

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 27 March 2018
Time: 7.00 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)	Councillor Jolanta Lis (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor David Anderson	Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Mike Bishop	Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Chris Heath	Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE	Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Andrew McHugh	Councillor Jason Slaymaker

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 23 January 2018.

5. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive communications from the Chairman.

6. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18** (Pages 5 - 16)

Report of Assistant Director – Law and Governance

Purpose of report

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2017/18.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2017/18
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the areas highlighted in the report prior to its submission to Council

7. **Work Programme 2017-18** (Pages 17 - 46)

Report of Assistant Director – Law and Governance

Purpose of report

To give an update on the status of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017-2018; to report results of the Mobile Phone Signal Survey; and to report the suggested topics received from parish councils.

Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the Mobile Phone Signal Survey (appendix 1), and to determine next stages for the review
- 1.2 To note the suggested topics received from Parish Councils (appendix 2), and to decide what course of action to take for each subject

- 1.3 To identify any items from the Executive Work Programme to form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicative Work Programme for 2018-19

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 322043 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 Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections
emma.faulkner@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01327 322043

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 19 March 2018

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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 23 January 2018 at 6.45 pm

Present: Councillor Neil Prestidge (Chairman)
Councillor Jolanta Lis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Andrew McHugh
Councillor Jason Slaymaker

Substitute Members: Councillor Tom Wallis (In place of Councillor Sean Gaul)

Also Present: Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

Apologies for absence: Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor David Hughes

Officers: Richard Ellis, Interim Executive Director: Wellbeing
Paul Sutton, Executive Director: Finance and Governance /
Section 151 Officer
Joanne Barrett, Strategic Housing Manager
Alison Adkins, Housing Options Team Leader
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer

44 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

45 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

46 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

48 **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Operational Delivery that detailed new legislation coming in to effect from April 2018 regarding Homelessness Reduction.

The Housing Manager and the Housing Team Leader explained that it was not known what the level of change in demand would be as a result of the legislation.

A project plan had been put in place for use across Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils. Government funding had been provided to assist with basic IT requirements, as there would be more information reported to government than was currently. Additional expenditure required was still being looked at.

With regard to the Homelessness Review, the Housing Manager explained that it was due every 5 years, however the next review would be conducted in 12 months' time, to compare and contrast the impact of the new legislation. The results from the review would then influence the new strategy.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Housing Manager said that the team had been preparing for the new legislation for 12 months, with the relevant tools in place to handle the changes. The main unknown was the volume of cases that would be generated.

The Committee requested that an update be provided in approximately 12 months' time.

Resolved

- (1) That the work being carried out to prepare the authority to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in 2018 be noted
- (2) That the potential impacts upon service delivery and resource implications affecting the Council in future years be noted
- (3) That the intention of the Shared Housing Service to adopt a collaborative approach to implement the new obligations imposed under the Act be noted

49 **Draft Business Plan and Budget**

The Interim Director, Richard Ellis, presented the report of the Chief Executive which sought consideration of the draft Business Planning and Performance Management documentation that would support the budget for 2018/19.

The Interim Director explained that the existing Business Plan was coming into the final year of its five year period. A 'light touch' refresh had been carried out, and as many of the South Northamptonshire (SNC) and Cherwell (CDC) themes and priorities were very similar, a joint plan had been put together. It was anticipated that over the summer, the process would start on a new plan for the next five year period, and a more detailed review would take place.

The Interim Director explained that the business plan for 2018-19 had been designed to fit on one page, rather than the 20 page document produced previously. The intention behind the one page document was to engage more people in the aims and priorities of the Councils.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Interim Director explained that some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been carried over from previous years. A wholesale review of all indicators would take place as part of the review process for the next five years of the plan.

The Executive Director – Finance and Governance gave an overview of the draft budget for 2018-19 and the current position with the Medium Term Revenue Plan.

The Executive Director – Finance and Governance explained that details of the provisional settlement had been received from Government shortly before Christmas. The term of New Homes Bonus had been reduced from 6 years to 4 years as expected.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Executive Director – Finance and Governance explained that a 1% increase in Council Tax would equate to approximately £60-£65,000.

Resolved

- (1) That the documentation be noted

50 **Work Programme 2017-18**

The Committee considered the draft work programme for the remainder of the 2017-18 Municipal Year.

With regard to the mobile phone signal review, the survey monkey questionnaire had now been sent to all parish councils. It would be available for completion until 23 February, and so far 28 responses had been recorded.

All parish councils had also been asked for suggested topics for consideration by the Committee in the new municipal year. Two suggestions had been received so far, and details of all suggestions would be submitted to the March 2018 meeting of the Committee for further discussion.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 March 2018

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18
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Report of Assistant Director - Law and Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2017/18.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2017/18
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to finalise the areas highlighted in the report prior to its submission to Council

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual report 2017/18 is submitted to the Committee for consideration before its submission to Council later this year.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The draft of the report details work undertaken by the Committee as of the end of February 2018. Areas that require additional information following the conclusion of the March 2018 meeting have been highlighted.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations as set out in the report are believed to be in the best interests of the Council.

5.0 Consultation

None

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To amend the recommendations. This is rejected as the report is considered to be an accurate summary of the Committee's activity in 2016/17.

Option 2: Not to agree the recommendations. This is rejected for the same reason as option 2 above.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Comments checked by: Cecilie Booth, Deputy Section 151 Officer. 01295 227946, cecilie.booth@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by: Chris Mace, Solicitor. 01327 322125, Christopher.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The Corporate Plan themes addressed by each scrutiny topic are detailed in the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18.

Lead Councillor

None

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017/18.
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Contact Information	Tel: 01327 322043 Email – emma.faulkner@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18

March 2018

Foreword

This annual report for overview and scrutiny at Cherwell District Council outlines the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2017/18.

[To be completed]

Councillor Neil Prestidge
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2017/18

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Neil Prestidge (Ch)
Councillor David Anderson
Councillor Mike Bishop
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Andrew McHugh

Councillor Jolanta Lis (V-Ch)
Councillor Claire Bell
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Sean Gaul
Councillor David Hughes
Councillor Jason Slaymaker

Substitutes

Councillor Andy Beere
Councillor Barry Richards
Councillor Tom Wallis

Guests in attendance

Lead members:

Councillor Richard Mould – Lead Member for Performance Management
Councillor Lynn Pratt – Lead Member for Estates and the Economy
Councillor Debbie Pickford – Lead Member for Clean and Green
Councillor George Reynolds – Deputy Leader of the Council.
Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council.

Other members:

Councillor Hugo Brown
Councillor Ian Corkin

External guests:

Inspector John Batty, Thames Valley Police
Alan Harris, Montagu Evans
Mitchell Ball, Freeths

Officers:

Scott Barnes, Director Strategy and Commissioning
Nicola Riley, Shared Community Services Manager (at the time of attendance; since been appointed Assistant Director – Communities)
Maria Wareham, Safeguarding Officer
Louise Tustian, Team Leader Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team
Ian Davies, Director of Operational Delivery
Mike Grant, Safer Communities Manager
Paul Sutton, Chief Finance Officer (at the time of attendance; since been appointed Executive Director Finance and Governance)

Richard Ellis, Interim Director (at the time of attendance; since been appointed Interim Executive Director – Wellbeing)

Joanne Barrett, Strategic Housing Manager

Alison Adkins, Housing Team Leader

Scrutiny Topics 2017/18 – Links to Corporate Priorities	
Performance Monitoring	Covers all priorities
Draft Budget and Business Plan	Covers all priorities
Lead Member Overview – Deputy Leader	Covers all priorities
Lead Member Overview – Lead Member for Performance Management	Covers all priorities
Lead Member Overview – Lead Member for Estates and the Economy	Covers all priorities
Lead Member Overview – Lead Member for Clean and Green	Covers all priorities
Lead Member Overview – Lead Member for Planning	Covers all priorities
The acquisition of Castle Quay Shopping Centre	Covers all priorities
Safeguarding Training Framework	Safe, Clean, Green
Safeguarding – update on internal review action plan and draft section 11 return submission	Safe, Green, Clean
Anti-Social Behaviour	Safe, Clean, Green
Oxfordshire CCG Phase 1 Consultation and Decisions Regarding the Horton General Hospital	A Thriving Community
Homelessness Reduction Act	A Thriving Community
A361 Working Group	A District of Opportunity
Mobile Phone Signal Working Group	A District of Opportunity
Youth Engagement Working Group	A District of Opportunity

Performance Monitoring

Each quarter the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the Council's performance as measured through the Performance Management Framework.

The Council had maintained generally excellent performance as in previous years, but the Committee did request that Inspector John Batty from Thames Valley Police attend a meeting to discuss levels of anti-social behaviour in the District.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Following consideration of the performance information, Inspector John Batty was invited to attend a meeting of the Committee in October 2017 to discuss Anti-Social Behaviour.

The Committee were keen to find out if Inspector Batty thought enough was being done to reduce levels of ASB in the Cherwell District. Inspector Batty reassured the committee that levels of ASB in the district were low, and that the Council and the police had a very good working relationship.

Draft Budget and Business Plan

In January 2018 the Interim Director Richard Ellis and Executive Director Finance and Governance Paul Sutton attended the Committee to present the draft business plan and budget for 2018.

The directors explained that a refresh had been carried out on the existing business plan, which would be entering the last year of a five year cycle. In summer 2018 a more detailed review of priorities would be taking place.

The directors added that the total number of performance indicators being monitored would be reduced.

Lead Member Overviews

Following the success of the invitation to the Leader of the Council in February 2017 and some changes to the Executive in May 2017, Lead Members were invited to give an overview of their areas of responsibility to the Committee.

The Committee received an overview from five Executive Members; the Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Performance Management, Estates and the Economy, Clean & Green, and Planning.

All of the overviews were very well received, and the Committee found them extremely useful in furthering their understanding of the work of the Executive.

The Acquisition of Castle Quay Shopping Centre

In November 2017, the Committee considered the proposed acquisition of the Castle Quay Shopping Centre in Banbury.

The Chief Finance Officer attended the meeting with representatives from the Council's financial advisors, Montagu Evans and Freeths.

The Committee received an exempt presentation which gave details on the proposed purchase, and had the opportunity to ask detailed questions of the officers.

Safeguarding – Training Framework and Draft Section 11 Audit Return

The Committee have considered Safeguarding on two occasions during the year, once in July 2017 and again in November 2017.

In July the Committee were asked to consider a training framework. The Shared Community Services Manager and Safeguarding Officer attended to give details of the training plan, which was proposed for rollout later in 2017.

The proposals included a base level training for all officers and Members, with increased requirements for those officers with roles more likely to encounter potential safeguarding situations.

The Committee endorsed the training framework, which was subsequently adopted and launched throughout the Council.

In November 2017, the Committee were asked to consider the Section 11 audit return to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Completion of the audit is an annual requirement, and following the internal review carried out in 2016, it had been agreed that the draft return would be submitted to the Committee for endorsement prior to its submission.

