

Notice of a Meeting

**Performance & Corporate Services Overview &
Scrutiny Committee**

Friday, 11 March 2022 at 10.00 am

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

These proceedings are open to the public

Please note If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#)

In line with current Government advice, those attending the meeting are asked to consider wearing a face-covering. Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection. In line with current Government advice, those attending the meeting in person are asked to consider wearing a face-covering.

Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9 am on the day preceding the published date of the meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on Monday 7 March 2022. Requests to speak should be sent to khalid.ahmed@oxfordshire.gov.uk .

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

Membership

Chair - Councillor Eddie Reeves

Deputy Chair - Councillor Michael O'Connor

<i>Councillors:</i>	Brad Baines	Andrew Gant	David Rouane
	Ian Corkin	Damian Haywood	
	Donna Ford	Ian Middleton	

Notes: *Date of next meeting: 17 June 2022*

For more information about this Committee please contact:	
Chair	- Councillor Eddie Reeves Email: eddie.reeves@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer	- Khalid Ahmed, Tel: 07990 368048 Email: khalid.ahmed@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Stephen Chandler
Interim Chief Executive

March 2022

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

All corporate services and budget scrutiny, including customer services, property, assets, procurement, finance, corporate policy matters such as consultation and public engagement; takes a lead role in scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working day before the date of the meeting.**

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents.

These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 4 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declaration of Interests - see guidance note on the back page**
3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 and to receive information arising from them.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**
5. **Outcomes Framework and Performance Reporting (Pages 9 - 14)**

The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to

i. **Consider the outcomes framework and performance management arrangements set out in this report and its annexes, and provide any comments, suggestions or feedback to Cabinet.**

ii. **Note the progress to date developing a public performance portal with a planned go-live in the second quarter of the year and consider whether the committee would like a demonstration of the portal.**

6. **Customer Service Centre - delivery model and plans for transformation presentation**

Report to Follow.

7. **Complaints Management Improvement Project (Pages 15 - 20)**

During 2021, as part of the customer service transformation programme, complaints management was taken on by the 'voice of the customer' team within the customer service function. The council's complaints management process is managed centrally with a focus on the statutory process in adults and children's services, the central team liaising with the service to investigate and resolve complaints.

Following a review of the complaints management function in November 2021, a number of performance issues and associated risks relating to the operation of the corporate and statutory complaints service were identified. These issues related to backlogs, data quality and reporting, resources and workflow and case management.

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider the content of the briefing note with a view to suggestions for performance and development within this function.

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact democracy@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 17 January 2022 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members Councillor Eddie Reeves – in the Chair
(Remotely):

Councillor Michael O'Connor (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Brad Baines
Councillor Ian Corkin
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Andrew Gant
Councillor Damian Haywood
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Jane Murphy (Substituting for Councillor Ian Corkin)
Councillor David Rouane

Cabinet Members in Attendance
(Remotely): Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE
Councillor Duncan Enright
Councillor Neil Fawcett
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Pete Sudbury

Other Members in Attendance
(Remotely) Councillor David Bartholomew

Officers (Remotely): Lorna Baxter (Director of Finance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law and Governance), Michael Carr (Law and Governance), Stephen Chandler (Corporate Director of Adult and Housing), Tim Chapple (Treasury Manager), Belinda Dimmock-Smith (Service Manager - Executive Support), Kevin Gordon (Director for Childrens Services), Karen Fuller (Deputy Director Adult Social Care), Kerry Middleton (Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement), Claire Taylor (Corporate Director of Customers and Organisational Development), Jodie Townsend (Law and Governance), Louise Tustian (Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes) Kathy Wilcox (Head of Financial Strategy), Susannah Wintersgill (Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications) and Khalid Ahmed (Law and Governance).

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

8/21 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

9/21 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2022/23: CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES: STRATEGIC PLAN - PROPOSED PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES: BUDGET CONSULTATION FINDINGS
(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee was asked to consider and comment on the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy, capital programme and supporting strategies, as part of the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's overall budget proposals for 2022-2023.

Members were provided with the following documents:

- Budget consultation 2022/23 findings and the draft strategic plan with accompanying engagement feedback on the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities
- The Capital and Investment Strategy which incorporated: -
 - I. The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23
 - II. The Investment Strategy for Property Investment 2022/23
 - III. The Property Strategy
 - IV. Proposed additions to the Capital Programme
 - V. The Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2031/32.

