



## **Council Minute Book**

**Monday 18 October 2021**

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There were no Lead Member decisions

#### **Accounts Audit and Risk Committee**

3. Minutes of meeting Wednesday 28 July 2021 of Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (Pages 13 - 16)
4. Minutes of meeting Wednesday 22 September 2021 of Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (Pages 17 - 20)

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## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Executive**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 19 July 2021 at 4.30 pm

#### Present:

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council  
Councillor Ian Corkin (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Customers and Transformation  
Councillor Phil Chapman, Lead Member for Leisure and Sport  
Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Finance and Governance  
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing  
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance  
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property  
Councillor Lucinda Wing, Lead Member for Housing

#### Also Present:

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group  
Councillor Tom Wallis, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green

#### Officers:

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive  
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment  
Bill Cotton, Corporate Director Environment and Place  
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer  
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development  
Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Policy Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

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### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

33 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions.

The Chairman advised that there was one request from a member of the public to address the meeting on agenda item 7, The Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document. The address would be made prior to Executive considering the item.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Wallis, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would address Executive on agenda item 7, The Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document, to report the feedback of the Committee which had considered the report at their 14 July 2021 meeting.

34 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

37 **The Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document**

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development submitted a report for Executive to consider the approval of the Oxfordshire Plan consultation document which sets out a range of planning policy options and a series of spatial strategy options for Oxfordshire.

When complete the Oxfordshire Plan will provide a high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire up to 2050 and will be a statutory Local Plan. The Plan aims to be transformational and occupies new policy areas, such as on climate change, environmental betterment, health impacts and zero carbon transport. It has now reached the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage.

Sir David Gilmour, on behalf of CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) Oxford, addressed Executive.

Councillor Wallis, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, addressed Executive to present the feedback of the Committee which had considered the report at its 14 July 2021 meeting. Detailed feedback (annex

to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) had been sent to the Leader and Lead Member for Planning, who had also been in attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Councillor Wallis summarised the key feedback from the Committee advising Executive that the Committee had raised concerns about the volume of information relating to the consultation and time Members had to review (whilst acknowledging it was available within the legal agenda publication timescales) and felt it was not possible to sufficiently scrutinise the documentation in the available time. The Committee had requested that there be a clear communications strategy to include progress updates to the Committee and briefings for all Members.

The Chairman thanked the Councillor Wallis and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their feedback.

Councillor Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group and a Cherwell District Council representative on the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel, advised Executive that the Panel had raised concerns about the consultation process. Whilst Town/Parish Councils were listed as a consultee, it was recommended that they could be asked to help widen engagement amongst people within their areas.

In response to Councillor Woodcock's comments, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Sub-Group had noted the comments and, where necessary, additional information, including small supplement would be provided to Town/Parish Councils about how they can get involved in the consultation.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved for public consultation.
- (2) That an updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book), which will become the formal basis for the forthcoming Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation be adopted.
- (3) That the Assistant Director be authorised to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the documents, and to agree the final publication style, in liaison with the Lead Member for Planning and subject to agreement with their counterparts in the other four partner Local Planning Authorities.

### **Reasons**

The Oxfordshire Plan is a joint Local Plan being prepared by the five Oxfordshire Local Planning Authorities in partnership with the County Council. It will provide a high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire up to

2050. The Plan aims to be transformational and occupies new policy areas, such as on climate change, environmental betterment, health impacts and zero carbon transport. It has now reached the Regulation 18 Part 2 stage and it is recommended that a public consultation takes place to inform the next stage of plan-making.

### **Alternative Options**

Option 1: Not to approve the documents at this time and seek changes. This would put in jeopardy the timetable agreed by the Growth Board with MHCLG.

Option 2: To seek specific changes prior to consultation commencing with delegation to the Assistant Director. This is dependent on Members' consideration

The meeting ended at 4.55 pm

Chairman:

Date:

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Executive**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 6 September 2021 at 6.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Councillor Barry Wood (Chairman), Leader of the Council  
Councillor Ian Corkin (Vice-Chairman), Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Customer and Transformation  
Councillor Phil Chapman, Lead Member for Leisure and Sport  
Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Tony Ilott, Lead Member for Finance and Governance  
Councillor Andrew McHugh, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing  
Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance  
Councillor Lynn Pratt, Lead Member for Economy, Regeneration and Property  
Councillor Dan Sames, Lead Member for Clean and Green  
Councillor Lucinda Wing, Lead Member for Housing

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Sean Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group

#### **Officers:**

Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive  
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment  
Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development  
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer  
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
Vicki Jessop, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning  
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes  
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development  
Andrew Maxted, Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Manager  
Eleanor Gingell, Planning Policy Team Leader  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

### **38      **Declarations of Interest****

There were no declarations of interest.

