduction of Personal Independence Payments

- 1.22 Personal Independence Payments replace Disability Living Allowance for claimants aged between 16 and 65 years of age. Initially the benefit is only available to new claimants. However, over the next few years all existing recipients of Disability Living Allowance will have to apply for the new benefit.
- 1.23 The rules for entitlement to Personal Independence Payments are different from those for Disability Living Allowance and it is estimated that approximately one quarter of those who would qualify for Disability Living Allowance will not qualify for the new benefit.
- 1.24 Currently none of our claimants for Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction are in receipt of the new benefit. Therefore, it is not yet possible to gauge the impact of this change.

Introduction of the Benefit Cap

- 1.25 The Benefit Cap sets a limit for the amount of state benefits that a household can

receive (£350 per week for single claimants; £500 per week for couples and families). If the total of benefits received exceeds the limit then Housing Benefit is reduced. Pensioners, households including a person in receipt of certain disability benefits, and those working over 16 hours per week are exempt from the Benefit Cap.

- 1.26 Between May 2012 and May 2013 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) issued a number of lists to local authority's indicating the households that were likely to be affected by the Benefit Cap. These lists indicated that between 50 and 70 households would be affected in our district. DWP wrote to these households that they were likely to be affected. Jobcentre Plus also contacted these households to offer support with finding employment.
- 1.27 The Benefit Cap was implemented in our district between 15 July and 18 August 2013. The Cap was applied to 35 households, as data cleansing by DWP reduced the number of households affected. To date only two of the affected households have applied for Discretionary Housing Payments. Awards have been made in both cases.

Discretionary Housing Payments

- 1.28 The Council has a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund from which awards may be made to Housing Benefit claimants suffering hardship, where Housing Benefit does not cover the whole of their rent liability.
- 1.29 In anticipation of greater demand as a consequence of the welfare reforms the government's contribution to the Council's DHP fund increased from £139,741 in 2012-2013 to £203,354 in 2013-2014. The Council has the discretion to make its own contribution to the fund up to one and half times the amount of central government funding. However, at this time no specific provision has been made for this purpose
- 1.30 Since April 2013 the authority has received 300 applications, compared to 370 for the whole of 2012-13. Of these applications 122 were successful. To date the authority has committed £74,166. This represents a slight underspend compared to our expectations at this stage of the year. This is due to lower than expected demand from households affected by the Benefit Cap. However, the meeting in October with social landlords will give us a clearer understanding of ongoing demand from those affected by new size criteria. The authority remains committed to fully utilising the government contribution.

Universal Credit

- 1.31 We continue to monitor government announcements on the progress of Universal Credit. However, the lack of detail on key issues such as the extension of Universal Credit to our district, the timetable for migrating existing claimants to the new benefit, and the level of central government funding to local authorities to enable them to carry out their role in supporting Universal Credit claimants, means that it is difficult at this stage to make firm plans.

- 1.32 Although the Department for Work and Pensions will be responsible for the assessment of Universal Credit claims, local authorities are expected to play a role in delivering the local element of Universal Credit. This includes activities such as supporting claimants with applying for Universal Credit, identifying claimant's support needs, and working with claimants to develop their budgeting skills.
- 1.33 Local authorities will also retain responsibility for assessing help with housing costs for claimants occupying supported accommodation.

Local Government Resources Review

- 1.34 In 2012 the authority set up a Local Government Resources Review (LGRR) project to prepare the authority for the welfare reform changes as well as the changes to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.
- 1.35 Many of these changes have now been implemented. However, the authority decided to relaunch the LGRR project team to address the continuing localisation of Non-Domestic Rates, preparing the Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2014-15, and issues arising from the Universal Credit.

Consultations

The Council is obliged to consult on any significant changes to the Council Tax Reduction scheme. However, the other changes are driven by government legislation so there is no need to consult on them.

Implications

- Financial:** There are no financial implications arising directly from the production of this report. However members will continue to be kept informed of any financial implications as they arise.
Comments checked by Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manger, 01295 221731.
- Legal:** There are no legal implications.
Comments checked by Kevin Lane Head of Law & Governance, 0300 0030107.
- Risk Management:** Expenditure and cost implications will continue to be monitored.
Comments checked by Nicola Jackson, Corporate Finance Manager 01295 221731.

Document Information

Appendix No	Title

Background Papers	
Report Author	Ryszard Filipiak, Service Assurance Team Leader
Contact Information	Ryszard Filipiak, Service Assurance Team Leader ryszard.filipiak@cherwell.gov.uk Tim Madden, Head of Finance and Procurement tim.madden@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Oxfordshire Support Fund

1st April 2013 to 31st August 2013

Overview

Number of Telephone Calls by Month

On average Auriga are receiving 650 telephone calls per month.