The Committee was informed that on 18 January 2022, the Cabinet would consider the proposed revenue budget for 2022/23, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 alongside the Capital and Investment Strategy. In addition, Cabinet would be asked to consider a Budget Scrutiny report and recommendations from this committee, to be finalised and agreed later on the agenda for this meeting.

Councillor Calum Miller - Cabinet Member for Finance attended the meeting and introduced the item. The Committee was informed that the Capital and Investment Strategy was an overarching strategy that brings together the strategies that drive the Capital Programme, the Investment Strategy and the Treasury Management Strategy.

There were seven strands to the proposed Council Capital Strategy:-

- Pupil Place Plan
- Major Infrastructure
- Highways and Structural Maintenance

- Property and Estates
- ICT Strategy
- Passported Funds
- Vehicles and Equipment.

Points Raised by the Committee

- In relation to borrowing to cover contingency funds, Members were informed that when to borrow was down to the judgement of the Treasury Management advisers. Borrowing would not take place in advance unless advised to do so.
- In the Capital Programme Investment Overview, Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme, the extra £6m additional funding from the Council was relative to other parties. Savings would be achieved as a result of improvements to bus journey times expected to be achieved through the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- The Capital requirement was increasing with changes to the cost of borrowing requirements and increases in interest rates.
- Property and Estates: Concern was expressed at the costs of invest to save and the return on the investment.
- Reference was made to the contingency of £50m and a Member expressed concern at the inability to scrutinise this figure due to a lack of financial detail.
- In relation to contingencies and the budgeted £50m, the Cabinet Member informed the Committee that this was based on future risks and pressures and had to be estimated.
- In response to a question regarding SEND provision in the capital programme, Members were informed that there was capital provision for two new SEND schools and to improve facilities in mainstream schools. The future plans for SEND provision were currently out for consultation.
- Regarding the governance of the capital programme, this would be more robust in the future to ensure better scrutiny.

Strategic Plan

The Committee was provided with a document which set out the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's vision which was to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county.

Points Raised by the Committee

- In relation to tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire, there should be reference to economic inequality, the unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in the county. This shaped social outcomes.
- There was no mention of gender-based inequalities.
- In relation to the priority of inequalities, there should be reference to developing plans by working with partners.
- What schemes were there for tackling food poverty, deprivation etc.
- Decarbonisation strategy should be linked into the all the strategies and there should be a timescale. There should be a rapid decarbonisation with ambitious targets.

- Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit; – There should be inclusion of supply chains and dealing with waste.
- LED lighting; – lower environmental impact but problems with the impact on nature, particularly birds. This would be passed to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment for his information.
- In relation to the priority support carers and the social care system; there was no reference to community provision of care. The Council should look to actively shape care within the community.
- There was a lack of measurability of the strategic priorities. Members were informed that targets were being developed with officers and these would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting before the final Strategic Plan was approved by Cabinet in March. **[ACTION: Corporate Director – Customers, Organisational Development and Resources]**
- On the strategic priority of work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit; this seemed to be encouraging people to start up their own businesses in the care sector, rather than working in the public sector.
- Some of the language used in the strategy was contradictory, with a mismatch between commitments and objectives and areas of focus. This required further investigation.
- Areas of focus required updating annually.

Property Strategy

Highways - Part 6 - Moving Vehicle Violations – Cameras; – Concern was expressed at the time period for this capital provision (£2.7m) and how many cameras it equated to. Members were informed that this was for Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras and equated to the purchasing cost. The information on the number of cameras would be provided to Members. **[ACTION: Director of Finance]**

Connecting Oxford (Development Budget); - £300,000 allocated for this year. A request was made for further information on this allocation. **[ACTION: Director of Finance]**

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Members present for their attendance at the meeting and for their engagement in the budget process. Officers were asked for next year's budget consultation, that informal briefing meetings take place with the Committee to ensure a more efficient and structured approach to the process.

At 11.55am, the meeting adjourned to enable the Chair to summarise the points raised by the Committee, and the meeting reconvened at 12.10pm.

The Chair summarised the discussions of the Committee and recommendations were suggested to be forwarded to Cabinet for their consideration and executive response to.

