



**Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday, 22 September 2021**

ADDENDA

7. Work Programme 2021/22

Appendix 1 to the work programme is attached.

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Appendix 1 – Place OSC Work Programme Suggestions

Suggestions received within scope of Committee:

Topic Suggestion	Responding to the covid pandemic – OCC as an organisation
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	

Public Interest	Should be significant
Impact	countywide
Council Performance	----
Context	As an organisation need to know what went well and the lessons that need to be learnt.

Topic Suggestion	Climate change and the school building programme
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	

Public Interest	OCC has built a number of schools and the DfE has also built schools in Oxfordshire
Impact	New schools have a long lifespan and if not built to forward looking standards will need rebuilt at extra cost at some point in their lifespan as standards change
Council Performance	To compare with other local authorities
Context	Housing growth means need to build more schools

Topic Suggestion	Parking provisions
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What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
As a local councillor that has lived in Banbury Ruscote since 1975 knows that when Bretch hill was built in the 1960s to 1970s that developers never built parking allocated for the cars in 2021. Road like Dover avenue and Bretch hill and Prescott close have cars parked on grass verges, pavement even double yellow line . As residents who work for building have a work van and car many other constituents Have trade vehicles. The B5 Stagecoach service runs up Bretch hill so cyclists have a difficult time. CPZ cost residents a fee and would not guarantee parkingand LTN would simply clogging up Estates like Bretch Hill Whilst CPZ would be unpopular . A park strategy Is needed with funding to make safety improvements	
Public Interest	Every time labour councillor knocks or survey Banbury Ruscote people complained about park and consequential Safety concerns
Impact	Local environmental safety residence Grass verges being destroyed over winter
Council Performance	In my opinion a full parking situation survey is needed in wards like Banbury with a view that one parking plan that takes in residents view and does not impose plans For instance ITN and fully takes in residents view
Context	There has to be a fully funded plan for parking that can discussion with highways officers local elected councillors and most importantly local residents

Topic Suggestion	Drain/gulley/grip maintenance and improvement programme
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
Aside from potholes, I get more emails on this topic than anything else. Flooding is an ongoing issue in rural areas.	
Public Interest	Self-evident.
Impact	
Council Performance	The standard council response to complaints about the frequency of clearing/cleaning/maintaining is that the schedule is fixed but exceptional problems can be dealt with on a contingency basis. Improvement suggestions are normally dismissed on the basis of cost/budget.
Context	This is an unglamorous topic that does not get the attention it deserves. Increased frequency of clearing/cleaning/maintaining needs to be evaluated and a comprehensive drainage improvement programme for rural areas needs to be developed.
Topic Suggestion	Relationship between county and district planning authorities with respect to Highways matters and member involvement.
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	

There is insufficient consultation by officers with members in relation to Highways planning application matters. Even on major applications, all there is, is a member's comment section on the 'OCC Single Response' to the district – and this is generally just a late add-on, not considered by OCC officers when formulating their response.

Furthermore, there is the ongoing issue of OCC always stating that it is merely a 'consultee' and all relevant planning decisions are made by districts, yet districts all say that they will not go against a Highways recommendation as this would be challenged at any appeal.

Topic Suggestion	Meeting CO2 reduction targets in the transport system in Oxfordshire
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
Tackling the Climate Crisis is the top stated priority of the council. Land transport is the highest CO2-emitting sector in the UK and in Oxfordshire. Therefore, in the task to reduce the county's climate footprint, transport should be the highest priority area for the council. As cars are the highest contributor to CO2 in the transport system, there needs to be a focus on reducing car use and enabling access via other modes of transport, as set out in the England's Economic Heartland Transport strategy. There are two main elements to this work. The first part is in reducing the car-dependency of our transport system as it currently is, shifting transport behaviour away from single-occupancy private car use to walking, cycling and public transport. The second part is in ensuring that new developments are built in a way which are not car-dependent and do not add more cars to the system. This therefore brings into play public transport, highways infrastructure and road/parking pricing policies.	
Public Interest	Very high - tackling the climate crisis is hugely important to the public. Reducing car use also has the huge potential benefits for residents of better health and wellbeing, revitalised city centres, cleaner air and closer communities
Impact	Very high - there are many transport and planning projects that will be decided upon and delivered this term
Council Performance	The council and Oxfordshire as a whole are not meeting our climate targets currently. There is a huge amount of work to do and the timescales are urgent
Context	The Paris Agreement and (soon to be) COP26, The England's Economic Heartland Strategy: Connecting People, Transforming Journeys

Topic Suggestion	Engaging fairly with the public, focusing on procedural, information and interpersonal fairness
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	

The ways in which policy is created has impacts on public trust in local government and the acceptability and compliance with that policy. Especially in regards to policies that impact on behaviour and are important for meeting our climate targets (e.g. transport), it is very important that the public perceives our processes to be fair. Important factors in this procedural fairness are:

- (1) Accuracy. Procedures are based on accurate and valid information
- (2) Bias suppression. Procedures are not affected by personal bias, preconception or self-interest
- (3) Consistency. Procedures are consistently applied across people and time
- (4) Correctability. Procedures provide opportunities to modify or reverse decisions such as allowing appeals and grievances to be considered
- (5) Ethicality. Procedures are congruent with the moral and ethical values held by the people affected
- (6) Representativeness. Procedures are representative in reflecting the basic concerns of the people affected

Also important for fairness perceptions are informational fairness (people's expectation that they should receive adequate information on and explanation of the process and its outcomes) and interpersonal fairness (people's expectation that they should be treated in a respectful, honest and interpersonally sensitive manner).