### **39      **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting****

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

40 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

42 **Local Development Scheme**

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development submitted a report to seek approval of an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the production of the Council's key planning policy documents.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman commended and thanked the Planning policy team for their hard work on the Scheme.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) (annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.

**Reasons**

An updated LDS has been prepared. It provides a programme for the preparation of the Council's key planning policy documents to guide future planning decisions. The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare and maintain an LDS. The LDS will be used by officers, the public, partners and developers and other stakeholders to monitor the production of documents and to plan for associated consultations. Approval of the LDS is needed to assist project management and ensure that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities for plan-making.

**Alternative options**

**Option 1: Not to approve the LDS**

The Council has a statutory responsibility to maintain an up-to-date LDS. If the Council did not prepare its own LDS the Secretary of State could impose one. Aside from legal duty, not to approve the LDS could undermine the confidence of the public and stakeholders about the Council's plan-making programme. The LDS would need to be re-presented to the Executive at a future meeting or to the Lead Member for Planning.

**Option 2: To reconsider the content of the LDS**

The LDS has been prepared having regard to the Council's statutory responsibilities and current resources. It is considered by officers to be appropriate for the present and foreseeable circumstances.

## **Planning for Cherwell: Cherwell Local Plan Review - Options Consultation Paper**

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development submitted a report to seek approval of an options consultation paper for the Cherwell Local Plan Review.

At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillor Woodcock, Leader of the Labour Group addressed Executive. In response to Councillor Woodcock's comments regarding the affordable housing figures, the Lead Member for Planning explained that the covid pandemic had had an impact and the council was reliant on developers to deliver affordable housing. It was an area that would be looked at and all options considered to provide affordable housing and deliver as much as was viably possible. The Assistant Director – Planning and Development confirmed that the figures in the Paper would be reviewed to ensure they were accurate before being published for consultation.

In the course of discussion, Executive highlighted the importance of the consultation engaging with as many stakeholders and residents as possible. The Lead Member for Planning explained that much of the consultation would be virtual with additional contact with parishes as their involvement was critical. He would discuss the feasibility of facilitated virtual events with the Assistant Director – Planning and Development. The Lead Member for Planning confirmed that all responses were detailed and recorded.

On behalf of Executive, the Chairman thanked the Assistant Director – Planning and Development and Planning Policy team for their hard work on Cherwell Local Plan review to date.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Options Paper be approved for the purpose of public consultation.
- (2) That the Assistant Director - Planning and Development be authorised to make any necessary minor and/or presentational changes to the options paper prior to the consultation and to determine the format of publication.

### **Reasons**

The Cherwell Local Plan Options Paper has been prepared to help continue dialogue with communities and other stakeholders in the interest of early engagement in the plan preparation process. The paper is the second stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. The Executive's approval of the Options Paper is sought to proceed to public consultation.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: Not to approve the Options Paper until the Oxfordshire Plan process is further advanced

A delay would affect the overall Local Plan programme and put the objective of adoption in 2023 at significantly higher risk.

Option 2: To reconsider the content of the Options Paper

The Options paper has been produced having regard to national policy and guidance, existing Local Plans, the emerging Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and other plans, programmes and policies. It is considered by officers to be an appropriate consultation document balancing technical information with discussion.

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## **Joint Performance, Risk and Finance Report**

The Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarises the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of July 2021.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report and the quarterly Climate and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plans be noted.
- (2) That the use of reserves detailed in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book) be approved.
- (3) That Council be recommended to approve use of reserves to include £1.240m Disabled Facilities Grant received and increase the associated scheme in the capital programme as detailed in the Annex to the Minutes (as set out in the Minute Book).

### **Reasons**

The Council is committed to performance, risk and budget management and reviews progress against its corporate priorities on a monthly basis.

This report provides an update on progress made during July 2021, to deliver the Council's priorities through reporting on Performance, the Leadership Risk Register and providing an update on the financial position.

### **Alternative options**

Option 1: This report illustrates the Council's performance against the 2021-22 business plan. As this is a monitoring report, no further options have been considered. However, Members may wish to request that officers provide additional information.

45 **Notification of Urgent Action - Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES)**

The Chief Executive submitted a report to update the Executive on an urgent decision made by Chief Executive in relation to the short-term leasing of homes from the Ministry of Defence to assist the Council's response to the government's request for support in relation to the Afghan resettlement programme.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the action taken by the Chief Executive under urgent powers to:
- i) Enter into 12-month full repairing leases for 10 homes from the Ministry of Defence: and
  - ii) Delegate responsibility for agreeing the terms of those leases to the Corporate Director, Commercial Development, Assets and Investment.