Number of Applications Received by Month

Month	Number of Applications Received
April	222
May	243
June	230
July	240
August	198
Total	1133

(Of the total received, 136 were on-line, 786 by phone and 211 by post)

Application Data

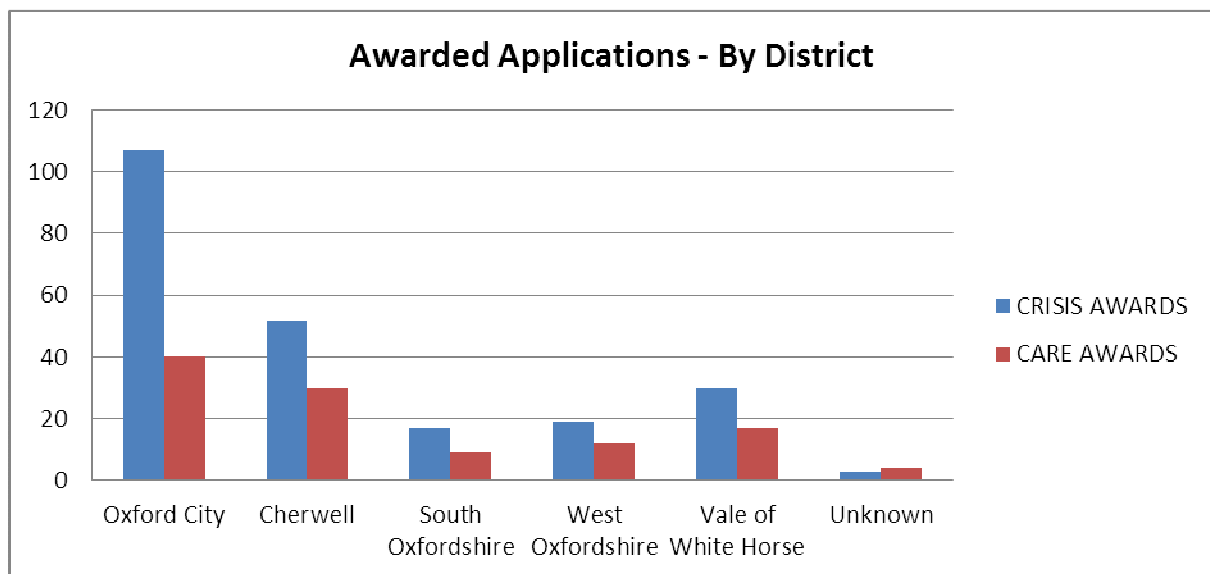
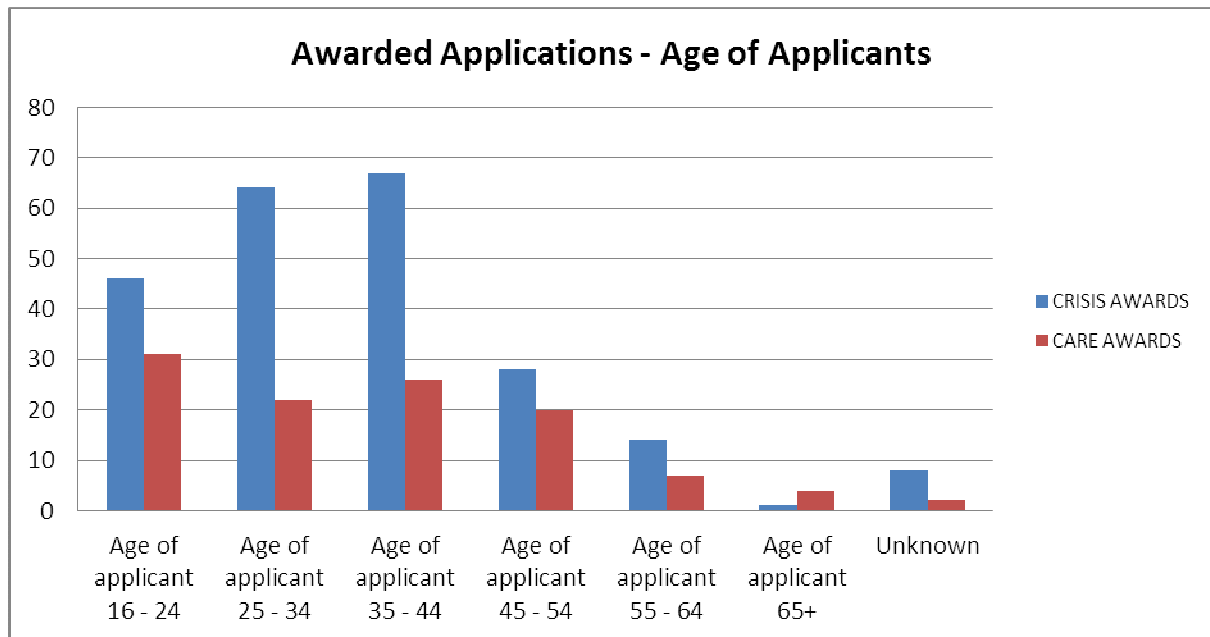
Summary of Applications in the period 1st April – 31st August 2013