As a council (the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance) we should be aiming to maximise the perceptions of fairness amongst the public in our decision-making. In practical terms this means meeting the above criteria in all ways the council currently interacts with the public, namely through online engagement/consultation websites and through in-person workshops. This should also extend out to more participatory decision-making processes such as Citizens' Assemblies and Citizens' Juries

Listening to our communities was the top manifesto pledge in the Oxfordshire Labour manifesto and so this area needs a high level of attention

Public Interest	Very high, especially in procedural fairness and public participation in democracy and local decision-making
Impact	Very high, if there is successful high levels of public inclusion and perceived fairness
Council Performance	The council has an unfortunate reputation for not listening to local people and not being good at consultation and engagement. This would tackle this negative reputation and breathe new life into our local politics and government in the eyes of the public.
Context	Public trust and satisfaction in politics and government is low generally and this would help to improve these. There are also potentially transformative decisions to be made and resident buy-in and inclusion in this is essential

Topic Suggestion	Active Travel & Modal Shift
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What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
<p>Reflecting the recommendations made by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change of the importance of decarbonisation to limit global warming to below an average of 1.5°C, studies have suggested that the UK would need to halve current carbon emissions in the 2020s including an 80% reduction in emissions from transportation. Following the reduction of the carbon intensity of energy production, transportation is now the largest producer of carbon emissions in the UK. Slashing carbon intensive transportation in line with these targets and promoting modal shift from private and shared cars to more sustainable and greener alternatives such as active travel, buses and electric rail are essential if we are to avert the perilous effects of climate breakdown. These objectives are in line with value statement adopted by the new administration and the County Council's own target of creating a net-zero carbon county by 2040. This topic is embedded within planning for projects including: Connecting Oxford, the Zero-Emission Zone, Active Travel Fund Bids and Mini-Holland Scheme Expression of Interest, as well as strategic documents including the Street Design Guide, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and Oxfordshire Climate Action Framework.</p>	
Public Interest	Climate issues are a primary concern for Oxfordshire Residents and are a key campaigning point for numerous local charities, campaign groups and organisations.
Impact	The climate crisis is the largest issue facing the future of the County, the UK and the wider world. With transportation being the largest contributor to carbon emissions in the UK and the County Council having direct responsibility and significant powers over transportation, action on promoting active travel and a sustainable modal shift are critical to tackling the potential effects of climate change.
Council Performance	The Council's ambition in planning and delivery in regard to Active Travel & Modal Shift infrastructure has been significantly criticised by members and external organisations. The public are hoping this will change with a new administration and potential change of approach. Scrutiny Committees have an essential role in making sure policy matches the requirements of the moment.
Context	See above

Topic Suggestion	Consultation Practices & Participatory Decision Making
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
<p>As a local authority, Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for making significant decisions affecting local people and their services. In such a role, as a democratic organisation, as well as the participation of members, the Council relies on year-round public engagement to shape decision making and ensure decisions ideally reflect the needs of local areas and take account of the views of local residents. This direct engagement of the public currently undertaken solely via consultations has faced severe and consistent criticism by members, by local organisations and members of the public. Furthermore, making the County Council more transparent with an improved public consultation process, perhaps with the addition of more participatory decision making methods, is a key commitment from the new Fair Deal Alliance Administration.</p>	

Public Interest	Residents have consistently expressed to me their concern that the County Council seems incredibly distant and disinterested in the views of local residents or involving them in decision making. We owe it to these motivated and engaged residents to change this.
Impact	Improved consultations and adopting more participatory and representative methods of decision making the Council has the potential to significantly improve its reputation as an organisation with the communities it serves.
Council Performance	The council is considered underperforming in this regard, as such the new administration has committed to significantly overhauling current practices. Scrutiny has a significant role in ensuring this change happens effectively.
Context	See above.

Topic Suggestion	Connecting Oxford
What is the reasoning for your suggestion?	
Connecting Oxford is an ambitious project to reshape transportation in Oxford, speed up journeys and support active travel by tackling congestion and providing infrastructure to prioritise cycling, walking and public transport over private car journeys. The plan amounts to a significant reorganisation of the transportation system within Oxford City, but also embeds its planning about its strategic connections to the wider County. As such it amounts to one of the largest projects currently being undertaken by the County Council and the largest for potentially many decades. It is a one-off change to positively transform transportation within the County Capital, and thus its scale, importance and new direction necessitates the involvement of Scrutiny from the earliest stage.	
Public Interest	Connecting Oxford, by virtue of its scale, will involve plans to significantly overhaul the transportation system in Oxford City. As such it is of significant importance to those living, working and visiting the City. The economic, employment and cultural hub of Oxford means that public interest and implications stretch beyond the City itself.
Impact	Connecting Oxford if delivered in appropriate ambition could be the single largest infrastructure project delivered by the County Council in many decades.
Council Performance	Policy in the development stage, but the significance of the project requires plans to be of the highest quality and in line with international best practice to achieve the desired objectives. Involvement of scrutiny at the earliest stages, is the best way to ensure this.
Context	Connecting Oxford forms a critical part of County transportation strategy and is a key part of plans to improve local public transport, active travel infrastructure as well as support modal shift and encourage healthy communities.