The Committee again endorsed the return, and were pleased with the progress made with the new training framework since its introduction.

Oxfordshire CCG Phase 1 Consultation and Decisions Regarding the Horton General Hospital

In August 2017 the Committee received a report that provided an update on proposed service changes at the Horton General Hospital.

The proposed changes had been subject of discussions at the Executive earlier in 2017. Following specialist advice, the Council decided to request a Judicial Review of the decision to downgrade maternity and critical care services at the hospital. Cherwell District Council was supported in the call for the review by South Northamptonshire Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Banbury Town Council.

The Committee were fully supportive of the proposed course of action, and recommended to the Executive that it proceed with the review action 'with all vigour'.

Homelessness Reduction Act

In January 2018 the Strategic Housing Manager and Housing Team Leader attended Committee to give an overview of upcoming changes to the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The officers reported that as a result of the changes the workload for the Housing team at the Council was likely to change, but the exact impact of the changes were not yet known.

In response to questions the officers assured the Committee that a project plan was in place and the team had been preparing for the new legislation for the previous 12 months.

Following a request from the Committee, officers agreed to provide an update on the implications of the Act in approximately 12 months' time.

Task and Finish Working Groups

Three task and finish groups were in place at the end of the 2016/17 Municipal Year. At the start of the 2017/18 year, it was agreed that all three would continue.

A361

In November 2016 a scoping document was signed off by the Committee, which agreed to look at the A361 running through Cherwell district.

The working group carried out some initial research, and found that the Department for Transport had a funding stream available for County Councils to apply to for road improvements. The Safer Roads funding identified areas of the country eligible to apply, and councils in those areas had the opportunity to bid for a share of the money.

Part of the A361 was eligible for funding, and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) submitted a bid early in 2017.

Announcements regarding awarding of the funding were due to be made in September 2017, which was then delayed to January 2018. Currently there still haven't been any announcements regarding which authorities have been successful with their bids.

In addition, OCC held a consultation during summer 2017 regarding a possible weight limit along part of the A361 through Burford. Although this isn't in the Cherwell District, the implications of any limit would mean that heavy goods vehicles would need to avoid the A361 through South Newington.

OCC decided that further information and consultation would be needed in relation to the Burford proposal. The working group are monitoring progress.

Mobile Phone Signal

Following the establishment of the Mobile Phone Signal Working group, initial research identified a similar project being undertaken by a group of MPs.

The British Infrastructure Group (BIG) intend to improve mobile phone signal across the UK by the end of 2017, off the back of a £5 billion commitment from Government.

The Committee agreed that the working group should carry out local research with a view to submitting it to the BIG review.

A survey was put together by Councillor Andrew McHugh, which was hosted on the Council's corporate Survey Monkey account.

Details of the survey were sent to every Parish Council and Parish meeting in the district, and a request made for those in poor or non-existent signal areas to complete it.

224 responses were received.

[Further detail to be added once the Committee have considered the results of the survey in March 2018]

Youth Engagement

In 2014, a review was carried out to improve Youth Engagement in the democratic process.

The review started well and had a lot of interest from local schools, but as time passed and students moved on, interest in the subject waned.

The Committee discussed the subject again, and felt that it was important for Youth Engagement to be encouraged wherever possible. A new scoping document was completed, with the aim of the review being to launch an event designed to engage young people in the democratic process. The scoping document was approved in February 2017.

Following changes to the Committee in May 2017, work on the review stalled. In August 2017 it was agreed that the review should be put on hold until the new Municipal Year.

Engagement with parishes

Following a training event in September 2017, the Committee agreed it would be a good idea to ask the residents of Cherwell for possible subjects to review in the new Municipal Year.

Correspondence was sent to all parish councils and meetings in January 2018, asking for topics to be suggested.

[More detail to be added after discussions at the Committee in March 2018]

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 March 2018

Work Programme 2017-18

Report of Assistant Director – Law and Governance

This report is public

Purpose of report

To give an update on the status of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017-2018; to report results of the Mobile Phone Signal Survey; and to report the suggested topics received from parish councils.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To note the results of the Mobile Phone Signal Survey (appendix 1), and to determine next stages for the review
- 1.2 To note the suggested topics received from Parish Councils (appendix 2), and to decide what course of action to take for each subject
- 1.3 To identify any items from the Executive Work Programme to form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicative Work Programme for 2018-19

2.0 Introduction

The Committee are required to review the Work Plan at each meeting and make any amendments required as a result of developments since the last meeting.

3.0 Report Details

Update on current Scrutiny reviews

A361 Traffic review

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Committee in May 2016, it was agreed that a working group be established to look at a potential review regarding the A361 through the district.

3.2 As part of the research carried out so far, the group found out about funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Safer Roads Fund that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) had the opportunity to bid for.

3.3 At the time of writing, no further announcements have been made regarding the award of Safer Roads funding. Should this change before the meeting, a verbal update will be given.

Mobile phone signal review

3.4 Following concerns regarding the quality of mobile phone signal across the district, the Committee agreed to set up a working group comprising of Councillors Anderson, Brown, Lis, Prestidge and McHugh.

3.5 At the November 2017 meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that a Survey Monkey based questionnaire put together by Councillor McHugh should be sent to all parishes in the district in January 2018, for a period of 6 weeks.

3.6 The survey was sent out on 12 January and was available for completion until Friday 23 February.

3.7 224 individual responses were received. The Strategic Intelligence and Insight team within the Council, who administer the consultation processes, have analysed the results. These are included at appendix 2.

3.8 The Committee are asked to note the results of the survey, and to determine what to do next with regard to the review.

Engagement with parishes

3.9 Following the training held in September 2017, the Committee agreed to engage with parish councils to find out if there are any subjects that they would like to refer to the Committee for discussion and/or review.

3.10 Correspondence combining notification of the Mobile Phone survey and the request for possible topics for consideration was sent to all parishes on 12 January. A copy was also sent to all District Councillors, in the event of any questions or queries as and when they attend parish council meetings.

3.11 Responses were received from three parish councils, the details of which are included at appendix 2.

3.12 The Committee are asked to note the suggested topics received, and to decide what course of action to take for each subject.

Executive Work Programme

3.13 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.

- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 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 2017/18.
- 3.16 At the time of writing this report, the current version of the Executive Work Programme is April to July 2018 and can be found on the following page of the website: [Forward Plan](#)

Future meetings Schedule

- 3.17 This meeting is the last scheduled for the current Municipal Year. Dates for the new year from May, are listed below:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2018/19 29 May 10 July 28 August 9 October 20 November 22 January '19 19 February 26 March
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4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations as set out in the report are believed to be in the best interests of the Council.

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 None required as this is a standing report.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified:

Option 1: To amend the recommendations.

Option 2: Not to agree the recommendations.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 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: Cecilie Booth, Deputy Section 151 Officer. 01295 227946, cecilie.booth@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Legal Implications

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

Comments checked by: Chris Mace, Solicitor. 01327 322125, Christopher.mace@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

8.0 Decision Information

Wards Affected

Each scrutiny review will identify the wards affected.

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Each Scrutiny Review will identify the relevant Corporate Plan and Policy framework links.

Lead Councillor

None

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Mobile Phone Signal Survey Results and analysis
2	Suggested topics received from Parish Councils
2a	Community First Oxfordshire Community Profile for Launton
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer
Contact Information	Tel: 01327 322043 emma.faulkner@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk



Mobile Phone Signal Coverage Survey February 2018 – Cherwell District

Final Report

March 2018

Prepared by

Daniel Rowan – Strategic Intelligence and Insight Analyst

Daniel.Rowan@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team

Cherwell and South Northants District Councils

SIITeam@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction	2
Survey Responses Summary	3
Geographical Analysis of Results	5
Conclusions	14
Recommendations	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Footnotes	15

Introduction

This report summarises the findings of a survey commissioned by Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2018. The survey was designed to deliver insight into the quality of mobile phone signal for Cherwell residents throughout the district, particularly targeting those users who suffer from poor connectivity to their mobile network provider.

The survey opened on 9 January 2018 and closed on 23 February 2018 with 224 individual responses to the survey. Twenty-one residents did not provide their postcode or other information allowing their location to be identified, and two respondents provided a postcode which indicated they were living outside of the Cherwell district; these results have been disregarded for the purposes of this analysis.

Each respondent was able to rate their phone signal quality as 'Intermittent' (highest), 'Poor', or 'Non-existent' (lowest). Information about the location where they experienced this issue, and other ancillary information such as mobile network provider and handset brand were also collected.

Survey Responses Summary

Phone Signal Quality

The below graph shows the distribution of answers for the survey question *'Please rate the quality of your signal'*:

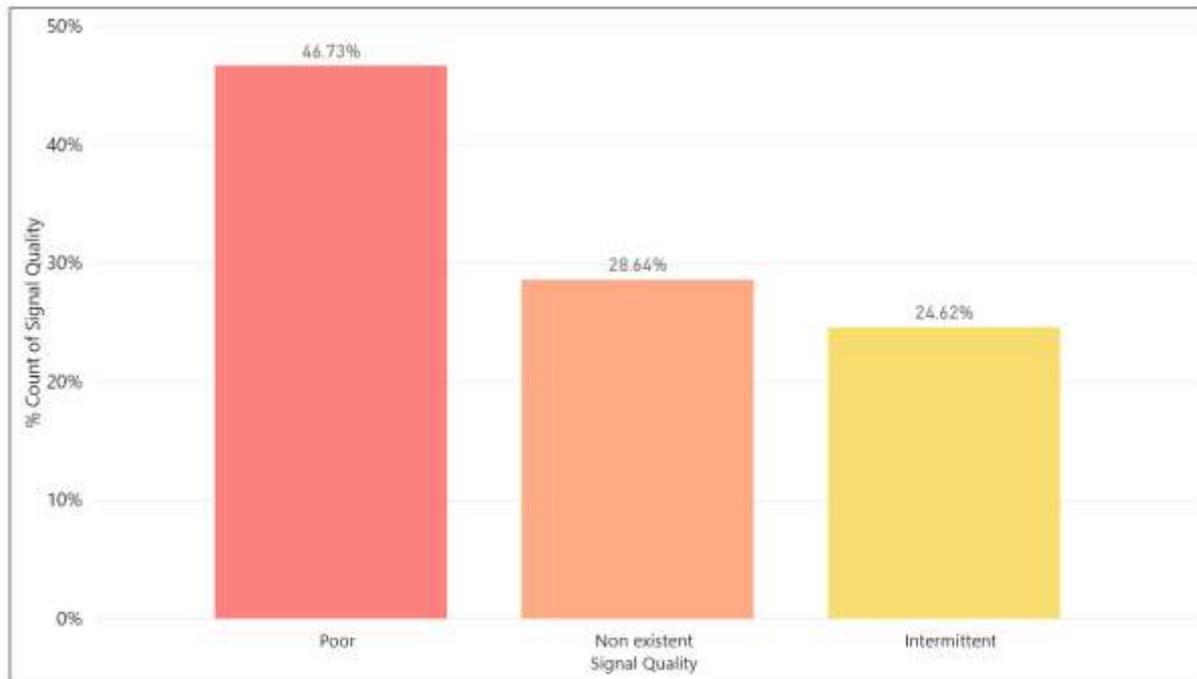


Figure 1 - Total survey responses of how each respondent rated their mobile phone signal quality. 'Intermittent' is best quality, with 'Non-existent' being lowest quality.