Such action being taken in support of the programme for acquisition of accommodation to facilitate housing need in relation to the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES), be endorsed.

**Reasons**

To provide a positive response to the emerging Afghanistan crisis and central Government's call for help by securing suitable family accommodation for affected families within the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES).

There is a need to act quickly and get leases in place so that families can begin to settle and receive the necessary wrap around support due to the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan and to ensure suitable accommodation is provided and affected families are settled as quickly as possible.

**Alternative options**

Option 1: To withdraw from the scheme - the Council could decide not to participate in the scheme and decide not to proceed with acquisition of properties.

Option 1 has been rejected due to the urgent need, by the end of September 2021 to provide emergency housing and support to Afghans who have worked for the UK in Afghanistan, and who have been relocated to the UK for safety following the withdrawal of NATO (including UK) forces from Afghanistan.

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**Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 28 July 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)  
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Tom Wallis  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Conrad Copeland

Officers:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance  
Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services  
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor  
Tessa Clayton, Audit Manager  
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner  
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections Team Leader

#### **16      **Declarations of Interest****

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **17      **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting****

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

#### **18      **Minutes****

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 19 May and 21 June 2021 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

19 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

20 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21 **Internal Audit Charter**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Charter and Internal Audit Quality Assurance Programme for 2021/22.

**Resolved**

- (1) That, having given due consideration, the Internal Audit Charter be approved.
- (2) That the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme be noted.

22 **Counter Fraud Annual Plan 2021/22**

The Director of Finance submitted a report presenting the Annual Plan for the Counter-Fraud service at CDC for 2021/22 and a new set of performance indicators that would be reported to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee going forward.

In response to Members' questions, the Audit Manager explained the methods available for fraud referrals. The Chief Internal Auditor confirmed that the referral cases figures would be reported by referral method received at the November committee meeting.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the Annual Counter Fraud Plan for 2021/22 be noted.
- (2) That the updated Counter Fraud Strategy and Performance Framework (annexes to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.

23 **Support to Subsidiaries**

The Director of Finance submitted a report that informed the Committee of the overall level of support provided to the Council's subsidiaries and how this is considered as part of the external audit.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the report be noted.

24 **Work Programme**

The Assistant Director of Finance informed Members that dates for the November, January and March, Account Audit & Risk Committee meetings may be changed, members will be informed once dates have been confirmed

**Resolved**

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

25 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Resolved**

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that, if the public and press were present, it would be likely that exempt information falling under the provisions of Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 would be disclosed to them, and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

26 **Support to Subsidiaries - Exempt Appendix**

**Resolved**

- (1) That the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.59 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 22 September 2021 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes (Chairman)  
Councillor Hugo Brown (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor Tony Ilott

Substitute Members:

Councillor Andrew Beere (in place of Councillor Sean Woodcock)

Also Present:

Maria Grindley, Associate Partner, Ernst & Young (external audit)  
Sue Gill, Ernst & Young (external audit)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Conrad Copeland  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Tom Wallis  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Officers:

Steve Jordan, Corporate Director-Commercial Development, Assets and Investment  
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer  
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
Steve Jordan, Corporate Director Commercial Development, Assets & Investment  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance  
Sarah Cox, Chief Internal Auditor  
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes  
Joanne Kaye, Strategic Business Partner  
Sharon Hickson, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Aaron Hetherington, Democratic and Elections Team Leader

27 **Declarations of Interest**

10. Statement of Accounts Update.

Councillor Hugo Brown, Declaration, as a Cherwell District Council appointed Director to CSN Resources.

28 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

29 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised the Committee that item 12 – Internal Audit Progress Report 1021/22 would be presented before item 7 Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report.

31 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

32 **Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Internal Audit Progress for 2021/22.

The Chief Internal Auditor highlighted the Payment Card Industry (PCI) red audit grading, reassuring Members that there had been a very positive response from management and a robust action plan had been drawn up and positive changes were already taking place.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the progress with the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan and the outcome of the completed audits be noted.

33 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report**

The Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes submitted a report which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring positions as at the end of July 2021.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee was responsible for monitoring the risk aspects of the report.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report be noted

34 **Review of Those Charged with Governance**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which set out the response to Ernst & Young (EY), the council's external auditor, regarding the view of management assurance.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the draft response relating to management assurances from Those Charged with Governance (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) be noted.
- (2) That it be agreed that the Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Chairman of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, make any further changes to the response relating to management assurances from Those Charged with Governance (Annex to the Minutes as set out in the Minute Book) that may arise as a result of the audit.

35 **External Audit - Annual Audit Opinion 2020/21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which set out the External Audit Opinion for 2020/21.