It was moved that it be recommended that Cabinet ensure that the corporate Strategic Plan provides greater detail on the environmental ambitions at a strategic level and fundamental measures, and the changes to be made to the Council's

approach to tackling climate emergencies in future. Additionally, that Cabinet consider mainstreaming its approach to climate change so that it becomes part of the Council's policy framework and a mandatory consideration as part of setting the Council's budget proposals.

RESOLVED –

(1) That the following documents be noted:

- **Budget consultation 2022/23 findings (Section 2.1) and the draft strategic plan (Section 2.2) with accompanying engagement feedback on the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance's priorities (Section 2.3)**
- **The Capital and Investment Strategy (Section 5.1), incorporating**
 - i. **The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/23 (Section 5.2)**
 - ii. **The Investment Strategy for Property Investment 2022/23 (Section 5.3)**
 - iii. **The Property Strategy (Section 5.4)**
- **Proposed additions to the Capital Programme (Section 5.5)**
- **The Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2031/32 (Section 5.6).**

(2) That the following observations and suggestions be noted:

- **The need to mainstream Climate Change in the Council's approach so that it becomes a consideration in all policy and budget proposals, including the Capital Programme policy and strategy.**
- **The Council should commit to maximise social value in procurement and purchasing approach.**
- **The Council should ensure the integration of the decarbonisation strategy into the Council's capital strategies.**
- **The Council should include economic inequalities in the equalities analysis and with greater emphasis on gender inequality.**
- **The Council should give due consideration to the use and allocation of any unused borrowing, the use of capital resources to ensure improved SEND provision, the impact of capital programmes on the natural environment, including bird wildlife, and the LED roll-out.**
- **There should be greater clarity on the use and allocation of any unused borrowing and on the risks presented to the Council (including Covid-19 inflationary pressures, ongoing Council budgetary processes and increasing borrowing costs and interest rates) as regards its assessment of the deliverability of capital projects.**
- **Use appropriate capital resources to ensure improved SEND provision.**
- **Consider introducing a 'Wellbeing of Future Generations' policy. This could potentially draw inspiration from the pioneering Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as part of its strategic ambition to "put the impact on... future generations at the heart of what we do", and to mainstream these considerations and apply them proactively as part of policy and budget design.**

(3) That Cabinet ensure that the corporate Strategic Plan provides greater detail on the environmental ambitions at a strategic level and fundamental measures, and the changes to be made to the Council's

approach to tackling climate emergencies in future. Additionally, that Cabinet consider mainstreaming its approach to climate change so that it becomes part of the Council's policy framework and a mandatory consideration as part of setting the Council's budget proposals.

10/21 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of the draft consultation and engagement strategy 2022 - 2025, and was asked to provide any comments, suggestions or scrutiny recommendations on the draft Strategy, to the Cabinet meeting on 15th February 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services introduced the report and informed Members that the strategy set out a new approach to consultation and engagement at Oxfordshire County Council, putting residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong active and inclusive communities.

There were two key aims: - i) to engage with and listen to residents and other partners in a more active and inclusive way and ii) to widen the Council's reach so that diverse communities and audiences could be listened to.

Reference was made to a detailed action plan, which had been developed, with clear targets and measures, to ensure that progress was on track and there was a continued commitment to two-way engagement with residents. This would be updated on an annual basis

Points Raised by the Committee

- The list of people consulted should include the working class and those who had English as a second language. In response, Members were informed that community groups would be consulted and those in the community who were seldom heard.
- There should be a reflective statement in the strategy whereby reference could be made to the areas in the past, the Council have been criticised on, and the improvements which would be made to the Council's consultation and engagement with residents.
- There were many consultations which operated within a timeframe, on a particular topic, could consideration be given to a general consultation which took place throughout the year asking residents for comments/ views on the Council. Reference was made to 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' which gave residents an opportunity to comment on the Council and to receive feedback.
- There needed to be a cultural shift on consultation, as sometimes consultation took place, for the sake of consultation. Residents could be asked for their views on what they wanted the Council to do. A framework on consultation needed to be built into the planning process of projects.
- Local Members should be included prior to consultations to ensure local expertise and knowledge was utilised and to keep local Members informed. Additionally, local Members should be included in the design of consultations.

- Discussion took place on the term “customer” and Members were informed that this was the preferred term of officers from customer services for residents
- The target of 10% respondents to consultations was the guide on best practise for engagement with residents and Members felt this should be more ambitious.
- The timelines for improvements to be made were ambitious but the Communications Team had been allocated extra resource to achieve the improvements.