1.1 Mobile Phone Network Providers

A question in the survey asked *'Please select your mobile network'*. The results of this are shown below:

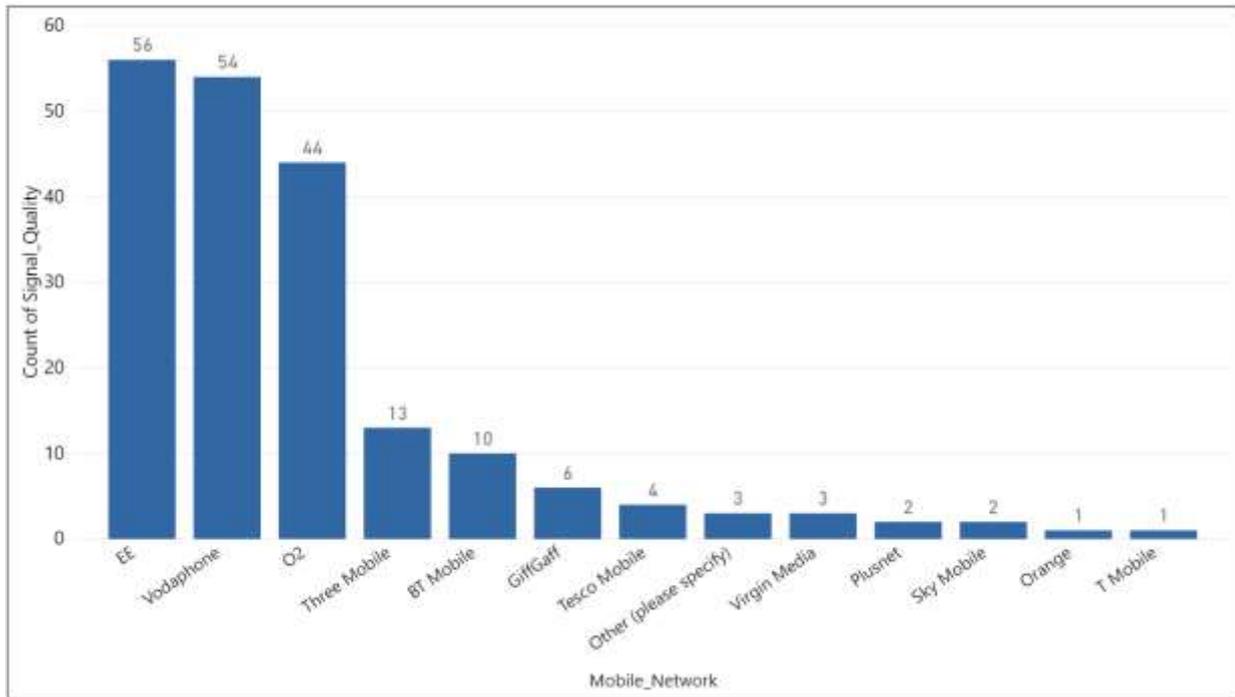


Figure 2 - Count of mobile networks used by survey respondents.

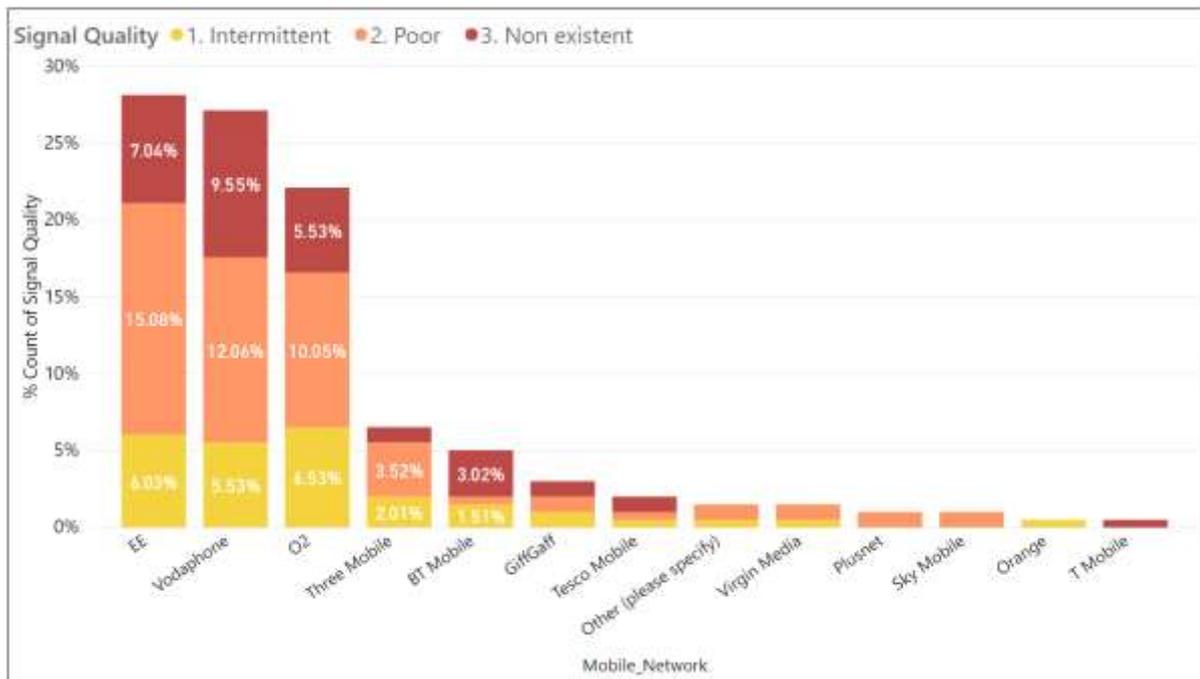


Figure 3 - Count of responses to question "Please select your mobile network", this graph includes the proportion of how customers rated their mobile phone signal within each mobile network.

As you can see from Figure 3 each provider had approximately the same distribution of responses, and considering the relatively small sample size, there do not appear to be any statistically significant variance in responses for each network provider.

Manufacturer of Handset

As with the questions about mobile phone provider, the majority of respondents selecting 'iPhone' and 'Samsung' is more likely to be based on market share of the manufacturers rather than them being a direct cause of poor signal. This is indicated by a relatively equal distribution of responses reporting the quality of signal across each device, as shown in the below graph:

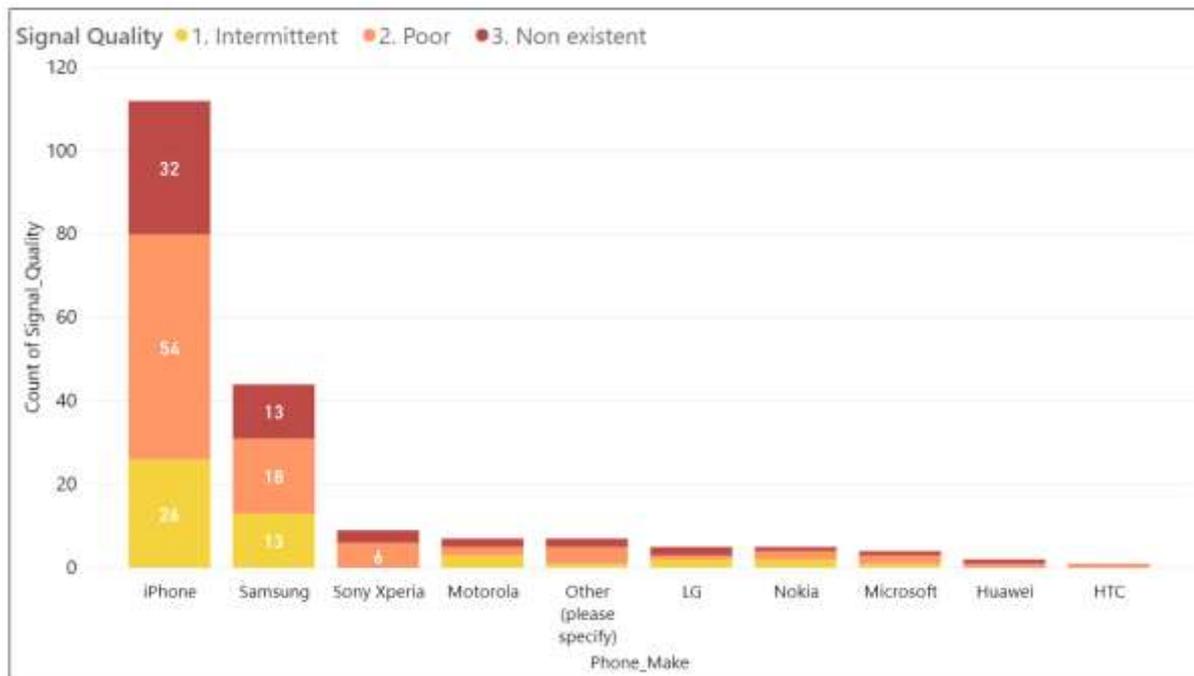


Figure 4 - Responses to the survey question "Please select your make of mobile phone", broken down by responses to signal quality.

As a result it would not be fair to conclude that handset is a predictor of poor mobile signal, and as a result further breakdowns of this have not been included on a per ward basis.

Geographical Analysis of Results

The below map shows the distribution of responses throughout the Cherwell district, denoted as red, yellow or orange dots depending on response type. Purple hot-spots show the areas with the highest frequency of responses.

Inclusion of LLPG communication mast data¹

To provide additional context, the location of existing telephone communications masts have been included on the map. It is worth noting that there appears to be an inverse correlation between

¹ Mobile phone mast data comes from extract of Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). This is a corporate database and provides the definitive identification of all land and property within Cherwell and South Northants Districts. The data extraction for this report was performed February 2018. The LLPG contains details of any current communication masts, many of which are owned and operated by mobile phone providers so may directly influence the quality of signal within each area.

locations of phone masts, and reports of poor mobile network signal, particularly in the Shutford area.

