

Recommendation Tracker
Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Due to Cabinet	In progress	Complete
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
15-Nov-24	Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to VCS Organisations	1. That the Council ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.	Vic Kurzeja; Michael Smedley	Accepted See response in item 9
		2. That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with		Accepted See response in item 9

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KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.		
		3. That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.		Accepted See response in item 9

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15-Nov-24	Commercial Strategy Progress Update	1. That the Council develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings		Accepted See response in item 9
		2. That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money		Accepted See response in item 9

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		will be used more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.		
		3. That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.		Partially Accepted See response in item 9
		4. That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.		Accepted See response in item 9
		5. That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board		Rejected See response in item 9

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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
17-Jan-25	Updated Funding and Budget Proposals 2025/26 – 2027/28	1. That the increases for school meals are stepped over a longer period	Lorna Baxter	Rejected See response in item 9
		2. That the Council budget report provides members with i) the impacts of school meal price rises for parents with two children getting school meals every day over a year (assuming that the full increase in costs are passed on by schools), and ii) and the anticipated savings to the Council made by increasing school meal prices		Partially Accepted See response in item 9

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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		3. That the Council budget report includes a benchmark figure for the cost-avoidance accruing from the Council's proposed flood-prevention investment		Accepted See response in item 9
		4. That the Council budget report provides members with the financial impact to the Council of increasing DIY waste charges by 4.2%		Partially Accepted See response in item 9
		5. That the Council makes clear the framework through which projects will be prioritised for active travel		Partially Accepted See response in item 9

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		spending, including consideration of the impact on numbers of people walking and cycling as well as the additional benefits of schemes being complementary as part of a network.		

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Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead	Update/response
There are no outstanding action items.				

**Recommendation Update Tracker
Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

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The recommendation update tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress accepted recommendations. The tracker is updated with recommendations accepted by Cabinet. Once a recommendation has been updated, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker. If the recommendation will be update in the form of a separate item, it will be shaded yellow.

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
19-Mar-24	Capital Asset Disposal Process	That the Council conveys information about potential asset disposals to opposition parties at an earlier point and consults with them over potential uses and helpful community contacts.	Michael Smedley	<p>As part of the current disposal process key decisions are sought for significant sales.</p> <p>Ahead of any disposal officers will consult with the local member, and where appropriate other members, to explore the possible uses of buildings prior to their disposal. The final decision on disposal will remain with the Cabinet advised by officers.</p>
19-Mar-24	Employee Engagement Survey	That the Cabinet monitors the actions and progress made in relation to the measures requested of the Head of Paid Service.	Cherie Cuthbertson	<p>That the Head of Paid Service, along with other relevant officers, undertake the following:</p> <p>a) That the staff engagement survey is repeated, in full, on an annual basis – This has been the case, but a project has started to</p>

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				<p>investigate an alternative approach to employee engagement surveys which will allow the council to deliver quarterly pulse surveys for greater accuracy and frequency of data.</p> <p>b) That fuller comparative data is requested from Best Companies of the Council's performance against other local authorities and report against this data accordingly in future – Yes, a NET promotor has been generated through the past survey, this is then compared to other local authorities. This will continue with the new engagement approach, as well as work with the Local Government Employee Engagement Index to obtain greater comparisons to local authorities nationally.</p> <p>That future staff engagement surveys are able to differentiate between responses from full and part time staff – Yes this will be the case.</p> <p>d) That questions be added to future surveys over whether staff consider their work to be of value, and whether they feel it is valued. – Yes, this will be included.</p> <p>e) That work is undertaken to convey the inherent value of staff's work, and the value the organisation places on it. – The new approach to the survey will provide opportunities to gather and assess this information. In addition, there is work underway to review the current approach to</p>

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				<p>recognition within the organisation. Both the engagement survey and recognition projects will work interdependently.</p> <p>f) That the Council develops measures to understand whether it is achieving its intention to become less hierarchical and more of a matrix-working environment – Yes, the new approach to quarterly pulse surveys will allow the organisation to tailor engagement questions and report more accurately and frequently, providing greater data and insights into how successful the shift to matrix working is progressing.</p> <p>g) That mechanisms are developed to support and develop psychological safety, whereby junior staff feel enabled to challenge senior staff respectfully or pose alternative courses of action in safety without fear of repercussions and that an additional question is added to the survey relating to this - Yes, the survey will champion anonymity to support psychological safety and provide opportunities for feedback and challenge. This additional question can be added. There are additional strands of work within the Our People and Culture strategy which are focused on supporting psychologically safe culture.</p> <p>h) That solutions are developed to address the twin needs of moving to a hybrid working model whilst also ensuring that relationships are developed between more junior and senior</p>

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				<p>staff – The survey can be used to target specific questions to provide insights for data-based decision making for solutions, however the agile policy is currently being reviewed as this is a key concern to address within it.</p> <p>i) That means are developed to allow work which does not deliver value to be dropped, rather than consistently adding to expectations on staff - The introduction of new technologies, combined with shifting the culture to support new ways of working is enabling the assessment of task value and prioritisation activity.</p> <p>j) That stronger steps are taken to clarify expectations of staff members around working outside standard office hours – This feedback has been taken on board and will be included in the agile policy review.</p> <p>k) That further work is taken to understand and unlock the skills which the staff members believe are not being utilised – Work has commenced to develop a skills assessment matrix assessing the skills, knowledge and experience of colleagues. In addition, the continuation of the organisational re-design focuses on aligning business needs with colleague skills.</p>
19-Mar-24	Social Value	1. That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.	Ian Dyson	There is no change to the previously stated practice using the prioritisation and weighting of TOMs. The development of a wider organisational policy is ongoing to ensure a consistent approach