The External Auditor advised the Committee that the quality of data presented by finance for this audit was of a very high standard and an improvement on previous years. The External Auditor thanked the Finance Team for their hard work.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the External Audit Opinion (ISA260) for 2020/21 from our External Auditors, Ernst & Young (EY) be noted.

36 **Statement of Accounts Update**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which sought consideration of changes to be incorporated to the draft statement of accounts.

**Resolved**

- (1) That subject to the changes required, the Draft Statement of Accounts 2019/20 be endorsed and it be agreed that once the final audit opinion is received the Director of Finance (S151 Officer), in consultation with the Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chair in case the Chairman is unavailable) be authorised to sign the accounts and it be noted that if any material changes to the accounts are required, then an additional committee meeting would be convened to consider the changes.
- (2) That the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chair of the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee (or Vice Chair in their absence), be authorised to make any further changes to the letters of representation that may arise during completion of the audit.

37 **Treasury Management Q1 Update 2021/22**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided information on treasury management performance and compliance with treasury management policy for 2021-22 as required by the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the Quarter 1 2021-22 Treasury Management Report be noted.

38 **Work Programme**

The Committee considered its work programme. The Director of Finance advised Members that confirmation of the November meeting date would be circulated in due course.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm

Chairman:

Date:

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Budget Planning Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget Planning Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 13 July 2021 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Nicholas Mawer (Chairman)

Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Conrad Copeland  
Councillor John Donaldson  
Councillor Shaida Hussain  
Councillor Andrew McHugh  
Councillor Douglas Webb  
Councillor Fraser Webster  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Also Present:

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council.

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Carmen Griffiths  
Councillor David Hughes  
Councillor Lucinda Wing

Officers:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance  
Kerry MacDermott, Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services  
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager  
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer

#### **1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee on 9 March 2021 and 19 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

5 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022-23**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which enabled members to consider the current banded scheme for Council Tax Reduction.

In response to questions from the Committee the Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services explained that the hardship fund would still be available in 2022-23. A proactive view had been taken in 2020-2021 and maximum grants were applied where applicable and this approach would continue.

In response to comments regarding the extent of advertising the hardship fund, the Interim Assistant Director for Revenues and Benefits Services undertook to advise Committee Members outside of the meeting with details of where information was made available.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report and any financial implications to the Council be noted.
- (2) That it be recommended to Executive that the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be retained for 2022-2023.
- (3) That no consultation take place, due to the recommendation to retain the current scheme.

6 **Monthly Finance Monitoring Report – Quarter 4 2020-21**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which summarised Cherwell District Council's revenue and capital outturn position for 2020/21.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the finance elements of the report be noted.

## 7 **Review of the 2021-22 Budget Process**

The Director of Finance submitted a report which provided the Budget Planning Committee with a review of the 2021/22 Budget Process.

In considering the report, some Members commented on the timing of the Committee's review of Capital Bids. Members requested that they should be considered earlier in the process alongside Revenue Proposals. Members also suggested that consideration should be given to a mechanism to enable urgent items to be considered outside the normal budget planning process.

In response to questions from the Committee the Assistant Director of Finance explained that the residents survey on the Council's priorities and services was in the planning stage and was expected to be carried out during the summer.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the review of the 2021-2022 Budget and Business Planning Process be noted.
- (2) That Executive be recommended to incorporate the following proposed improvements into the 2022-2023 Budget and Business Planning Process;
  - Review how the Council allocates its resources to ensure they are aligned with the Council's priorities;
  - Carry out additional engagement with residents on the Council's priorities and services it provides to inform savings proposals;
  - Look to ensure that the Capital Budget proposals are developed to the same timeline as the revenue budget proposals and that these are considered earlier in the financial year;
- (3) That it be recommended to Executive that a process be introduced for urgent Capital Bids to be considered outside of the normal budget planning process.

## 8 **Review of Committee Work Plan**

The Assistant Director – Finance gave a verbal update regarding the work plan.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Chairman advised that items to be considered for the workplan should be emailed to the Chairman and the Director of Finance.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the verbal update be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 14 July 2021 at 6.30 pm

#### Present:

Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman)  
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Bishop  
Councillor Sandy Dallimore  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Perran Moon  
Councillor Adam Nell  
Councillor Les Sibley  
Councillor Bryn Williams

#### Substitute Members:

Councillor Andrew Beere (In place of Councillor Matt Hodgson)

#### Also Present:

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning  
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council  
Adrian Colwell, Oxfordshire Plan Team  
Andrew Thompson, Oxfordshire Plan Team

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Matt Hodgson

#### Officers:

Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
David Peckford, Assistant Director: Planning and Development  
Sharon Whiting, Principal Planning Policy Officer  
Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader  
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Appointment of Chairman for the remainder of the 2021-2022 Municipal Year**

**Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Tom Wallis be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2021-2022 Municipal Year.