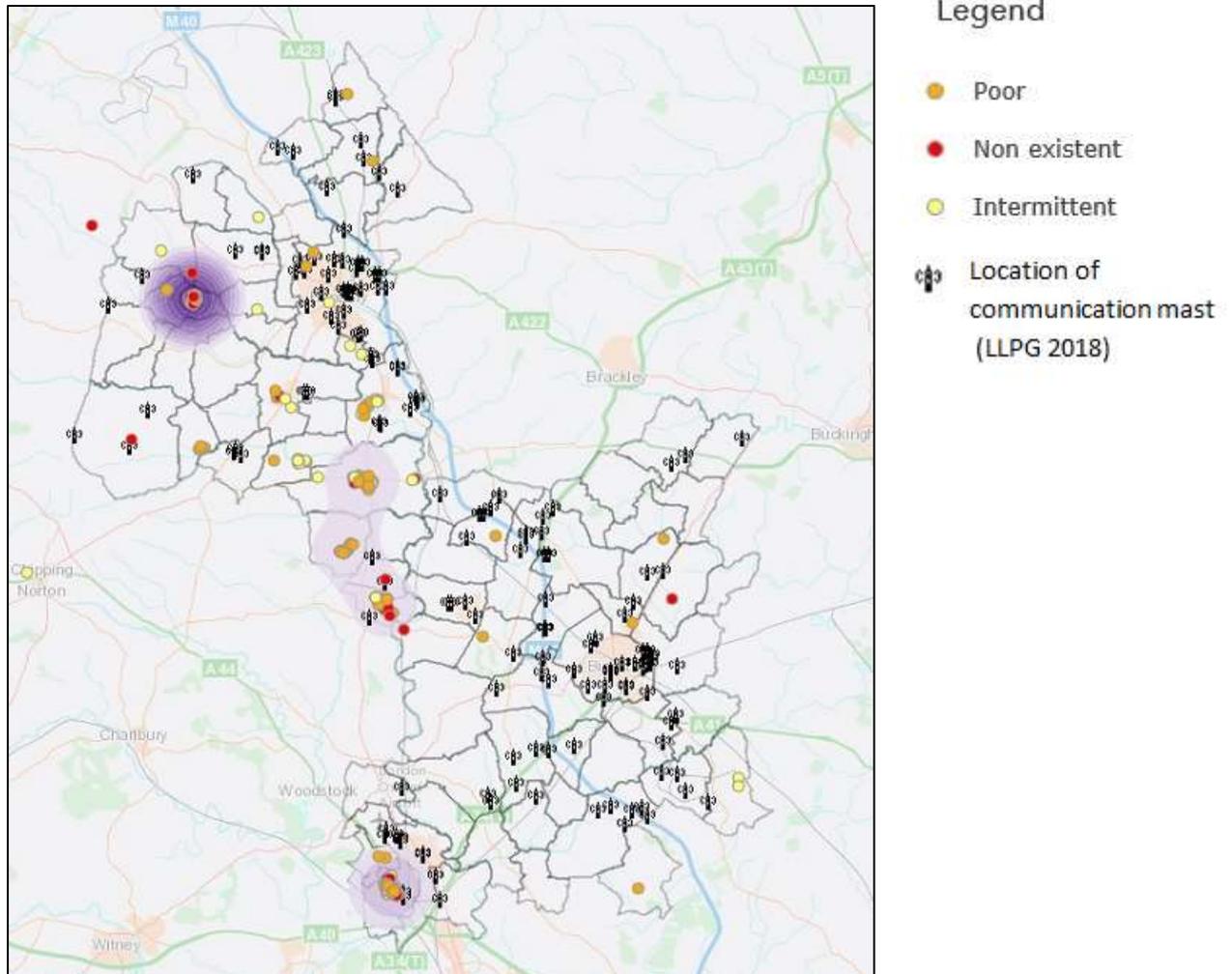


Figure 5 – Overview of Cherwell District - Crown copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100018504

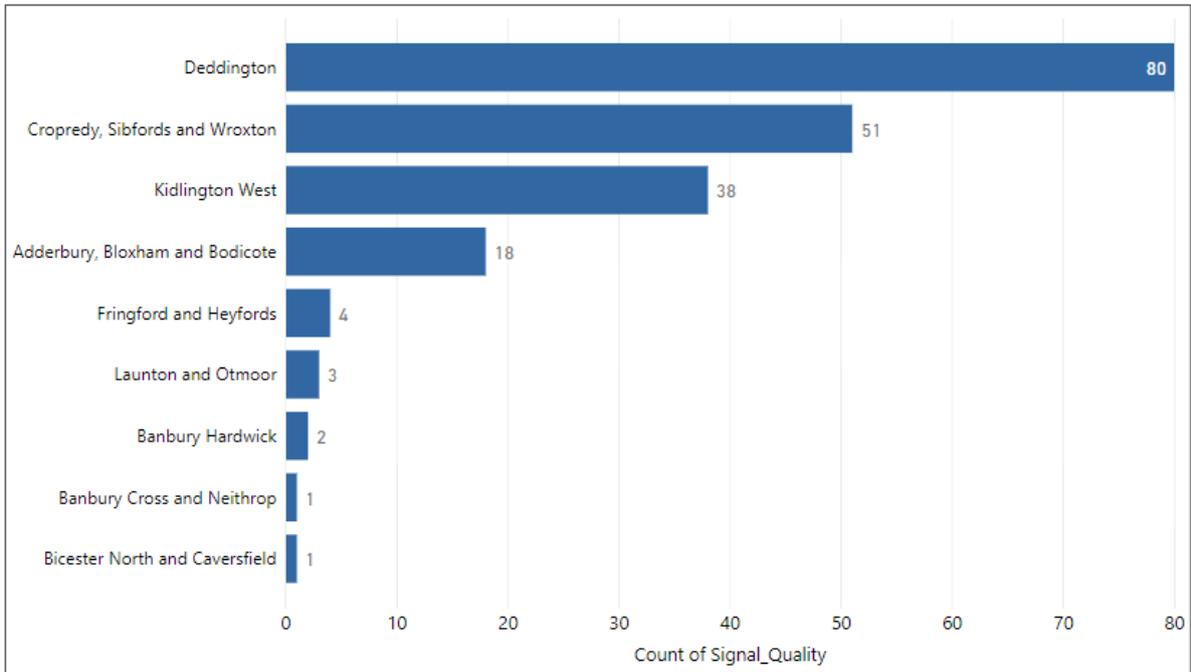


Figure 6 - Breakdown of responses by ward. Please see below graphic for how this breaks down by signal quality.

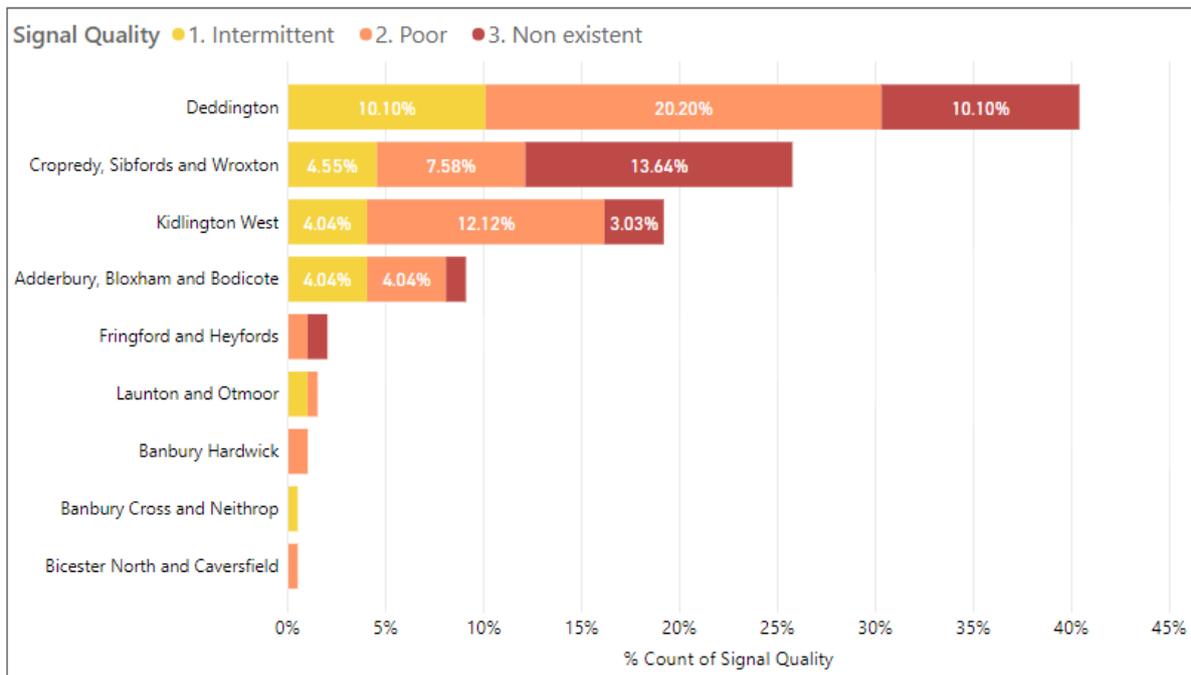


Figure 7 - Breakdown of responses by ward, including the proportion of how each ward population rated their reported signal quality.

As indicated by the above map and chart, four wards within Cherwell represented the majority of responses to the survey received (93% in total). These were:

- Deddington (40%)
- Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton (25%)
- Kidlington West (19%)
- Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote (9%)

These hotspots are shown in more detail below:

Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton Ward (Shutford) Results

The heaviest concentration of survey replies across Cherwell can be found in the Shutford area:

Legend

- Poor
- Non existent
- Intermittent
-  Location of communication mast (LLPG 2018)