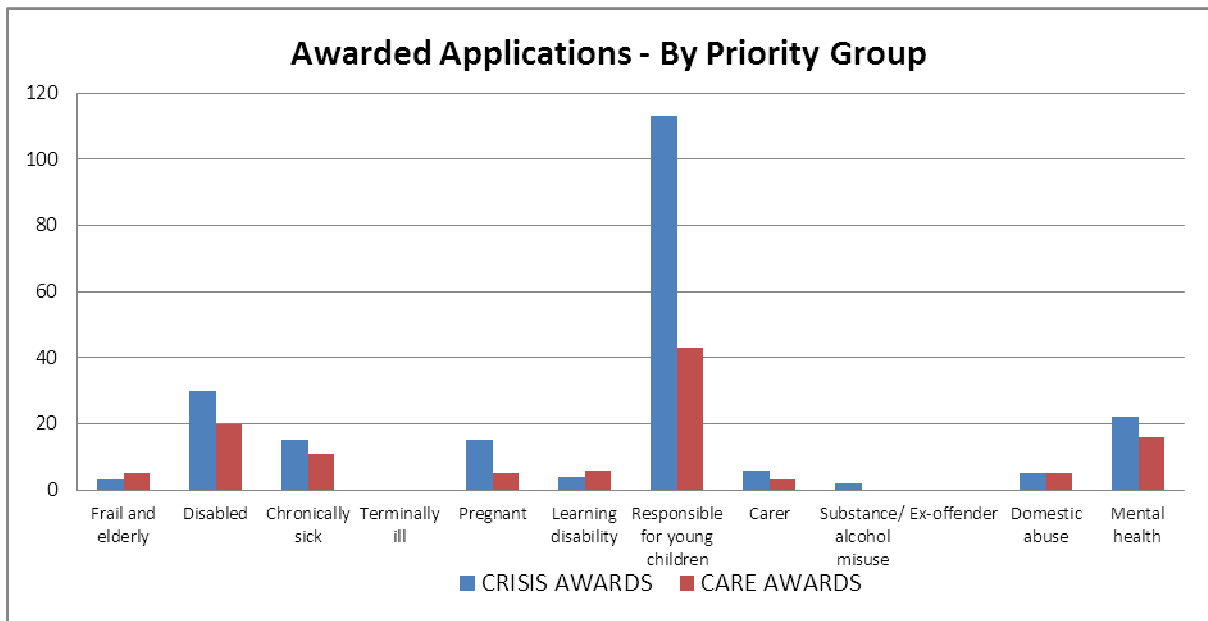
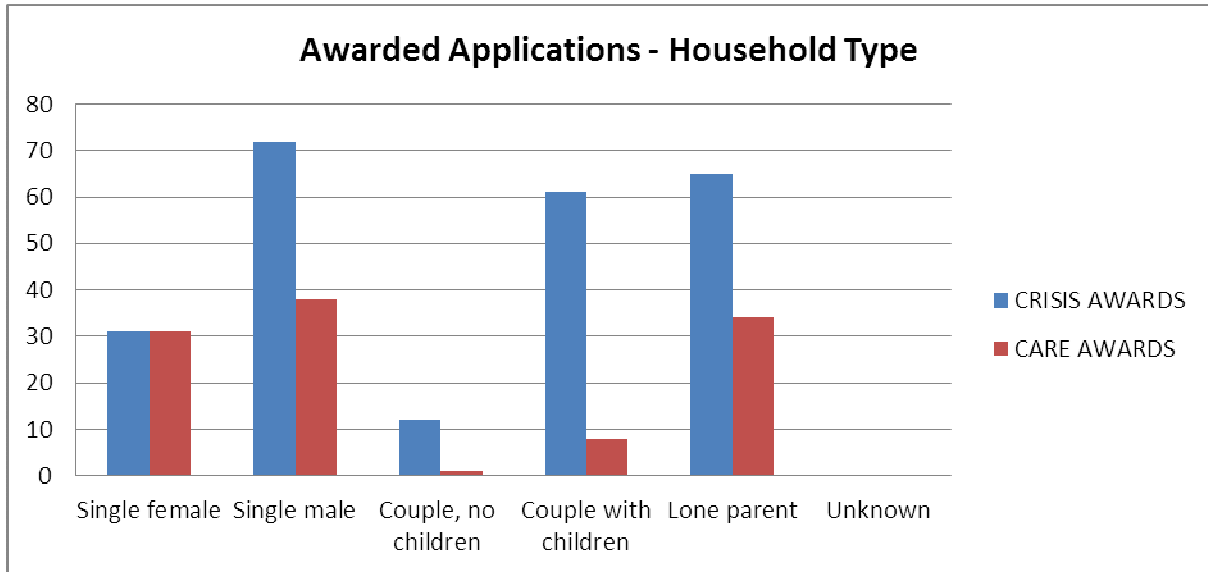
Award	No. of Applications Awarded	No. of Applications Rejected	No. of Applications Closed	No. of Applications Carried Forward to September
Crisis	228	249	303	6
Care	112	103	96	36
Total	340	352*	399**	42

*The majority of rejected applications are due to applicants not being eligible (benefit/not being in a genuine crisis situation and/or no evidence) or not being in a priority group.