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				<p>to social value across all decision-making processes. This will be a priority when the new Head of Commercial and Procurement joins the council later this year.</p> <p>There has been training undertaken with contract managers where social value is included in their contracts, focussed on their role in managing and monitoring performance against social value commitments.</p> <p><u>Original response update:</u> In the reporting year 2023-24, OCC's suppliers contributed £1,442,894.95 of social value delivery against their commitments.</p>
		<p>2. That the Council investigates how it might develop a more bespoke model of social value, to include consideration of how it might support cooperatives to tender for contracts, and selecting TOMs which truly drive climate action benefits.</p>		<p>A review of the Social Value Policy and operating model is scheduled to be undertaken during 2025/26 as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. Through the procurement process efforts to engage with all levels of suppliers, including cooperatives, are ongoing to ensure diverse sourcing options. The current social value operating model, through the supplier Social Value Portal, includes climate action as a priority in its delivery plan criteria. This supports suppliers to focus on environmental sustainability in their social value submissions and to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of their activities.</p> <p><u>Original response update:</u> In the reporting year 2023-24, the Jobs Theme saw the highest level of social value delivery, amounting</p>

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				to £1,361,223.22. This was primarily achieved through direct local employment, with 38.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions recorded under NT1 and its sub-measures. Additionally, there was a broader commitment to supporting local skills, particularly for young people, through 18 hours of school visits, 6 weeks of training opportunities, and 193.5 hours dedicated to supporting young people into work.
		3. That the Council investigates how it can undertake greater pre-engagement with SMEs and cooperatives to understand the issues faced in securing contracts		Through the procurement process the council continues to promote SME engagement and holds regular Buyer Days to address the challenges faced by SMEs and cooperatives in securing contracts.
		4. That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.		A full review of the procurement social value policy and operating model is scheduled to be undertaken during 2025/26 as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. An annual review of the current policy is being undertaken in consultation with services, to consider if changes are required for 2025/26.
19-Mar-24	City Centre Accommodation Strategy	That the Council produces a vision document and plan, detailing its understanding of 'social value' and 'regeneration', its priorities for place shaping, the opportunities it sees, and the steps it will take to see those priorities realised throughout the implementation of the strategy as part of the report for the Cabinet's next decision on the sales of either County Hall or Speedwell House.	Vic Kurzeja	Updated during Place OSC on 05 February 2025
		That the Council has a clear understanding over potential future consolidation of current staff buildings into Speedwell House when determining its floorspace needs.		Updated during Place OSC on 05 February 2025

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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15-Oct-24	Draft Customer Engagement Strategy	1. That the Council reviews within the Customer Experience Strategy - and more widely - its use of the word 'customers' as the preferred term to refer to those in receipt of collectively paid-for public services	Louise Tustian	The definition of 'customer' in the strategy has not been updated. The new head of customer experience is planning to do a refresh of the strategy in light of new data, digital and technology strategies and if required, the definition of customer can be discussed. However, the current, broad definition of customer has allowed the strategy to drive delivery of improvements in a number of areas.
		2. That the Council takes further measures to increase public understanding of its financial limitations		As per the above, the Customer Experience strategy has retained the page outlining the challenge of balancing an increased demand for services with a reducing budget. The budget simulator mentioned above was published again for 2025/26 and details on views can be shared once available.
		3. That the Council works more closely with district/city and town/parish councils to reduce for residents the impact of the complexity of multiple layers of local authority		Since publishing, the Improving Customer Experience transformation programme have been in regular contact with colleagues in Oxford City Council who have a similar, citizen engagement strategy. This has led to interesting conversations around how the services could improve sharing of information and redirection of customers. However, more work is needed on working with other district and town councils to develop the same relationship. The automatic redirection of customers who require district or town council services is something on the workplan for wider roll out of the Zoom platform. We will continue to work closely with the policy

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				team who produced the Oxfordshire Councils charter.
		4. That the Council identifies the steps it can reasonably take to extend improvements in service standards to subcontractors.		The above update still applies. The remit of the customer experience strategy has, so far, been focused on services that interact directly with customers and our internal customer processes. While it is accepted that there are improvements that can be made to the way the council works with subcontractors, this is something that will be supported by the new customer experience service rather than led by it.
		5. That the Council monitors the effectiveness of its complaints-handling as part of its Customer Experience Strategy.		The customer complaints and feedback process is a continual work of progress, as we continue to learn from the outcomes. A new case management system will be developed that will allow the team to better track and monitor performance of timeliness and quality of responses to complaints
		6. That the Council includes within its profiles of user groups those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and those for whom English is a second or other language.		As above. A wider piece of work between the customer experience service area, IT colleagues and the data service is looking to leverage the increased use of case management to build a holistic view of the customers who use council services. This will allow us to better focus engagement with the user groups mentioned above.
17-Dec-24	Community Wealth Building and Wider Social Value	That the Council works with the Local Government Association to open discussion with central government to clarify s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972.	Vic Kurzeja	Update due April
		That the Council consults on its draft update of the CAT policy with Locality Groups.		Update due April