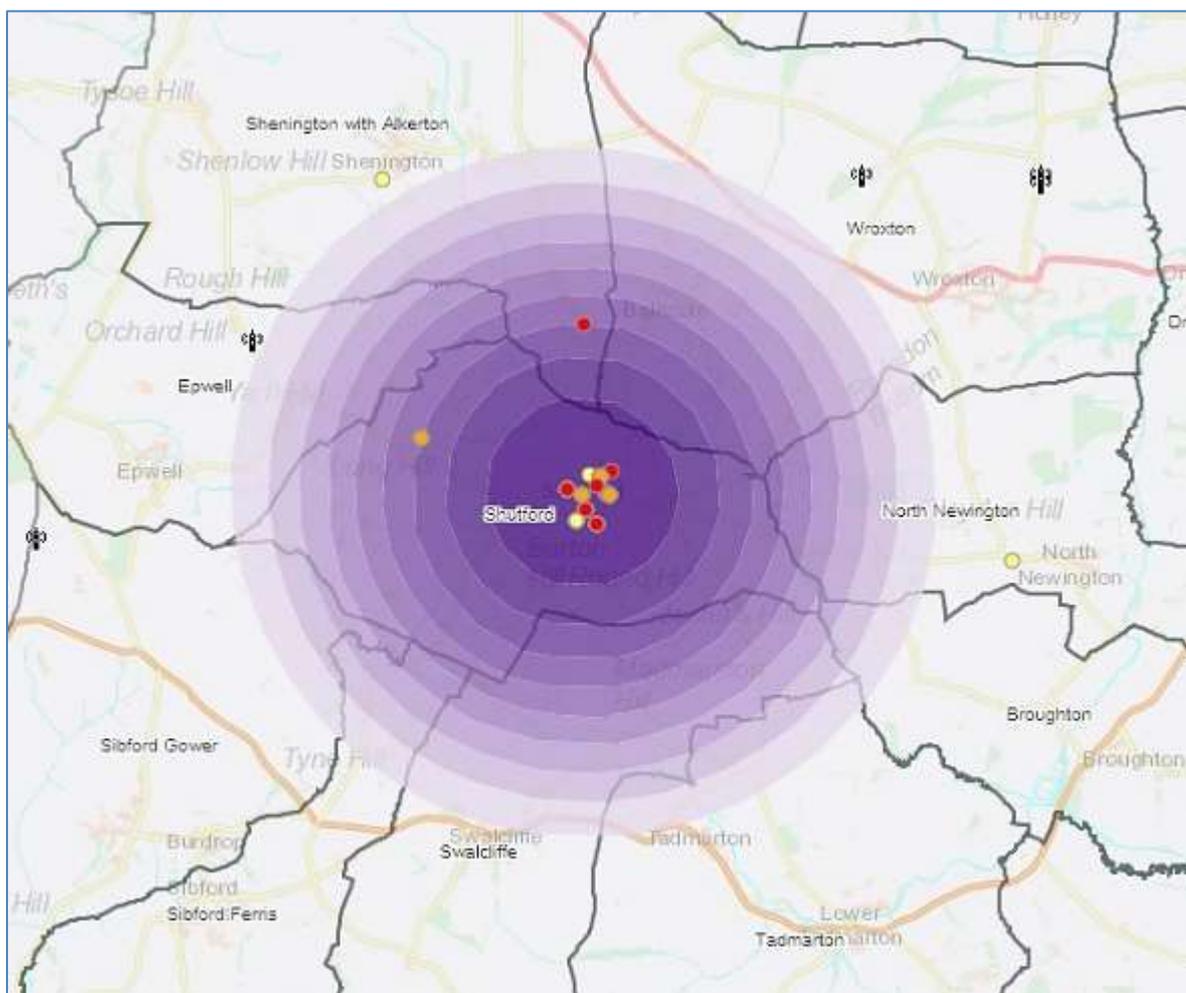


Figure 8 - Overview of Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton Ward area - Crown copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100018504

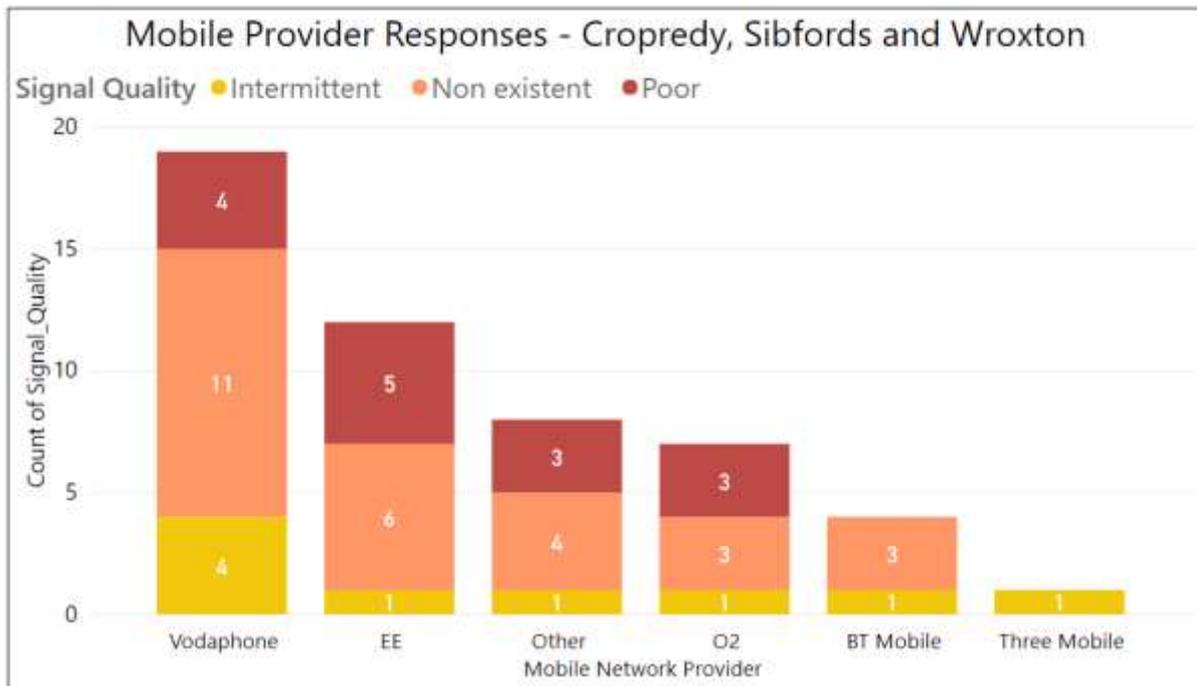


Figure 9 - Graphical representation of ward responses to mobile phone provider, broken down by reported signal quality.

Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote Ward Results

Legend

- Poor
- Non existent
- Intermittent
- 📶 Location of communication mast (LLPG 2018)

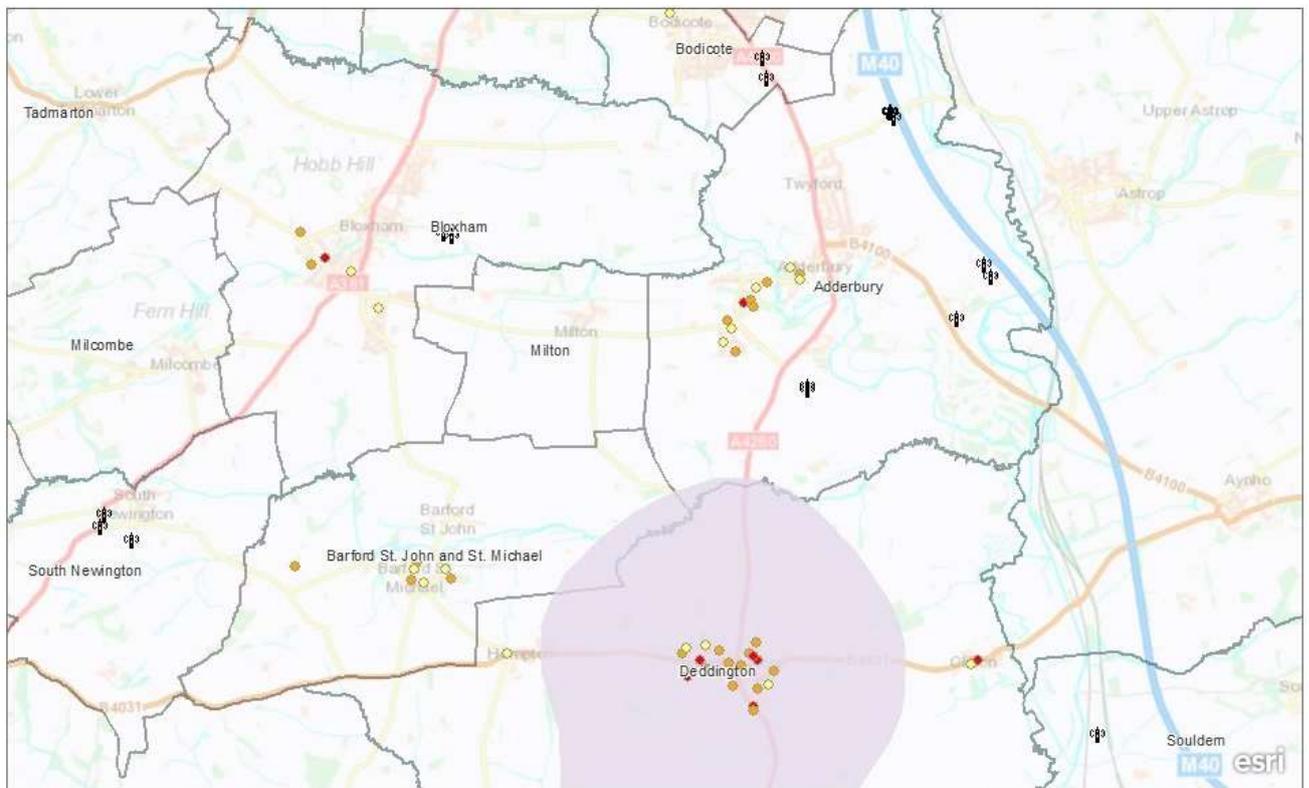


Figure 10 - Overview of Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote Ward area - Crown copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100018504

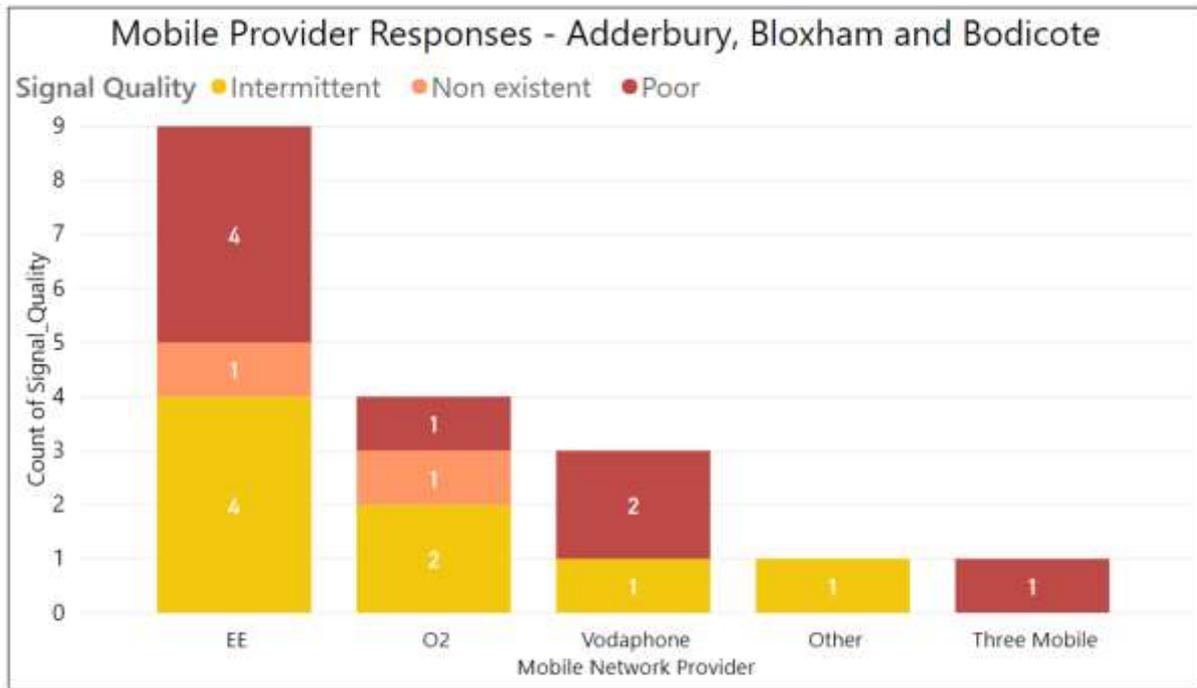


Figure 11 - Graphical representation of ward responses to mobile phone provider, broken down by reported signal quality.