5 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2021-2022 Municipal Year (if required)**

The Vice-Chairman having been appointed Chairman at the prior agenda item, it was necessary to appoint a new Vice-Chairman.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Doug Webb be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2021-2022 Municipal Year.

6 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 16 March and 19 May 2021 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

7 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's Announcements.

8 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

9 **Monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring Report**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Finance and Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes which summarised the Council's Performance, Risk and Finance monitoring position at the end of March 2021.

In presenting the report the Performance Team Leader focused on the performance elements of the report.

41 business plan measures were monitored during the year, and 28 were reporting as green at the year end in March. The indicators reporting red were mainly due to the impact of covid-19, including usage of district leisure centres and homes improved through enforcement action.

Regarding performance highlights, the Performance Team Leader explained that 1545 planning applications had been processed whilst officers worked at home, and 5.4 million bins had been emptied with an additional 7,067 tonnes of waste collected.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Performance Team Leader explained that the additional waste collected had been as a result of more houses in the district, and people spending more time at home due to the pandemic.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the performance aspects of the monthly Performance, Risk and Finance Monitoring report be noted.

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### **The Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 Consultation Document**

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Director – Planning and Development regarding the Oxfordshire Plan Regulation 18 Part 2 consultation document, which set out a range of planning policy options and a series of spatial strategy options for Oxfordshire. When complete the Oxfordshire Plan would provide a high-level spatial planning framework for Oxfordshire up to 2050 and would be a statutory Local Plan.

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 was being jointly produced by the five local planning authorities in Oxfordshire, working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and OxLEP. A central officer team were preparing the plan, and each of the five councils (four districts and city) needed to formally approve each stage of preparation.

The Committee was requested to provide observations on the consultation document before it was considered by Executive at a special meeting on 19 July. If approved by all five councils, consultation would start on 30 July 2021.

In presenting the draft Executive report, the Assistant Director – Planning and Development explained that an additional recommendation had been added requesting adoption of the updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which would also form part of the public consultation.

In addition to the SCI, changes would also need to be made to page 120 of the consultation document, specifically the housing figures quoted in the two tables.

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development explained that the consultation considered various options for growth, but specific locations and details would need to be developed after the consultation. Specific locations and numbers of houses were not known at this stage.

The Committee thanked the officers from the central unit for their work in putting together the documents, however it was agreed that due to the volume

of published information it had not been possible to read through everything in sufficient detail prior to the meeting.

The Director Law and Governance clarified that the papers had been published in line with statutory legal timescales but acknowledged the concerns of the Committee.

With regard to the timetable for the adoption of the plan, the Committee felt it was important for all Members to be kept informed of the outcome of the Regulation 18 consultation and subsequent work on the draft plan and Regulation 19 consultation, and requested a clear communications strategy to ensure ongoing involvement of members prior to anticipated adoption of the plan in 2023.

The Committee requested an understanding as to how the plan would address the estimated annual cost to the economy in relation to Mental Health, as detailed in the table in paragraph 248 of the consultation document.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Assistant Director – Planning and Development explained that the term ‘Affordable housing’ did also refer to social rented housing. Adrian Colwell from the Oxfordshire Plan Team added that as the plan would cover a 30 year timeframe, it was important to strike the right balance in wording and not be too specific at this stage. Definitions could change over time, and lead to the plan becoming out of date very quickly.

Mr Colwell advised the Committee that as further work would need to be completed once the Regulation 18 consultation had taken place, they could request that later stages of the plan focus on affordable homes.

With regard to how the consultation document had been laid out, the Committee commented that the preferred and alternative options could be confusing, and requested clarity over how the final document would be presented.

In relation to Policy Option 01: Sustainable Design and Construction, the Committee felt that caveats such as ‘this policy would be subject to viability and deliverability testing’ should be removed, as they could be used as ‘get outs’ by land owners/developers later in the plan process.

The Committee also expressed concern in relation to the Oxfordshire Growth Need Assessment and the accuracy of the figures, and commented that trajectory graphs throughout the documents all portrayed straight lines, with no apparent reference to natural growth and the possibility of growth decreasing.

Finally in relation to Green Belt references in Policy Option 10, the Committee felt that the messages were mixed. In some cases there seemed to be a suggestion of making it easier to build on Green Belt, and in others discussion was around enhancing Green Belt.