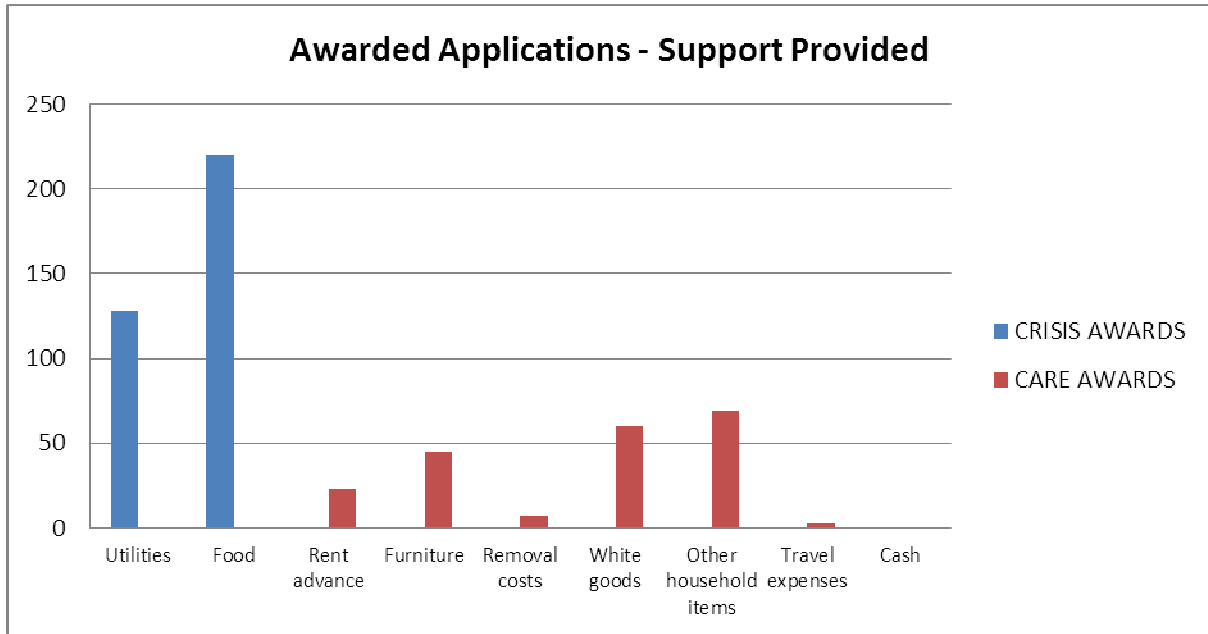
**The majority of closed applications are where applicants have not provided the required evidence or have not contacted Auriga again.

Awarded Applications – 1st April – 31st August 2013





*Some applicants could fall into more than one priority group.



*Some applicants could receive more than one category of support.

**There has been no cash awarded, the main reason for this is that there hasn't been a situation where the support available could not meet the need of the applicant i.e. food, utilities etc.

Feedback Received by Auriga

"Thank you so much for everything you have done for our service user, it is very much appreciated"

Supported Housing Officer

"Thanks, can I say thank you for helping with the situation. The process seems so much more simple than it used to be. Which from my point of view is great."

Homeless Prevention & Support Manager

"We received the food parcel this morning and got our gas and electric on last night, such a big thank you to you and your team. You have helped us much in this time of trouble and we wanted to let you know how grateful we are. Please let us know if there is any voluntary help we can provide either now or in the future."

Individual Applicant

Overview and Scrutiny

Customer Insight Report

24 September 2013

Report of Corporate Performance Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review the quarter 1 Customer Insight Report to pick up any issues for further consideration, review or addition to the Committee's work programme.

This report is public

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to consider:

- (1) To highlight any issues from the Customer Insight Report for further investigation or addition to the Committee's work programme.
- (2) To review the Customer Insight Report and request any improvements for future versions for the document.

Details

Introduction

- 1.1 The Customer Insight Report is a new approach to ensuring that complaints and customer feedback is reported, reviewed and that any issues are addressed.
- 1.2 The report is available to both Officers and Members and is intended to make accessing this type of information easier. It also aims to highlight the importance of learning from customer feedback by including a 'lessons learnt' section.
- 1.3 This is the first quarter the Insight report has been produced and the Committee is invited to review the content and suggest any improvements or additions to future versions.

Details

- 2.1 The Customer Insight Report brings together various elements of customer feedback (including complaints) into a single report with the aim of improving access to this information, which was previously held in a number of service areas, and highlighting any themes or issues of concern.
- 2.2 The Committee is invited to review the report and identify any matters it would like to further consider or add to its work programme. Alternatively the Committee may find the report is not of direct relevance to their work and choose not to consider it at future meetings.

Implications

Financial:	There are no financial implications arising from this report. Comments checked by Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance, 0300 0030106
Legal:	There are no legal implications arising from this report. Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance, 0300 0030 107
Risk Management:	Failure to learn from customer feedback puts the council at risk of increased complaints, potentially more Ombudsman investigations and even litigation. Comments checked by: the author of this report is responsible for risk management.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Lead Member

Councillor Nicholas Turner
Lead Member for Customers and Performance

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Customer Insight Report
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager Hedd Vaughan Evans, Research and Intelligence Officer
Contact Information	01295 227978 Hedd.VaughanEvans@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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Cherwell District Council

**Customer Insight
Report**

1st April – 30th June 2013

1. Introduction

1.1 What is customer insight?

Customer insight is the broad term used to describe the process of using data and information about our residents to better understand their needs, expectations, behaviours and experiences. This information can then be used to target services and communications around the needs of different customer groups.

1.2. What information is available about our residents?

Information about our customers (our residents) is available from a variety of sources. The results of the 2011 Census provides a vast amount of demographic data on those living within the district. This information is summarised in a number of profiles currently available on the Cherwell website and detailed ward profiles are currently in development.

However, information about our customers is also collected through our interactions with residents. This can be through formal consultations, focus groups, customer feedback, customer complaints, and our website and through social media. Elected Members also provide officers with an important source of customer insight, often being the first to hear of issues impacting local areas.