Deddington Ward Results

Legend

- Poor
- Non existent
- Intermittent
-  Location of communication mast (LLPG 2018)

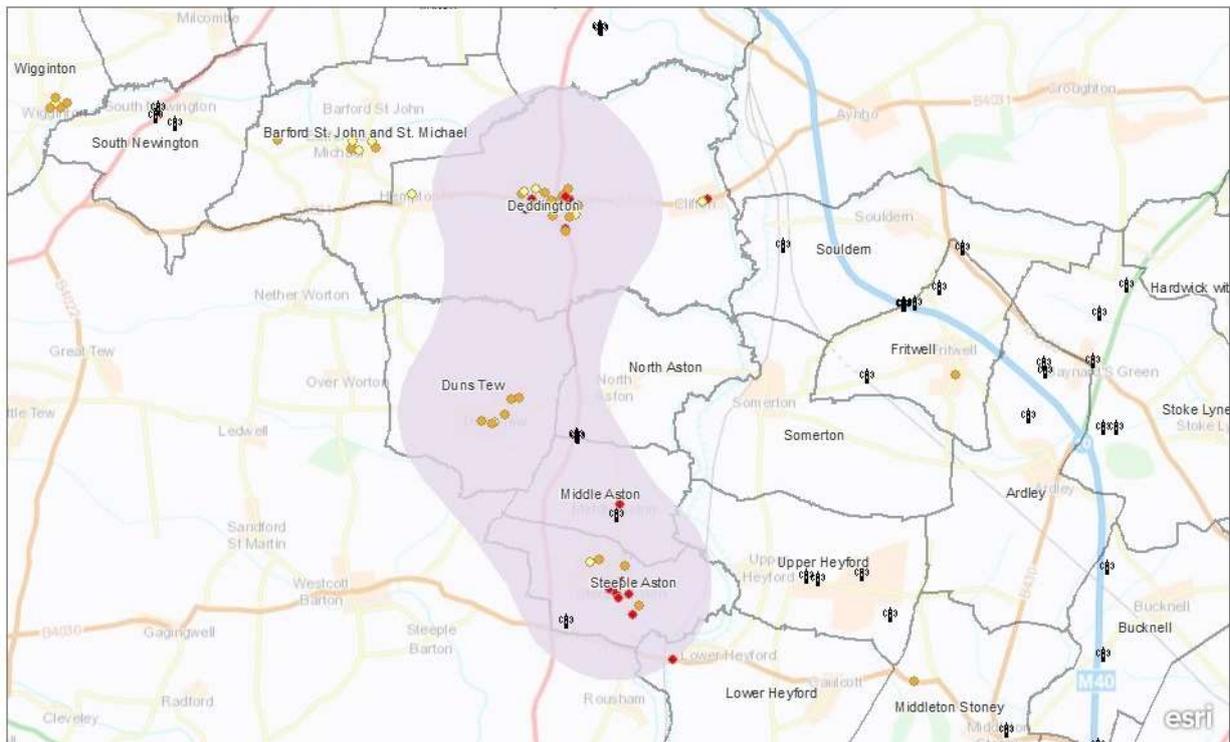


Figure 12 - Deddington Ward area - Crown copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100018504

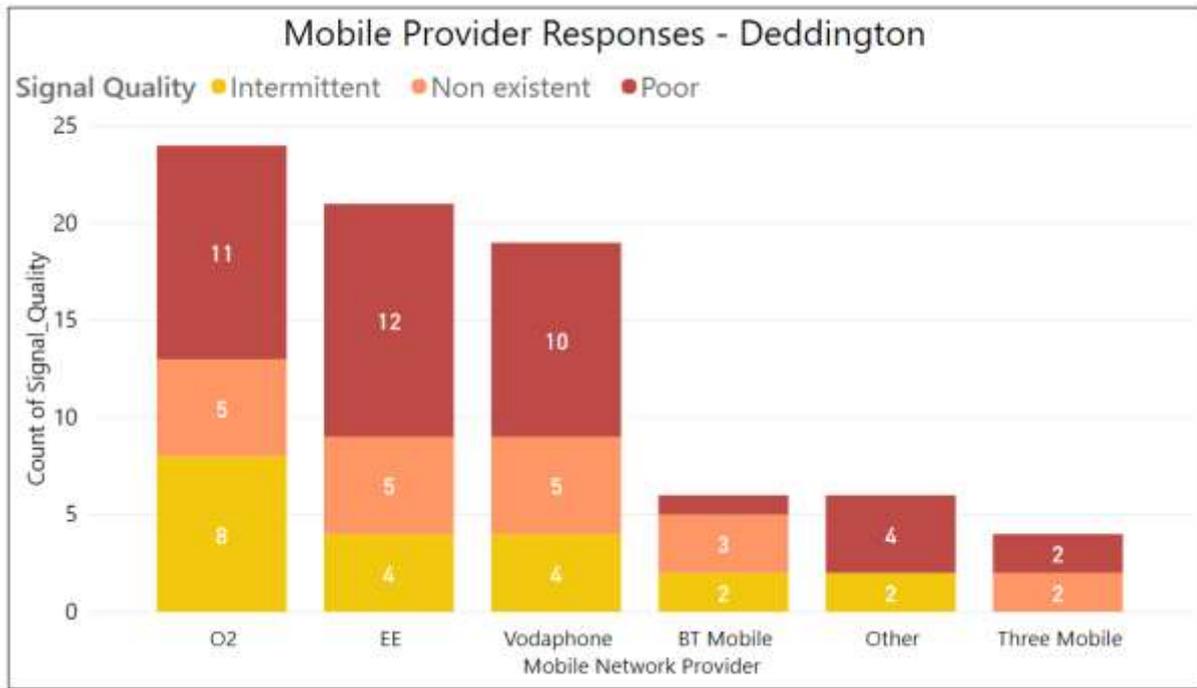
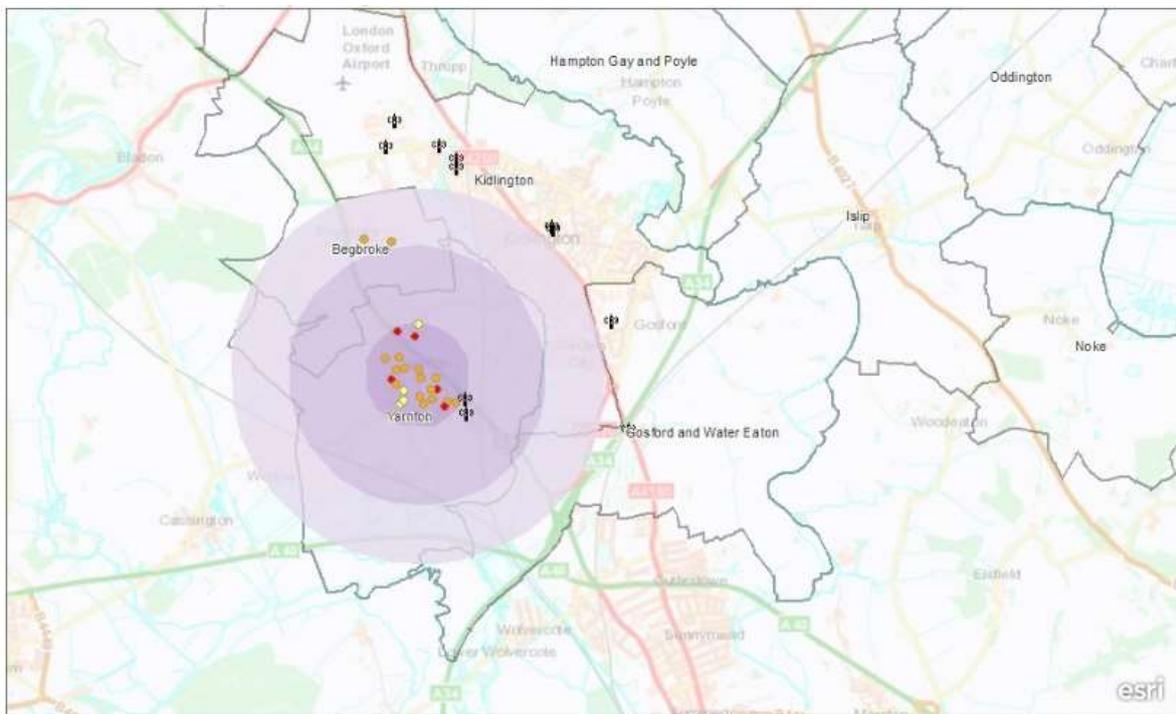


Figure 13 - Graphical representation of ward responses to mobile phone provider, broken down by reported signal quality.

Kidlington West Ward Results



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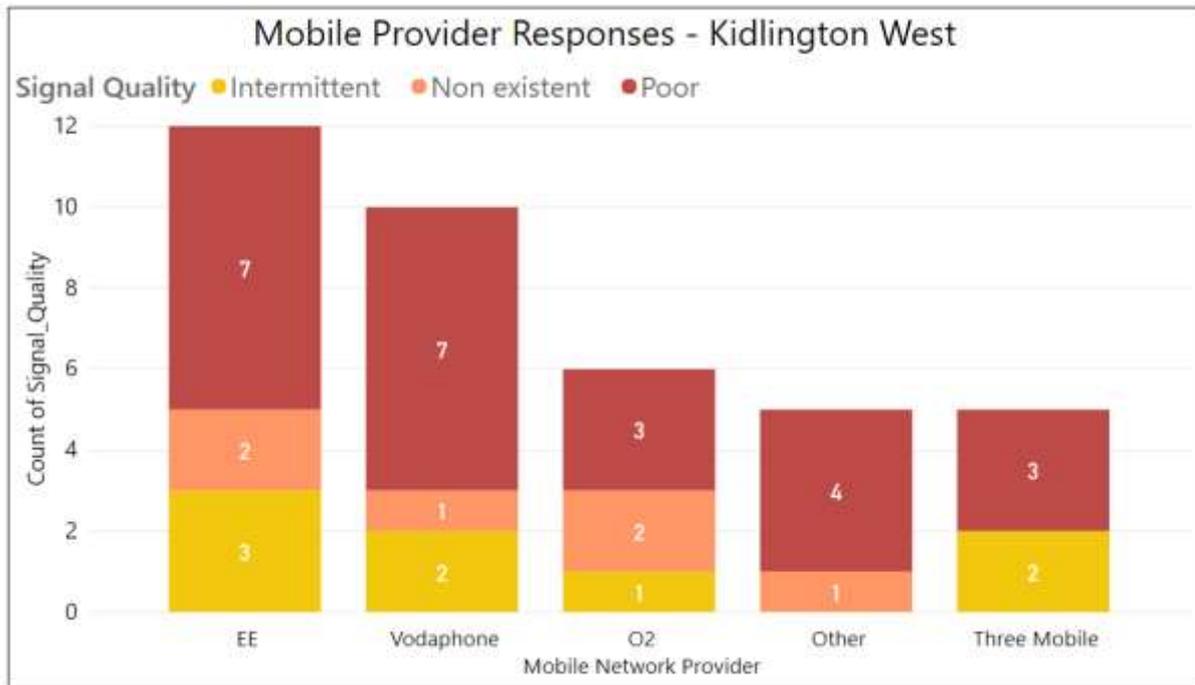


Figure 14 - Figure 11 - Graphical representation of ward responses to mobile phone provider, broken down by reported signal quality.