## Resolved

- (1) That the draft Executive report and the Regulation 18 (Part 2) consultation document for public consultation be noted
- (2) That the following observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be reported to the Executive:
  - a. A feeling of discontent amongst the Committee regarding the volume of information relating to the consultation, and the length of time Members had to go through it (acknowledging that it was within statutory legal timescales for agenda publication but not ideal). The Committee felt unable to sufficiently scrutinise the documentation in the available time.
  - b. A request for a clear communications strategy, and for progress updates and further involvement of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee specifically, and more general briefings for all Members during the course of work on the plan following the Regulation 18 consultation
  - c. A request for an understanding as to how the plan will address the estimated annual cost to the economy in relation to Mental Health, as detailed in the table in paragraph 248 of the consultation document (Committee supplement part 1, page 87).
  - d. A request for the later stages of the Plan process to focus on the Affordable Homes aspect, specifically social housing and social rented housing, acknowledging the explanation from the Assistant Director – Planning and Development that in planning terms ‘affordable’ does include social rented housing.
  - e. A request for clarity regarding how the preferred and alternative options will be presented in the final consultation document, to avoid possible confusion for those reading it.
  - f. In relation to Policy Option 01: Sustainable Design and Construction, the removal of caveats such as ‘this policy would be subject to viability and deliverability testing’ (Committee supplement part 1, page 52) as they could be used as ‘get outs’ by land owners/developers later in the plan process
  - g. Concerns around the Oxfordshire Growth Needs Assessment documents and the accuracy of the figures
  - h. Natural growth is not referred to through the document, trajectory graphs provided are all straight lines and do not seem to take account for natural growth to decrease as well as increase.

- i. Within Policy Option 10 – Green Belt (Paragraph 258, Committee supplement 1 page 89), National Planning Policy Framework guidelines are frequently referred to but the messages are mixed. In some cases there seems to be a suggestion of making it easier to build on Green Belt, and in others discussion is around enhancing Green Belt.

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## **Work Programme 2021-22**

The Committee considered the indicative work programme for 2021-22, and received an update from officers on potential topics for review that had been raised at the informal work programme planning session held on 30 June.

With regard to the subject of teenage mental health raised by Councillor Perran Moon, the Democratic and Elections officer advised the Committee that information had been requested from the Wellbeing team, but not received yet. A further update would be given at the next meeting.

In response to the subject of homelessness within the LGBT community raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore, the Housing Options and Allocations Manager had advised that one of the questions asked in a homeless case was regarding sexual orientation, and customers can choose their response.

There was no specific data collected on anyone who may be made homeless due to their sexual orientation. This would be picked up as part of casework, but there was no specific question asked for officers to draw down a report.

With regard to possible next steps for the subject, Councillor Dallimore requested that the Housing Options and Allocations Manager be asked why the information was not specifically requested, and if it could be in future.

Councillor Sandy Dallimore had raised the subject of the relationship between the District Council and parishes. The Healthy Communities Manager had provided Councillor Dallimore with a brief overview of the work of the team. Twice a year the council hosted a conference style parish liaison meeting to consult, inform and inspire parishes, and give them the opportunity to network with each other and senior council members and officers. Since July 2020 the meeting had been virtual, due to coronavirus restrictions.

The Healthy Communities Manager had also advised that as a result of the first coronavirus lockdown, a fortnightly parish bulletin had been started, which included items such as grant opportunities, consultations and changes to government guidance that would be useful for parishes.

Councillor Dallimore was due to meet the Healthy Communities Manager to discuss the issue further, and would feedback to the next meeting of the Committee.

With regard to the Management Companies subject that had been on the topic list since May 2019, the Committee agreed to remove it from the list as a possible subject for scrutiny.

The Governance and Elections Manager explained that a new appendix had been added to the work programme, which provided an update on items previously considered by the Committee. The new appendix would be updated and submitted to each meeting.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the verbal updates regarding suggested topics for scrutiny be noted.
- (2) That the Management Companies subject be removed from the topic sheet.
- (3) That the update on items previously submitted to Overview and Scrutiny be noted.
- (4) That the indicative work programme for 2021-2022 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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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, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 7 September 2021 at 6.30 pm

#### Present:

Councillor Tom Wallis (Chairman)  
Councillor Douglas Webb (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Mike Bishop  
Councillor Sandy Dallimore  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor David Hughes  
Councillor Perran Moon  
Councillor Adam Nell

#### Substitute Members:

Councillor John Broad (In place of Councillor Ian Middleton)

#### Also Present:

Councillor Lucinda Wing, Lead Member for Housing (for Items 6 and 7)  
Councillor Barry Wood, Leader of the Council

#### Apologies for absence:

Councillor Simon Holland  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Les Sibley  
Councillor Bryn Williams

#### Officers:

Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer  
Vicki Jessop, Interim Assistant Director Housing and Social Care  
Commissioning (for Items 6 and 7)  
Paul France, Senior Housing Officer (for Item 6)  
Frances Evans, Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader (for Item 7)  
Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Lesley Farrell, Democratic and Elections Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

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### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

13 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

15 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

16 **Changes to Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme**

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning relating to proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme prior to approval being sought from Executive at their 1 November 2021 meeting.

The Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning explained that the scheme set out how the Council processes and prioritises applications for social housing, including the criteria for determining priority based on housing need. The allocation of social rented housing is the responsibility of Cherwell District Council (CDC) as the housing authority, with alternative options such as shared ownership going through help to buy agents.

The CDC Housing Allocation Scheme had last been reviewed and amended in November 2018. The Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning explained that it was important to review the scheme regularly, to ensure it reflected housing needs in the district as well as taking account of updated statutory guidance and regulatory changes.

The proposed changes offered clarity to wording and definitions in a number of sections of the scheme, as well as adding a new section that dealt with the potential implications of Oxford's unmet housing need.

In response to questions from the Committee the Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning clarified that housing applicants with a disability were assessed in terms of how their specific housing needs were affected by their particular disability.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme be supported

## **Draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement 2021 (Cherwell District Council)**

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Assistant Director, Housing and Social Care Commissioning which outlined changes to the Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement and sought comments from the Committee as part of the consultation process.

The Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader gave a presentation detailing the proposed changes, which included reflecting changes to legislation that had occurred since the statement was initially adopted in 2017 and reflecting the council's ambition to deliver more social rented housing.

The Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader explained that the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to promote the consultation to all Registered Providers (RPs) in the district. Two consultation workshops had been held with RPs, in addition the Housing Team had promoted the consultation to stakeholders, voluntary and community groups.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader explained that current residents had not directly been encouraged to respond to the consultation, but the consultation was a full public consultation and advertised in line with the council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

The Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader then asked the Committee to respond to three questions via the Slido online polling app. The questions were:

- To what extent do you agree/disagree that more social rented homes should be provided?
- To what extent do you agree/disagree that the vision and aims of the new draft strategy are the right one for Cherwell District?
- What challenges might be we in delivering this new strategy for Cherwell District?

Once the consultation period had finished the strategy would be amended to take into account consultation responses, including the comments from the Committee members who had answered the Slido poll questions. The updated strategy would be presented to Executive for approval at their 1 November 2021 meeting.

The Committee were invited to make comments which would be included in the consultation feedback to the Executive.

Further to the earlier question regarding current residents being invited to take part in the consultation, the Committee requested that for future consultations, consideration be given to a mechanism for ensuring residents directly affected by a consultation are contacted and encouraged to respond.

The Committee also requested that a continuous effort be made to improve the quality and standard of housing in the district.

In response to queries from the Committee regarding the type of housing available, the Housing Strategy and Development Team Leader encouraged the Committee to advise parish councils in their wards that a 'parish needs survey' could be undertaken to determine future housing requirements in each area.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the draft Tenancy Strategy and Affordability Statement be noted
- (2) That the following comments be submitted to the Executive:
  - a. For all future consultations, a mechanism for ensuring residents directly affected by a consultation are contacted and encouraged to respond
  - b. A continuous effort is required to improve quality and standard of housing in the district

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### **Constitution Review 2021**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer regarding the process for the 2021 annual review of the Constitution.

The Constitution was last reviewed in 2020, and one of the conclusions agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 14 December 2020 was that an annual review should be undertaken in autumn each year, with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee making recommendations to Council on any proposed changes.

The report as set out proposed an approach to the 2021 review, including the establishment of an informal cross-party working group, comprising 5 Conservative members, 2 Labour members, 1 Progressive Oxfordshire and 1 Independent Group member.

Councillor Perran Moon advised the Committee that following careful consideration and discussion within the Group, the Labour Group would not participate in the 2021 review if the working group was established as proposed. The reason for the Labour Group's decision was because the 2020 review process had resulted in some recommendations that had cross-party agreement at the working group stage, when considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resulting in different recommendations going forward to Full Council.

Councillor John Broad echoed the comments of Councillor Moon with regards to the changes made by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to recommendations of the working group, and advised that the Progressive Oxfordshire Group would also not take part in the 2021 review if the working group was constituted in the same way.

Noting the comments put forward on behalf of the two Groups the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that there was a legal responsibility for the Constitution to be kept under review to ensure it remains fit for purpose. The preferred way of doing so would be via discussions with a cross party working group. If the Committee did not resolve to establish a working group as set out in the report, it would still be possible for the legal requirement to be met via an officer led process, but this was not the preferred approach. The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee that Full Council was the body responsible for adopting and changing the Council's Constitution and any changes would therefore need to be agreed by Full Council.