The Chair informed Members that the comments and recommendations of this Committee would be referred to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting of 15 February 2022 and that Cabinet would be asked to respond to the Committee.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet be asked to consider the following:

(i) due consideration be given to the role of consultation and engagement as a key part of an ongoing democratic process that involves listening to residents, not solely in order to canvass views and determine preferences, but also to ensure that their voices are heard as citizens,

(ii) that an indicative protocol should be produced to indicate which strategies will be deployed when and

(iii) that, as an addendum to an indicative protocol, a specific, detailed strategy be drawn up to include Active Travel schemes, given their effect on local areas. Such a strategy should include consideration of:

- **the capacity of the Council to deliver representative polling in line with the British Polling Council standards, as set out in the updated Department for Transport Network Management Duty Guidance,**
- **consideration of the stakeholders that the DfT recommends Councils should engage with at an early stage of active travel projects in the Network Management Duty Guidance,**
- **how active travel plans should be co-designed with local residents and businesses,**
- **transparent data collection and sharing with the public for active travel projects with open data standards,**
- **how live project updates are communicated in a timely and accurate manner to the public,**
- **how to ensure consultations are secure and robust against potential interference,**
- **whether the existing digital tools the County Council has access to have the required technical features to deliver the heightened communication, consultation, engagement and digital security needs, as set out above,**
- **how best to engage with local councillors, bearing in mind their specific knowledge of a local area.**

11/21 BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

(Agenda No. 7)

Members were provided with this Committee’s draft Budget Scrutiny Report which had been developed following the consideration of the Cabinet Budget Proposals at this Committee’s meeting on 10 December 2021.

The Committee was asked to consider and agree the draft Budget Scrutiny Report at Appendix A for submission to Cabinet on 18th January 2022 and to Full Council at its budget setting meeting on 8th February 2022.

RESOLVED –That the Budget Scrutiny Report be agreed and submitted to Cabinet and Council for consideration.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 200

Divisions Affected - ALL

**Performance and Corporate Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

11 MARCH 2022

**Oxfordshire Strategic Plan
A greener, fairer and healthier county**

OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK AND PERFORMANCE REPORTING

**Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational
Development and Resources**

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - i. Consider the outcomes framework and performance management arrangements set out in this report and its annexes, and provide any comments, suggestions or feedback to Cabinet.
 - ii. Note the progress to date developing a public performance portal with a planned go-live in the second quarter of the year and consider whether the committee would like a demonstration of the portal.

Executive Summary

2. In July 2021 the Cabinet published a set of nine strategic priorities and commissioned an engagement programme to develop a new corporate strategy for the Council.
3. A full round of public and stakeholder engagement took place between September and November 2021 and the nine strategic priorities were refined and developed. The plan sets out commitments and key areas of focus by which to deliver the vision 'Leading positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county'. Following this work, and the budget consultation during December and January, the new corporate strategy was adopted by Council on 8th February 2022.

4. The feedback from the public and stakeholder engagement has been presented to and considered by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
5. The outcomes framework represents a high-level overview of the council's priorities. It does not represent all metrics, measures and targets that the councils collects or reports upon. The strategic plan is also underpinned by a series of thematic and service strategies, and service areas produce their own service or business plans and operational measures. Collectively these documents comprise the county council's performance management framework.
6. Cabinet have requested that officers prepare a document setting out this strategic framework which clearly demonstrates how key plans and strategies support and underpin the wider delivery of the council's strategic plan. This document will be publicly available and may also be a useful resource in terms of scrutiny planning. This piece of work will necessarily require a revision and development of targets and measures in line with policy development and review during the year.

Performance Reporting Schedule

7. Over the last three years the county council has sought to improve the quality of its performance reporting. With a particular focus on aligning financial, performance and risk reporting. This approach will continue, and the performance and insight team are currently working on the development of a performance portal what will directly publish performance metrics on the council's website for easy public access. The portal is in in test mode currently and should be ready for launch in the second quarter of the (financial) year.
8. Following a review of the budget and performance reporting cycle it is recommended that we move to a bi-monthly reporting arrangement this will replace the monthly reporting schedule. The cycle is set out below

Table 1:

Reporting period	Publication of performance report
April – May	July
June – July	September
August – September	November
October – November	January
December – January	March

9. The rationale for this change is twofold. The performance reports are comprehensive, and the proposed reporting schedule will allow greater space in the council's forward plan and agenda for consideration of the reports, in addition the move to bi-monthly will also enable a clearer picture of period-to-period change which is often minor on a month-by-month basis. This schedule

leaves space in December and February to look forward as part of the budget and target setting process.