Conclusions

The relatively small sample size (224 responses) renders it difficult to draw any statistically significant conclusions from the survey. Particularly as, there does not appear to be any significant correlation between users suffering poor or no signal and either the make of handset or mobile phone provider.

The majority of users responding to the survey were customers of EE, Vodafone and O2. However, this is perhaps more likely to be down to their market share rather than these providers being the cause of poor quality signal. It is difficult to determine this exactly, as there is no available information regarding their respective customer base in the Cherwell area, and no published contextual information such as benchmarks. Notably, the quality rating of signal did not vary significantly between each network provider, suggesting no single provider performs any worse than its peers in relative terms. This is shown below in Figure 3.

However, there are trends we can identify as areas for future exploration. Primarily, almost all of the responses came from areas within Cherwell considered to be rural; almost no reports came from the Banbury or Bicester area. This would suggest that perhaps the main driver of poor quality mobile signal is the placement of mobile phone communication masts within the Cherwell District. Communication masts (many of them operated by mobile network providers) are placed densely within the three main population centres of Cherwell (Banbury, Bicester, and Kidlington), where there were very few, if any, reports of poor phone signal.

In rural areas (particularly Deddington, Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton), these communication masts appear much more sparsely, and it is within these areas where there are a frequent number of

survey responses reporting poor signal (Please refer to the second section of this report – “Geographical Analysis of Results” for more details). It is worth bearing in mind that, while this inverse correlation does appear quite strongly visually, this may be superficial and a direct link (causation) cannot be proved without further research in this area. Please note Kidlington West has two communication masts relatively close to its centre in nearby Yarnton, and as such appears to be a slight exception to this rule.

Options

1. **Option 1** is to complete another consultation, with a view to obtaining greater numbers of participation and widening the scope of the survey to include additional questions to gauge where positive mobile phone signal is received throughout the district. Increased participation numbers (approximately 800-1000) would provide a robust evidence base, and we would expect to see the distribution of responses expand into the main population centres which would allow for blackspot comparison. With increased participation numbers the possibility of identifying additional correlating factors will increase, and will prove a more solid evidence base for any conclusions going forward.

Including the option for additional answers around positive responses to mobile phone signal will provide more context for any blackspots identified; rather than focusing exclusively on users with poor signal. Comparing users with poor signal by location to users with good signal will serve as a benchmark for what could be called the “average coverage” for the district, enabling easy identification of areas which fall significantly below this. With the current data we are unable to calculate any such benchmark for relative comparison. For instance, this will enable us to effectively test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between mast data and mobile phone signal.

2. **Option 2** is to review the above report and use the results within the Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting to facilitate further discussion around mobile networks and agree a set of actions with the 224 responses.

Footnotes

[1] – Mobile phone mast data comes from extract of Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG). This is a corporate database and provides the definitive identification of all land and property within Cherwell and South Northants Districts. The data extraction for this report was performed February 2018. The LLPG contains details of any current communication masts, many of which are owned and operated by mobile phone providers so may directly influence the quality of signal within each area.

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Suggested topics for Overview and Scrutiny received from Parish Councils

1. Adderbury

Suggested topic - To identify whether current planning policies and guidance are producing homes fit to live in with specific reference to the adequacy of storage space for personal possessions and of vehicular transport off of the road.

Review could be carried out by identifying a selection of recent housing developments now occupied and survey residents as to their satisfaction levels.

Initial officer comments – The Planning process is governed by legislation and guidance, including minimum requirements for parking vehicles. On 5 March 2018 the Government published a draft of a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is subject to consultation. Officers suggest that the proposed revisions to the NPPF are researched, to see if the issues raised by Adderbury Parish Council are covered, as well as gathering information on existing legislation and guidance.

The findings of the research to be reported back to the first meeting of the new Municipal Year in May 2018, and further discussion had at that time.

2. Kidlington

Suggested topic (1) – Decriminalised parking across the district

Due to issues with parking cross the district, a PCSO is in place to enforce parking regulations etc. In the past, Cherwell District Council (CDC) have approached Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) with a request to decriminalise parking, so that local wardens can enforce the restrictions instead. OCC were not able to do so, due to the cost of the local wardens and a restriction on the number of districts that could have them.

The view of OCC has recently changed, and the restriction on the number of districts has been lifted. Kidlington Parish Council have asked if CDC will reconsider the request to OCC to decriminalise parking in the district.

Initial officer comments – A potential subject to follow up, although not necessarily with a full Scrutiny review. The Assistant Director – Environmental Services will be asked to provide an update and enquiries to be made of OCC regarding the current position with decriminalised parking and restrictions, and discussions had with officers who oversee parking at CDC to find out if this would be a viable request.

Suggested topic (2) – Masterplans

The urban centres have had masterplans that have become supplementary planning documents to the local plan part one. What progress has been made on meeting the requirements and improvements in the masterplans, and if there isn't any progress what is being done to address this?

Initial officer comments – A potential subject to follow up, although not necessarily with a full Scrutiny review. Progress reports on each of the masterplans could be requested from relevant officers and scheduled for meetings across the new Municipal Year

3. Piddington

Suggested topic - Social exclusion of rural communities

Community First Oxfordshire published a Community profile (attached) of the Launton area, concentrating on Piddington. The report identifies Piddington as “relatively more deprived through lack of access to services, children and young people, and education and skills”.

Initial officer comments – A potential subject for review in the new Municipal Year. Further research to be carried out initially to see if similar Community Profiles have been published for other rural areas of the Cherwell District, and if similar issues have been identified elsewhere.

Findings to be reported back to the first meeting of the new Municipal year in May.

4. Shenington with Alkerton

Suggested topic - Inconsistencies in planning applications.

The parish have provided details of several planning applications that they feel have had inconsistencies in the way they were determined. Examples include local knowledge of the parish council being ignored, and consultation comments from other departments of the council being disregarded.

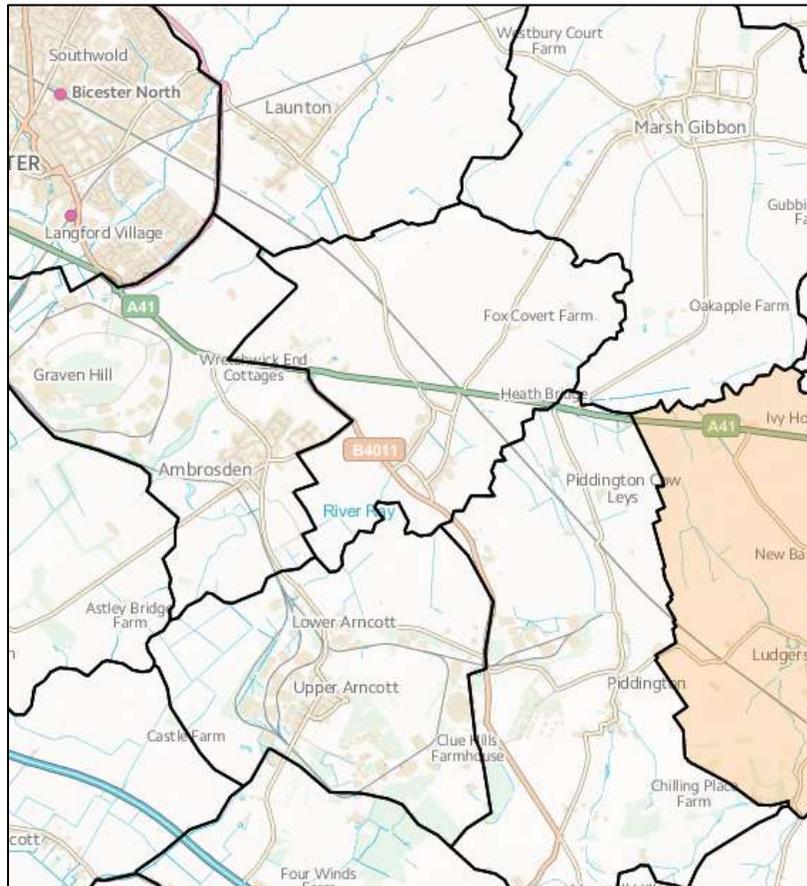
Initial officer comments – This is not a subject that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can get involved in. Planning applications are considered on a case by case basis, using relevant guidance and policy from central Government. The best course of action in this case would be for the details provided to be passed to the Planning department, to be discussed between the department and the parish council.

A further suggestion would be for officers from planning to attend a parish clerk forum to give an overview of the consultation process for planning applications, and to explain where parish comments fit in to the process. A similar presentation has been delivered to parish clerks at South Northamptonshire Council, and was very well received.

Launton cluster (Piddington, Arncott and surrounding area) – Community Profile: October 2017 update

Initial focus of this audit is Piddington, with other areas to follow

1. Map and Overview



Source: Ordnance survey¹

Overview

¹ <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/#>

Initially, this audit focuses on Piddington as this part of Launton ward shows up as relatively more deprived through lack of access to services, children and young people, and education and skills.

- This cluster of villages to the east of Bicester includes Launton and smaller villages including Piddington and Arncott and other nearby villages which are experiencing significant reductions in services. Each village has particular issues.
- Piddington is 4.5 miles southeast of Bicester, close to the border with Buckinghamshire.
- It is likely that the issues will span across other villages nearby such as Arncott and Blackthorn and is likely to also involve cross border work with Buckinghamshire.
- The population of Piddington parish at the time of the 2011 census was 370, 22% of the population was over 6, 32.6% of residents over 16 were qualified to Level 4 or above, 7.6% of households (23) did not have a car or van.
- The evidence for the situation in the area is from local questionnaires (Piddington report due Jan 2017), Parish Council minutes and contact with local people.

Social life

- Piddington is an active community but with very few community spaces.
- A lot of activity centres around the parish council and the village hall committee.

Parish Council

- Launton Parish Council has its own website at www.launton-pc.gov.uk Council meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of each month in Launton Parish Hall. The formal session starts at 7.30.
 - Anne Davies – parish clerk: piddington.pariah.clerk@googlemail.com

School

Launton Church of England Primary School. Bicester Road, Launton, Bicester, Oxfordshire. OX26 5DP.
Telephone: 01869 253692

Post office /shop

Launton has both a Post Office and shop. The Post Office is located at Sherwood Close, Bicester 01869 252122. The Cost Cutter shop is at 36 Bicester Road, Oxford, OX26 5DQ.

