



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Briefing Paper

Subject: Scrutiny Working Groups update

Climate Action Scrutiny Working Group

Membership:

Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Isabel Creed
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray

Executive Member:

Councillor Tom Becket – as Portfolio Holder for Greener Communities

Service Lead Officers:

Jo Miskin - Climate Action Manager, Environmental Services
Hitesh Mahawar - Climate Change Programme Manager

Scrutiny Support Officers:

Michael Carr - Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet - Democratic and Elections Officer.

Update

The Climate Action Scrutiny Working Group met on 12 December 2024, when the Climate Change Programme Manager provided evidence to the Scrutiny Working Group on the context to the Climate Change Programme and the Council's operational delivery, including -

- Governance Arrangements
- Strategy and Action Plan
- CDC and District Emissions
- Recent Achievements
- Challenges in Reaching Net Zero
- Next Steps.

The Scrutiny Working Group considered the climate impact of planning applications being listed within the planning presentation and how that would fit within the Climate Action Plan, as well as the solar strategy for the district. It was noted that the Solar Strategy was in draft and an update on this was requested for the next meeting of the working group.



Members also considered the electrification of Council fleet vehicles and the financial impact versus the environmental impact, and it was noted that a study into electric vehicles was in progress.

The next meeting is on 31 January 2025, when officers from the planning department have been invited to the next meeting to discuss the climate impact of planning applications, along with expert witness Dr Marco Raugei - Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Fellow in Mechanical Engineering, Oxford Brookes University. Members have also requested a presentation on the Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP).

The Food Insecurity Scrutiny Working Group

Membership:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel - Chair
Councillor Phil Chapman – Vice Chair
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke.

Executive Member:

Councillor Rob Pattenden –Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
Councillor Ian Middleton – Member Champion for Food

Service Lead Officers:

Nicola Riley - Assistant Director of Wellbeing and Housing Services
Edward Frape - Senior Healthy Place Shaping Officer
Libby Knox - Food and Wellbeing Officer

Scrutiny Support Officers:

Michael Carr - Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet - Democratic and Elections Officer.

Update

Members of the Food Insecurity Scrutiny Working Group undertook a site visit to see the Banbury Larder on 17th December 2024. The Banbury Larder is one of the [Community Larders run by SOFEA](#).

The Members of the Working Group were able to see first hand the work going on there, speaking with staff, volunteers, people who use the Community Larder and get a better understanding of the impact that it has.

Community Larders are designed to provide a social hub for vulnerable people experiencing different challenges and hardships, so that those facing multiple vulnerabilities can have a



space to come together, make new friends and build confidence all by harnessing the convening power of food. Unlike a food bank, which provides temporary, means-tested assistance, the Community Larders also provide 'wrap-around' services such as money management and mental health support.

The next meeting of the Working Group is on 23rd January 2025, when the Working Group will hear oral evidence from Alison Drake - Bicester Foodbank, as well as an update on the relevant community programmes from Council officers.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scrutiny Working Group

Membership:

Councillor Barry Wood
Councillor Lynne Parsons
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Dr Chuckwudi Okeke

(This Scrutiny Working Group is made up of members of the Personnel Committee and members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

Executive Member:

Councillor Chris Brant – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services

Service Lead Officers:

Claire Cox – Assistant Director Human Resources
Nicola Riley - Assistant Director Housing and Wellbeing

Scrutiny Support Officers:

Michael Carr - Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet - Democratic and Elections Officer.

Update

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scrutiny Working Group met on 11 December 2024, when it reviewed the Council's the Including Everyone Framework stagey and received an Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Performance report for Quarter 2.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources introduced the Council's equalities diversity and inclusion strategy titled *Including Everyone* Framework to provide a brief overview of the framework. Members were informed that the framework had not been updated in four years and was due to be updated. This provided an opportunity for the Scrutiny Working Group to feed into the development of the new framework, through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any report and recommendations that might be put forward.



It was agreed that the current framework be circulated to members of the Scrutiny Working Group for further consideration and to inform consideration of any possible recommendations from the Scrutiny Members on the development of the future strategy arising from the scrutiny inquiry.

The Scrutiny Working Group is also considering examples from other local authorities to help inform the scrutiny inquiry and the development of the new EDI Frameworks,

The Performance Team Leader provided a brief overview of the performance and progress to date, highlighting key indicators that were behind schedule. The Working Group considered the metrics and indicators used and whether these were the right metrics to measure delivery of the EDI, and it was noted that this was a possible area for further consideration and a possible area for scrutiny recommendations in the development of a new EDI framework and performance framework. It was noted, in particular, that the KPIs had no timeframe or delivery target date / review date.

It was noted the KPI EDI1.03.01 “Work with partners to promote an ethnically diverse representation at our voluntary sector forum” was listed as “slightly behind schedule”. It was also noted the KPI EDI1.05.01 “Collaborate with partner organisations to involve young people in volunteering activities and engage with them to undertake active participation in their local communities” was highlighted “red” and “Behind schedule”.

It was agreed that KPIs should be “SMART” and measurable. It was also noted that the inclusion of milestones with implementation dates and outputs would be useful to help measure and evaluate implementation progress. KPIs that measure outcomes for the organization or residents may also be more useful to measure impact.

As part of the topic of community engagement it was agreed officers would reach out to councillors for suggestions of community groups that may be unknown to the council to enable officers to engage better and report back to the Scrutiny Working Group.

It was agreed that the performance report would be requested to be considered again at the next meeting, with key questions sent to officers in advance to provide a written response.

The date of the next meeting was noted as 30th January 2025.

Planning Application Appeals Scrutiny Working Group

Membership:

All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Member:

Councillor Jean Conway - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management



Service Lead Officers:

David Peckford - Assistant Director - Planning and Development
Christina Cherry - Planning Policy Team Leader

Scrutiny Support Officers:

Michael Carr - Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet - Democratic and Elections Officer.

Update

This is a one meeting spotlight review taking place on 25 February 2025 to consider planning application appeals, having particular regard to planning application refusals overturned at appeal (Planning Committee and delegated decisions), the reasons for cost implications and lessons learned.

Resettlement and Migration Scrutiny Working Group

Membership:

All Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Executive Member:

Councillor Nick Cotter - Portfolio Holder for Housing

Service Lead Officers:

Nicola Riley - Assistant Director of Wellbeing and Housing Services
Katie Thrussell - Head of Resettlement Service

Scrutiny Support Officers:

Michael Carr - Interim Principal Officer - Scrutiny and Democratic Lead
Martyn Surfleet - Democratic and Elections Officer.

Update

This issue is now being considered through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 28 January 2025.

**Completed by: Michael Carr, Interim Principal Officer – Scrutiny & Democratic Lead
Date: 20 January 2025**

Presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 28 January 2025