1.2. What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to pull together various customer insight sources available to the Council on a quarterly basis and to attempt to highlight trends and areas of importance to our customers.

This is the first report of its kind for Cherwell District Council and as a result it is acknowledged that the content and format of the report is likely to develop over the course of the year. Therefore feedback on the content and format of this report is most welcome.

2. Latest News / Consultation Results

During this period, Cherwell residents had an opportunity to have their say on three consultations, the 'Community Governance Review', 'Local Validation Checklist' and the 'Compulsory Purchase Order, Crown House'. All consultations were available on our Online Consultation Portal <http://consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/>

Additionally during this time we gathered feedback from Cherwell residents who used our specific services including 'Oxfordshire Business Enterprises' and 'Bulky Collections'. We also engaged and consulted with residents who attended our community events organised as part of Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme. In April we also ran a specific workshop on the Welfare Reform and held a meeting of the Cherwell Faith Forum. In June, a meeting of the Cherwell Disability Forum was held.




For more information on consultations or community engagement events please contact Michal Gogut, michal.gogut@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01295 22 1575.

3. GovMetric Report

The Council uses GovMetric as a mechanism for capturing customer feedback about its services. GovMetric asks customers to rate their experience as either 'Good', 'Average' or 'Poor' based on a system of smiley faces. Feedback can be provided by telephone and via the website.






Overall satisfaction




			
Number Of Respondents	2,949	94	254
Percentage Of Respondents	89.5%	2.9%	7.7%

A total of 2,949 responses were logged with the GovMetric system during the period 1st April 2013 to 30th June 2013. Overall satisfaction with Council services was very high; however 7.7% of respondents said the service they received was poor.

1.1 Overall satisfaction by channel

<u>Telephone Satisfaction</u>			
Number Of Respondents	2,693	12	0
Percentage Of Respondents	99.6%	0.4%	0.0%




Telephone satisfaction rates are exceptionally high, with 99.6% of respondents stating that the service they received was good. Only 12 respondents stated that the service they received was average and no respondents stated the service they received was poor.

<u>Website Satisfaction</u>			
Number Of Respondents	256	82	254
Percentage Of Respondents	43.2%	13.9%	42.9%

Website satisfaction rates are considerably lower than those for telephone satisfaction; however this is to be expected. 43.2% of respondents through the website rated their satisfaction as good, compared to 42.9% who rated their satisfaction as poor.

1.2 Service satisfaction

The following tables provide a breakdown of the GovMetric responses by service areas and highlight some examples of the comments by respondents.

Service	Number Of Respondents			
Benefits	671	99%	0%	1%
Council Information	21	43%	14%	43%
Council Tax	1,128	97%	1%	2%
Environmental Services	130	78%	5%	16%
Housing	324	91%	4%	5%
Licensing	5	40%	0%	60%
Planning & Building Control	53	38%	9%	53%
Sports, Leisure & Arts	21	67%	5%	29%
Streets & Parking	33	52%	21%	27%
Waste & Recycling	527	91%	4%	5%
Other Services	154	86%	3%	11%
Uncategorised	228	53%	19%	39%

Council Tax received had the highest number of respondents and achieved an exceptionally high satisfaction rate with 97% rating their experience of good.

The highest volume of responses was for Benefits, Council Tax, Waste & Recycling and Housing services. The overall satisfaction rate for these service areas for the period was excellent.

A number of service areas received a low number of responses during this period making a direct comparison across all services difficult.

At present a high number of responses are 'uncategorised'. Officers are currently working with GovMetric to identify the reasons for this.

3. Complaints Report

A new Corporate Management Process for both Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Council was introduced on 1 July 2013. Both councils have now moved to a more effective two phase approach, replacing the old three stage complaints system. The complaints reported here were recorded under the old three stage process.

4.1 Total number of complaints

	Quarter 1 (Apr – June)	Quarter 2 (Jul – Sept)	Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec)	Quarter 4 (Jan-March)
Stage 1 Complaints	56	-	-	-
Stage 2 Complaints	5	-	-	-
Stage 3 Complaints	2	-	-	-

A total of 63 complaints were received and recorded during the period 1st April to 30th June 2013. 5 of these were 'Stage 2' complaints and 2 were 'Stage 3' complaints.

No of Complaints Received	Acknowledged within 3 working days		Responded to with 10 working days		Unknown (No response date logged)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
63	57	90.5%	21	33.3%	35	55.6%

Of the 63 complaints received, 90.5% were acknowledged within 3 days. The majority of these complaints were acknowledged on the same day that they were received.

Only 21 out of 63 complaints were recorded as being responded to within 10 working days. A large number of the complaints received during this period (55.6%) do not have a response data logged on the system. This needs to be investigated further to ensure that accurate reporting can take place in the future.

4.2 Complaints by service area

Complaints are logged in LAGAN in line with the new reporting process. However, there is a need to update the service categories that complaints are recorded against. This issue is being addressed and service categories will be updated to reflect the new service structure implemented by JMT on 1st September 2013.