Website

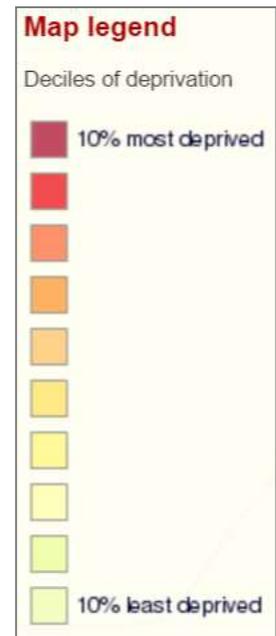
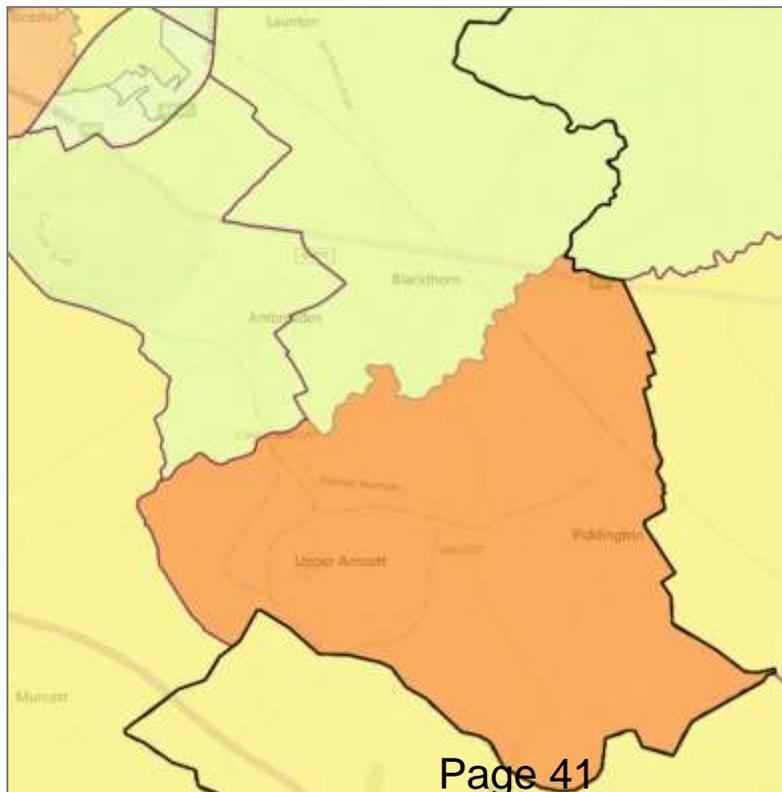
- www.facebook.com/piddingtonoxfordshire
- Twitter- [@Piddingtonoxon](https://twitter.com/Piddingtonoxon)
- <http://www.piddingtonvillageoxfordshire.org.uk/parish-council.html>
- <https://www.facebook.com/Launton-Parish-Council-1738353776382256>
- <http://www.launton-pc.gov.uk/>

Launton is a village and civil parish on the eastern outskirts of Bicester. King Edward the Confessor granted the manor of Launton to Westminster Abbey in 1065. The abbey surrendered the manor to the Crown when it was suppressed in the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, but in 1542 the Crown granted Launton to the abbey's Dean and Chapter. Mary I restored the Roman Catholic Church in England and in 1556 Launton was surrendered to the Crown, who restored it to the reinstated Abbott and convent of Westminster. Elizabeth I restored the English Reformation again in 1560 Launton was surrendered to the Crown for a third time, who granted it to the Dean and Chapter. In 1649 the Commonwealth of England assigned Launton to Westminster School. In 1860 the lands of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster were vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

<p>Launton Sports and Social Club Bicester Road Launton</p>	<p>FB@LauntonSportsSocialClub Send Message Call 01869 242007</p>
<p>Launton Parish Hall Bicester Road, Launton, Bicester, Oxon OX26 ODP</p>	<p>Joan Packer 01869 241694 and 07903 610405 j.packer779@btinternet.com</p>

2. Deprivation

There is one area of Launton ward which shows up as somewhat deprived relative to the rest of Oxfordshire. This area includes Arncott and Piddington villages (LSOA E01028500).



LSOA code (2011)	Index of Multiple Deprivation	Income	Employment
Launton cluster			
E01028500	4	8	7

LSOA code (2011)	Education, Skills and Training	Children and Young People	Adult Skills	Barriers to Housing and Services	Geographical Barriers
Launton cluster					
E01028500	2	2	2	1	1

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 Deciles (where 1 is most deprived 10% of small areas - LSOAs)

3. Service overview

Children's Centre	Day Centre	Transport
Nearest service Bicester	Nearest service Bicester Health and Well-Being Centre	Service cut: T94 to Bicester and Oxford Alternatives being sought (see Section 7, below)

Launton

The Hummingbird Centre

Grange Courtyard

Station Road

Launton

Bicester

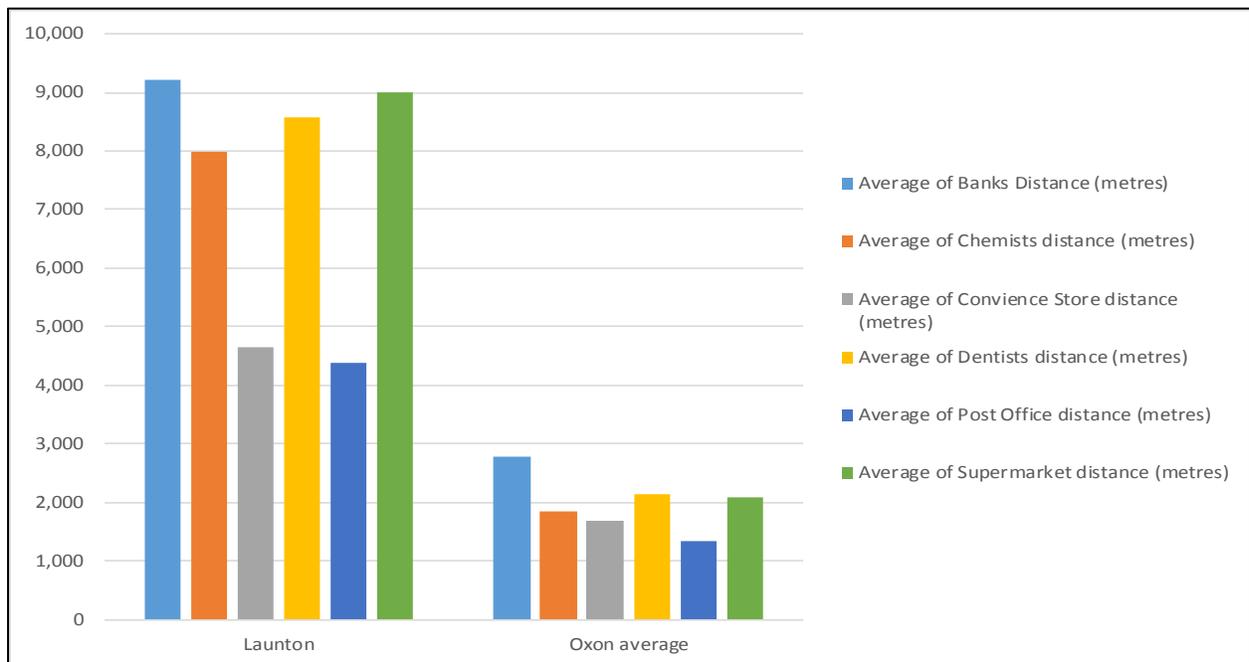
OX26 5DX

Tel: 01869 244 244 info@thehummingbirdcentre.org.uk

The Hummingbird Centre is a relaxed place for cancer patients, whatever stage throughout the cancer journey.

4. Distance to services

LSOA code (2011)	Post Office	Primary school	General store or supermarket	GP surgery
Launton cluster				
E01028500	3.54	3.63	2.05	7.17



SOURCE- Road distance to key services (km) in 2014 - IMD 2015 Barriers to Housing and Services Domain

5. Community assets

Name	Details
Piddington Village Hall	Well-used for many activities including the pop up pub and the weekly Pantry (café and community shop) and provides meeting space for several clubs and groups. The village hall requires extension
St Nicholas' Church	A focus of community activity
<u>Launton Sports and Social Club</u>	Large hall for hire which can seat 150 people so is ideal for most events.
<u>Launton Parish Hall</u>	Seated Capacity 100 Car park spaces 12. Built in 1930s. Single storey 2 toilets [one being for disabled use] Wood floor in main part of hall, kitchen to one side, storage for tables and chairs at back.

Page 44

6. Community activity: overview

Group	Contact	Notes
The Pantry	Francesca Darby	Piddington market and coffee shop opens every week on Saturday. Twitter: @pidding_pantry
Regular fitness sessions		Piddington village hall - short mat bowls, exercise, pilates
Annual community apple pressing day		Since 2015, this was initiated as a result of community engagement in the Community Led Plan

Group	Contact	Notes
200 Club		
Launton Sports FC Launton Sports & Social Club Bicester Road Launton Oxfordshire OX26 5DP	Tweet @LauntonSportsFC	First Team play in the Oxfordshire Senior League Prem and Reserves in Division 2.

7. Summary of key local issues

Transport is the key local issue. The T94 bus route provided a daily route to Bicester. The loss of this service has affected some people in the village significantly (a group used it weekly, particularly on Bicester market day) and alternative solutions have been sought. Community First has been in discussions with parish councillors to advise.

Piddington has decided not to use OCC's COMET bus service but is working with Buckinghamshire CC to make the community operated "Bernwood Bus" available to Piddington residents. The council has been trying to engage with three options:

- Stagecoach - extending the X5 and service that goes to Bullingdon Prison to Piddington. This would add 4 minutes both ways for their bus which is a 25-minute walk down an unlit country lane
- Charlton Services - extending the route of the 94 to include Piddington
- The Bernwood Community Bus - a Bucks initiative which will service nearby villages. BCC is keen to promote cross boundary initiatives

Village Hall improvements are needed – Community First Oxfordshire advising. Funding for this has not yet been identified.

A play area for the older youngsters of the village is something the Parish Council have been endeavoring to establish for many years: investigations into a possible site are progressing.

Widnell Park and Playing Fields: PC is trying to regenerate the area both environmentally and for the community. Couple of successful grant applications which will start the clearance process and has enabled purchase of park furniture. Their next challenge is to raise approximately £5000 for green gym equipment (hoping to install by spring 2017).

Potential mitigation projects

Potential projects (from initial discussions with the parish council) are:

- Community transport
- School transport
- Village hall improvements
- Play area

Potential Piddington area community transport initiative

Finding a potential solution has involved liaison with other villages including one across the county border. CFO has met with local parish councillors and initiated a process to identify specific areas where links to various agencies might be of use.