10. In addition to the bi-monthly budget, performance and risk reports the Cabinet will consider the annual report in June alongside the budget outturn. The Cabinet will also continue to receive quarterly workforce reports and twice-yearly updates with regards to the delivery of the council's climate action plan and equalities, diversity and inclusion strategy. Scrutiny committees may wish to consider these documents.
11. It should be noted that performance measures will continue to be collected and collated to reflect the timeframe that is most appropriate, this ranges from daily to annually depending on the measure. Performance management, the activity by which service performance and progress is monitoring and action taken to ensure performance remains on track, remains a daily activity and a core role of managers and team leaders. Issues and risks to delivery will be escalated at the point they occur via exception reporting, likewise Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and the Audit and Governance Committee may seek to consider elements of delivery and performance of strategies or services as part of their work planning.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

12. The strategic plan and outcomes framework provide a high-level picture of the County Council's priorities. The outcomes framework sets out a combination of targets and progress measures by which the Council will report progress and update throughout the year. The strategic plan is supported by thematic strategies, policy documents and service plans. During the course of the year many of these documents will be reviewed and updated. A list of key thematic strategies is included within Annex 2, the committee may wish to consider this in relation to future work programme items.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The framework reflects the council's budget set out and agreed in February 2022.

Comments checked by:

Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance lorna.baxter@oxfordhsire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Staff Implications

15. There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

16. The corporate strategy and outcomes framework includes actions and objectives to address equalities, diversity and inclusion priorities. Many of these are captured within these documents but a wider set of activities are also embedded in strategies and action plans that underpin the corporate strategy. To this end a progress update on 'Including Everyone' the council's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan will be given twice yearly. On a quarterly basis the council's workforce review will also cover actions relating to equalities, diversity and inclusion within the workforce.

Sustainability Implications

17. The corporate strategy and outcomes framework includes a cross cutting commitment to sustainability and tackling climate change. There are a wide range of actions and objectives to take climate action and reach net zero and these are captured at the higher level within the corporate strategy and outcomes framework and in a wider set of activities that are set out in the climate strategy and supporting documents. embedded in strategies and action plans that underpin the corporate strategy. To this end a full progress update on climate action will be given twice yearly in addition to progress monitoring against the outcomes framework.

Risk Management

18. There are no immediate risks associated with or arising from this paper. However, it should be noted that the council's strategic plan, priorities and outcomes framework will be reflected in the council's strategic risk register, alongside other corporate risks. This will be reported alongside budget financial and corporate strategy updates.

Consultations

19. A full programme of public engagement and consultation took place in the development of the corporate strategy, priorities and the budget. The outcomes have been reported at scrutiny and in a series of Member briefings. In addition, a new consultation and engagement strategy has been agreed setting out the ambition of the council to further develop its approach to consultation. As such

the ongoing development of the corporate strategy and outcomes framework will reflect engagement with residents and stakeholders.

CLAIRE TAYLOR, Corporate Director – Customers, Organisational Development and Resources.

Annex: Annex 1 Corporate Strategy
Annex 2 Outcomes framework

Background papers: Summary of stakeholder engagement (link below)
[Section 2.3 Engagement feedback on the strategic priorities.pdf](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/section-23-engagement-feedback-on-the-strategic-priorities.pdf)
[\(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Contact Officer: Claire Taylor, Corporate Director – Customers,
Organisational Development and Resources,
claire.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2022

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Divisions Affected - ALL

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 MARCH 2022

Customer Service

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - i. Consider the content of the briefing note with a view to suggestions for performance and development within this function.

Complaints Management Briefing Note

2. During 2021, as part of the customer service transformation programme, complaints management was taken on by the 'voice of the customer' team within the customer service function. The council's complaints management process is managed centrally with a focus on the statutory process in adults and children's services, the central team liaising with the service to investigate and resolve complaints.
3. Following a review of the complaints management function in November 2021, a number of performance issues and associated risks relating to the operation of the corporate and statutory complaints service were identified. These issues related to backlogs, data quality and reporting, resources and workflow and case management.

4. At the beginning of December, the position was:

Service	Total	Of which (Status)	
		Unallocated / not started	Open cases (with complaints team)
Adults	89	42	47
Children's	116	51	65
Corporate	65	21	44
Other	12	0	12
Total	282	114	168

('Other' included cases that were escalated such as debt cases)

5. A Complaints Recovery Plan was introduced, and additional resource was allocated to form a backlog team within the voice of the customer team in the Customer Service Centre.
6. After a process of data cleansing and collation of information, a total of 73 cases were identified as being unallocated and were assigned to Recovery Team. Specific recovery meetings with the key directorates were held where each complaint was analysed and agreed actions taken.
7. By 14th January 2022, the position from the original backlog was:

Service	Total	Of which (Status)	
		Open cases with service	Open cases with complaints team
Adults	3	3	0
Children's	20	0	20
Corp	3	0	3
Total	26	3	23

8. By 2nd March 2022, the position from the original backlog was:

Service	Total	Of which (Status)	
		Open cases with service	Open cases with complaints team
Adults	0	0	0
Children's	10	10	0
Corporate	0	0	0
Total	10	10	0

Current position

9. At the same time as dealing with the backlog we were also operating a support team to deal with new complaints.
10. The number of complaints received 30th Nov 2021-28th Feb 2022 by type is set out below. One of the key findings from this work has been that 30% of complaint contacts do not fall into the Complaints process and have been processed as a Service Request or signposted to the appropriate organisation.

	Total	Open with Services	Open cases with complaints team	Complete cases (responses sent)	Closed – other reason (withdrawn, duplicate, out of time)
Statutory Adults	85	25	1	50	9
Statutory Children Stage 1s	79	39	2	26	12
Corporate Complaints	99	29	1	46	23
Service Requests / Not OCC complaint	116	-	-	-	116
Totals	379	93	4	122	160

Resourcing

11. A considerable amount of effort and capacity has gone into the recovery plan since mid-November. Internally, this has involved support from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Legal and Governance, HR Recruitment and IT. This is in addition to the redeployment of Customer Experience staff and intense recruitment of colleagues within the Complaints team itself in the Customer Service Centre. We have also employed temporary resource at a senior complaints officer level and at a junior level plus administrative support and assorted support from other management posts within the service.

Training

12. Training of the new starters in the Complaints team has been successful and the training materials have been agreed with external companies such as Customer Contact Association and the IGO training is planned to be delivered in March 2022. Further development of training is ongoing to ensure documented processes and material. The service managers have also engaged with other Local Authorities to seek best practices and guidelines. This has proved insightful.

Process redesign

13. A revised way of working was introduced on 24th January, where we are transitioning to new ways of working including management workflow and data quality.
14. We have introduced a triage process so that when any complaint is received, it is triaged within 24-48hrs and then allocated to a Complaint Officer in the voice of the customer team to acknowledge to the customer and send out to the services.

System solution

15. Working with ICT colleagues, a number of systems (both currently used for other modules within OCC/CDC and off the shelf providers) have been investigated and procurement of a new system has been undertaken. We are currently in the process of configuring this for our needs and working with relevant stakeholders.
16. Phase one of this system is due to be operational in early April. This will transition the complaints team from the current manual way of working of a spreadsheet run operations to a more focussed case management solution and further enhance data and reporting.

Summary

17. This briefing note sets out the results of a successful performance intervention following a review of a service function where performance metrics were highlighting issues, especially relating to increasing complaints backlogs.
18. Colleagues in the complaints team and service areas who have undertaken targeted work to identify and address the issues should be commended for the efforts they have put in to effectively address the backlog and put in place system and process improvements.
19. The approach taken highlights the role of the 'voice of the customer' team in driving performance improvement, it is worth noting that the establishment of this team and its function and capability resulted from the wider service redesign of the customer service centre undertaken during 2019/20.

Financial Implications

20. There are no financial implications arising from this briefing note.
Comments checked by:
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Legal Implications

21. There are no legal implications arising from this briefing note.

Comments checked by:

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Staff Implications

22. There are no staffing implications arising from this briefing note.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

23. There are no specific equality and inclusion implications arising from this briefing note.

Sustainability Implications

24. Not applicable to the content of this report.

Risk Management

25. Complaints management is reflected within operational risk registers.

Consultations

26. Not applicable to the content of the report.

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Background papers: N/A

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March 2022

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