Service Area	No of Complaints Received	Acknowledged within 3 working days		Responded to with 10 working days		Unknown (No response date logged)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Amenity Services	12	12	100%	4	33.3%	8	66.7%
Council Tax	9	9	100%	0	0%	9	100%
Customer Service	5	5	100%	0	0%	4	80%
Benefits	6	3	50%	0	0%	6	100%
Planning	5	5	100%	4	80%	1	20%
Environmental Services	11	11	100%	8	72.2%	3	27.3%
Urban & Rural Services	6	5	83.3%	3	50%	0	0%
Other Services	9	7	77.8%	2	22.2%	4	44.4%

4.3 Reasons for complaint

The following table provides a breakdown of the reasons for each complaint received.

Reason for complaint	Number of complaints	% of all complaints
Services not being delivered / Delivered at a lower standard	19	30.2%
Disagreement about a decision	16	25.4%
Attitude of staff	11	17.5%
Policy decision	1	1.6%
Neglect or delay in responding to customer	6	9.5%
Failure to follow agreed policy and/or procedure	3	4.8%
Unknown	7	11.1%

The main reasons for complaints during this period were services not being delivered or delivered at a lower standard, disagreements about a decision and the attitude of staff.

4.4 Lessons learned / Service improvements

This section will provide examples of complaints received during each quarter, the response given by the Council and any lessons learned or service improvements made as a result of the complaint.

However, as the new complaints process was implemented from the 1st July 2013, the number of lessons learnt or service improvements recorded prior to this date was very low. For future reports, examples of lessons learnt will be presented in the following format:

Complaint
Response
Lessons learnt / Service improvements

4.4 Ombudsman Complaints

In 2012/13, the Local Government Ombudsman received 16 complaints about Cherwell District Council.

This is higher than the average number of complaints received by District/Borough Councils (recognising considerable population variations between authorities of a similar type). The average number of complaints received by District/Borough Councils was 10.

4. Media Enquiries

The Communications Team produces a monthly media monitoring report, detailing how the Council has been reported on in the local news, whether the news item was positive or negative and what media enquiries and news releases occurred during the month. This section is a high level summary of those reports for the period 1st April to 30th June 2013. For further detail, please contact the Communications Team.

	Total number of media items	Positive	Neutral	Negative
April	161	37.9%	59.6%	2.5%
May	139	44%	52%	4%
June	208	40%	56%	4%
Total Quarter 1	508	40.4%	56.0%	3.5%

This section of the report is one which will be developed over the course of the year to include more detail on the service areas being reported on in the media.

5. Social Media

Social Media is a powerful tool for engaging and communicating with customers. The Council has a Facebook page and a Twitter account which allows us to communicate directly with any residents who have decided to 'like' or 'follow' us on these social media sites. They also allow residents to communicate directly with the Council. The Communications Team manages the Council's social media presence.

This section of the report is one which will be developed over the course of the year to reflect the Council's growing social media presence and the importance of social media for engaging with customers.

5.1 Twitter

The council currently has 3665 followers on Twitter, we are following 70 and we have tweeted 1373 times. Follow us on Twitter [@CherwellCouncil](https://twitter.com/CherwellCouncil)



5.2 Facebook

The Council is also on Facebook, we currently have 226 likes. Take a look and start following us - click on the link to our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/cherwelldistrictcouncil>



6. Website Interaction



The following provides an overview of how customers access the Cherwell website and how they behave on the site.

6.1 Visitor Statistics

	01/04/13 – 30/06/13
Number of visitors	179,183
Number of unique visitors	90,867
Number of page views	844,703

6.2 How customers access our website (search engine terms)

The following are the top 5 search terms that have been used across all search engines and referred visitors to the website during the period 1st April – 30th June 2013.

Rank	External Search Term	Number of visits
1.	cherwell district council	18,074
2.	cherwell	2,406
3.	cherwell district council planning	1,778
4.	cherwell council	1,466
5.	cherwell planning	672

6.3 What customers search for on our website (search function on website)

Rank	Internal Search Term	Number of visits	Number of occurrences
1.	elections	36	36
2.	election results	18	18
3.	choice base	14	14
4.	contact	10	10
5.	10/00359/f	10	10

Elections was the most popular internal search term used on the website during the period 1st April – 30th June 2013.

6.4 Most popular pages

Rank	External Page	Page Views
1.	Homepage	76,703
2.	Public Access search results	42,827
3.	Public Access homepage (publicaccess.cherwell.gov.uk)	31,972
4.	Site search results	25,729
5.	View/comment on a planning application	23,793
6.	Planning landing page	19,979
7.	Job vacancies	9,888
8.	Public Access planning applications weekly list	7,753
9.	Recycling & waste landing page	7,743
10.	Council Tax landing page	7,399

Five of the ten most popular pages for the period 1st April – 30th June 2013 were planning web pages. Search results from the planning register was by far the most popular page, however this figure is likely to be inflated by users carrying out multiple searches.

7. Members Insight

This section of the report will be developed over the course of the year to allow Elected Members to provide their own insight into issues and/or areas of concern for residents.

Please contact Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Research & Intelligence Officer for further details:
Hedd.vaughanevans@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

7. Summary

As this is the first report of its kind it is not possible to comment on any emerging trends, however there are some clear messages to be taken from the data for this period.

Customer Satisfaction

Overall, the customer feedback collected through GovMetric for the period 1st April to 30th June 2013 is very positive, in particular the feedback collected by telephone.

However, website satisfaction rates are considerably lower and this will need to be taken into consideration as the Council continues to encourage residents to access services via the website.

Complaints

There is an issue with how the complaints have been recorded over this period as 55.6% of complaints received do not have a response date recorded on the system. This needs to be addressed to ensure that accurate complaints reporting can take place.

Website Interactions

From analysing the website statistics it is clear that other than the home page; 'Planning' or information related to planning applications is the most popular area for visitors.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14

24 September 2013

Report of Head of Law and Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2013/14 for consideration.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.
- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Work Programme and consider whether to include them on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

Details

- 1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14**
 - 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013/14 is attached at appendix 1.
 - 1.2 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 Committee.

- 1.4 In determining the work programme for 2013/14, the Committee will wish to take into account the terms of reference as laid out in the Constitution (Appendix 2)

2 Executive Work Programme

- 2.1 As part of the monthly work programme report, the Committee reviews the Executive Work Programme 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 Executive Work Programme items at an early stage of the decision making process.
- 2.2 The Executive Work Programme 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 Executive Work Programme 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 Executive Work Programme and consider whether to include them on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2013/14.
- 2.4 At the time of writing this report, the current version of the Executive Work Programme is September to December, 2013 and can be found at: www.cherwell.gov.uk

3 Updates on Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Items

- 3.1 Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) – a successful bid was made for some Microsoft development money, and a Microsoft Gold partner has identified and designed what it would require from an IT perspective to implement an EDRM solution for Cherwell and South Northants. The design is now being reviewed to identify the implementation costs, and will be fed back into the joint Harmonisation programme. Provided approval is subsequently given, the phase one pilot will commence to test and measure against success criteria, followed by phase two; the roll-out to both Cherwell and South Northants.

4 Potential Work Programme Items

- 4.1 Committee Members may wish to suggest other items for inclusion on the Work Programme 2013/14. 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.

4.2 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.

5 Future Meetings Schedule

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 November 2013, 6.30pm 10 December 2013, 6.30pm 14 January 2014, 6.30pm 18 February 2014, 6.30pm 01 April 2014, 6.30pm 27 May, 2014, 6.30pm 08 July, 2014, 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 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 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 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 2013/14
Appendix 2	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	David Parry, Democracy and Elections officer, Democratic & Elections
Contact Information	01327 322365 dave.parry@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme items - 2013/2014

(Updated: September 2013)

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Item	Description	Reason for / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Welfare Reform (National Benefit Changes) (Sept)	To receive a further report on the introduction of National Benefit Changes, and what these will mean for CDC service delivery and residents. Report to include information on impact on Social Landlords and actions being taken, the possible formation of a Welfare Reform Team, and out-of-hours advice by Auriga Services (Oxfordshire Support Fund).	Progress report to meeting in September, 2013 following previous consideration (September, 2012 and April, 2013)	Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement; Ryszard Filipiak, Service Assurance Team Leader.	Lead Member for Financial Management (Cllr Atack) invited to attend. OSC members are requested to feed-in any particular areas they would like covered.

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 / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Commissioning of services to Banbury CAB (Nov)	Undertake monitoring of recommendations once new service arrangements (Volunteering / coordinating role; giving advice; Voluntary Driver scheme) in place 12 months.	Committee request	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing	Originally scheduled for consideration at September meeting, but slipped to November due to reallocation of responsibilities.
Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) (Nov)	To receive updates as appropriate on the Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) project	Scrutiny and Monitoring. Outcomes from pilot (commencing July, 2013) to be reported to November 2013	Jo Pitman, Head of Transformation and Gareth Jones, ICT Manager	Pilot not yet commenced; update detailed in Work Programme report.
Air Quality (Nov)	To review monitoring across the District, and review progress of Hennef Way Action Plan objectives.	Update report to meeting in November, 2013 advising on how objectives being met following consideration by O&S Committee - October, 2012 and May, 2013.	Sean Gregory Environmental Protection Officer	Lead Member for Public Protection (Cllr Illott) to be invited to attend.
Q2 Performance Monitoring (to include an update on Processing of minor Planning applications)	To receive the Q2 Performance monitoring report; this to include an update on progress in attaining the 65% target for processing minor planning applications.	Committee request following Performance Monitoring report – August 2013	Andy Preston Head of Development Management	Lead Member for Planning (Cllr Gibbard) to 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 / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
(Nov)				
Planning and Building Control Enforcement (Nov)	Delivery of Enforcement Service Plan (review impact of additional staffing resources)	Monitoring - Originally considered by former Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2012 and January 2013. Further Committee request (August 2013) for update report to November meeting.	Andy Preston - Head of Public Protection and Development Management.	Lead Member for Planning (Cllr Gibbard) to be invited to attend.
Business Plan (Nov)	To review draft Business Plan.	Policy Development. Report regarding draft Business Plan to be submitted to November meeting.	Claire Taylor – Corporate Performance Manager	
Service Plan (Nov)	To review draft Service Plan	Policy Development. Report regarding draft Service Plan to be submitted to November meeting.	Claire Taylor – Corporate Performance Manager	
Wind Turbines and their locations	To undertake a Scrutiny Review regarding the Council's Planning Policy in respect of Wind Turbines and their locations.	Committee request arising April and August, 2013	TBC	Scrutiny Review to be undertaken by Cllrs. Ann Bonner, Michael Gibbard and Jon O'Neill, supported by Planning and other officers as appropriate.

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 / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
CDC Employment Initiatives	To consider a scoping document regarding a potential review of the effectiveness of the various employment initiatives introduced by the Council.	Committee request arising April, 2013	TBC	Councillor Magee to draft scoping document.
Contract Scrutiny: Landscape Maintenance Contract	To receive updates as appropriate. Councillors Lawrie Stratford, Douglas Williamson and Sean Woodcock nominated to be involved in the procurement of the landscape maintenance contract	Scrutiny review – contract scrutiny	Ed Potter, Head of Environmental Services; Paul Almond, Streetscene and Landscape Services Manager	The nominated Members will provide updates to the Committee as appropriate.
Review of Local Plan Process	Upon completion of the Local Plan examination, to review the process, and consider lessons learnt for future, similar projects.	Request from Councillor Woodcock with support of Executive.	TBC	
Community Transport and Dial-a-Ride	Undertake monitoring of operation; ascertain value received following addition contribution.	Committee Request	Chris Rothwell, Head of Community Services	Briefing note submitted in August. Item to be retained on work programme. Countryside and Communities Manager and OCC Transport Coordinator to be invited to attend future

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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 / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
				meeting to advise on the future of the scheme.
Concessions Policy	To undertake Scrutiny Review regarding possible introduction of a Concessions Policy (informal working group established August, 2013: Cllrs. O'Neill, Randall and Lawrie Stratford)	Policy Development – Recommendations arising from informal working group to be submitted to Budget Planning Committee.	Tim Madden, Interim Head of Finance and Procurement.	Informal working group, together with appropriate officers to review and submit any recommendations to the Budget Planning Committee in due course.
Items retained on Work Programme for update via Briefing Notes				
Update on Empty Homes	Update on progress in bringing empty homes and other empty property back into use	Originally considered by former Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March, 2013. Update via Briefing Note – March 2014	Chris Stratford (Head of Regeneration and Housing)	

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 / Date of next Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Housing Strategy	Review of Annual Delivery Plan	Originally considered by former Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March, 2013. Future updates via regular Briefing Notes	Helen Town (Strategic Housing Officer)	

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

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will:

- Innovate and challenge the way the Council operates
- Exercise the call in powers contained in the Constitution
- Add value to the Council through in-depth studies
- Add value to the Council through selective studies of external crosscutting issues
- Promote more informal smaller group working.
- Open up the local democratic process to greater public involvement.
- Add value to the Council through pre-decision scrutiny of Key Decisions through using the 28 day notice
- Be involved in performance management on a selective and strategic basis.
- Develop effective and positive channels of communication between itself and the Executive.
- Adopt a Select Committee style and approach wherever possible.
- Require effective and reliable officer support
- Be involved in the development of Policy
- Scrutinise areas of interest or concern and make recommendations to Executive and where appropriate full Council following the completion of such scrutiny

Terms of Reference

The Committee will be appointed to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 or Regulations under Section 32 of the Local Government Act 2000

Scrutiny Committee

Co-ordinating and managing the scrutiny Work Programme and ensuring that there is effective and timely scrutiny of Council Policy and authority wide performance as well as holding the Executive to account.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have a membership of 12 Councillors who are not members of the Executive, appointed on a Proportional Representation basis by Council.

Functions

Within its scope and terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will:

- (a) review and monitor the performance of the Council's services;
- (b) review and/or scrutinise policies, proposals, decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (c) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions;
- (d) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants;
- (e) exercise the right to Call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made, but not yet implemented by the Executive.

- (f) consider matters arising from a Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Regulations thereunder; and
- (g) undertake the functions of the Council's crime and disorder committee for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, including CCfA relating to crime and disorder matters.

Specific Functions

- (a) **Scrutiny** - Within its scope and terms of reference Scrutiny may:
- (i) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive and/or Committees and the appropriate Officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time;
 - (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service area;
 - (iii) question Members of the Executive and/or Committees and appropriate Officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
 - (iv) make recommendations to the Executive and/or appropriate Committees and/or Council and/or any external bodies arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
 - (v) review and scrutinise the performance of major partnerships and other public bodies in the area and invite written reports and/or request them to address the Committee and local people about their activities and performance;
 - (vi) require Members of the Executive, the Chief Executive, Directors and Service Heads to attend to answer questions and give evidence on receipt of at least 5 days' written notice.
 - (vii) question and gather evidence from any person, not a Member or an Officer of the Council, with their consent;
- (b) **Advisory and Review** – Within its scope and terms of reference the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may:
- (i) assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its Policy Framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues, excluding those policy areas which fall under the remit of the Strategic Planning and Regeneration Committee;
 - (ii) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options
 - (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options,
 - (iv) make recommendations to Executive and/or appropriate Committees and/or Council and/or any external bodies arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process.
 - (v) review and scrutinise the performance of major partnerships and other public bodies in the area and invite written reports and/or request them to address Councillors and local people about their activities and performance.
- (c) **Annual Report** – The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will report annually to Council on function on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- (d) **Work Programme** – The Overview Scrutiny Committee will exercise overall responsibility for the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme and for ensuring that

this is sustainable with regard to the support and resources that are available to it and that is considered in conjunction with other committees of the Council and their respective work programmes in order to minimise duplication of effort.

Proceedings of Overview and Scrutiny

The Overview Scrutiny Committee will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in this Constitution.

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