The Chairman of the Committee explained that he would like to move forward with a consensus view from Committee and establish the working group as set out.

The Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that as well as establishing the working group, she would be willing to liaise with Political Group Leaders to agree the practical steps and process for the review to allay their concerns arising from the 2020 review.

It was proposed by Councillor Tom Wallis and seconded by Councillor Sandy Dallimore that the recommendations as set out in the report be approved, with an additional recommendation reflecting the suggestion from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer regarding liaising with Political Group Leaders about the 2021 review process.

In the course of debate it was proposed by Councillor Perran Moon and seconded by Councillor Matt Hodgson that a recorded vote be taken. Having been proposed and seconded, a recorded vote was duly taken and Members voted as follows:

Councillor John Broad	For
Councillor Matt Hodgson	Against
Councillor Perran Moon	Against
Councillor Douglas Webb	For
Councillor Mike Bishop	For
Councillor Sandy Dallimore	For
Councillor Adam Nell	For
Councillor David Hughes	For
Councillor Tom Wallis	For

**Resolved**

- (1) That the process for the 2021 annual review of the Constitution be endorsed.
- (2) That the establishment of a cross-party Constitution Review working group be agreed.
- (3) That the Director Law and Governance be requested to liaise with Political Group Leaders to agree the practical steps and process for the review.

## 19 **Work Programme 2021-22**

The Committee considered its work programme for 2021-22, and received an update from officers on potential topics for review that had been raised at the informal work programme planning session held on 30 June.

With regard to the subject of teenage mental health raised by Councillor Perran Moon, the Wellbeing Team had provided information regarding the Oxfordshire mental health prevention concordat, and the Mental Health Prevention Framework which was in place for the period 2020 to 2023.

In addition to the concordat and framework, the Wellbeing Team had advised that the Youth Activators, in partnership with Oxfordshire Mind and Resilient Young Minds, had been delivering a mental health programme in schools. Work so far had been in primary schools but would be expanded to older age groups shortly.

In response to the information provided, Councillor Moon advised that he would still like more information to be provided, particularly in relation to the work of the Youth Activators and the mental health programme. His particular concern was the 13-19 age group due to the increased case load that had been reported nationally.

With regard to the subject of homelessness within the LGBT community raised by Councillor Sandy Dallimore, officers had gone back to the Housing Options and Allocations Manager and asked if it would be possible to record additional information when processing homelessness applications. The Housing Options and Allocations Manager had advised that it was not possible, as the questions asked related to information that had to be recorded annually for statistical returns to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

In response to the further information provided, Councillor Dallimore agreed that the subject should be removed from the topic list for the moment as no further work could be undertaken at this stage.

With regard to the subject of the relationship between the District Council and the parishes, Councillor Dallimore advised that he had now spoken to the Healthy Communities Manager and gathered some more information on what

was proving to be a complex subject. Councillor Dallimore therefore requested agreement of the Committee to set-up a working group of approximately five or six members, to investigate how the district council and parish councils interact and what might be possible in terms of improving the relationship, the flow of information and communication.

The Committee agreed that this was a good subject to investigate, and agreed that a working group should be established. Democratic and Elections Officers advised they would work with Councillor Dallimore and the working group to draft a scoping document for the review, which would be brought back to the October meeting of the Committee for consideration and approval.

Regarding potential new subjects for discussion, Councillor Dallimore proposed that a separate working group be established to look at the subject of member training and education.

Councillor Dallimore proposed that the working group should include the five new Members elected in May 2021, with one or two longer serving Members. The working group would gather views and feedback on the induction process and the ongoing process of member training, to identify any areas for development or improvement in the future.

The Committee supported the suggested topic and agreed to establish a working group. Democratic and Elections Officers advised they would work with Councillor Dallimore and the working group to draft a scoping document for the review, which would be brought back to the October meeting of the Committee for consideration and approval.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the verbal updates regarding suggested topics for scrutiny be noted.
- (2) That further information be sought and circulated to all Members regarding the Mental Health programme being delivered by CDC Youth Activators and an update and presentation be scheduled for a future Committee meeting.
- (3) That the homelessness in the LGBT Community subject be removed from the topic sheet.
- (4) That a working group be established to consider the subject of the relationship between Cherwell District Council and the Cherwell parishes.
- (5) That a working group be established to look at the subject of Member Training and Education.
- (6) That the update on items previously submitted to Overview and Scrutiny be noted.

- (7) That subject to the inclusion of scoping documents from the working groups being considered at the 19 October meeting, the indicative work programme for 2021-2022 be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.17 pm

Chairman:

Date: