**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
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## *Notice of a Meeting*

# Strategy & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
## Thursday, 26 May 2011 at 10.00 am
## County Hall

**Membership**

| *Councillors:* | Norman Bolster | Tim Hallchurch MBE | Chip Sherwood |
| | Liz Brighouse OBE | Hilary Hibbert-Biles | Dr Peter Skolar |
| | Nick Carter | A.M. Lovatt | David Wilmshurst |
| | Jean Fooks | | |

**Notes:**

*Date of next meeting: 21 July 2011*

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**What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**
- Corporate and community leadership; corporate strategies; regional issues
- Local strategic partnerships and District Council liaison
- Social inclusion & equality; services for members
- Finance; procurement; property
- Culture change and customer focus; human resources; communications strategy; information and communications technology
- The elections and appointments functions of the Democracy & Organisation Committee
- The functions of the Pension Fund Committee

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**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 on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

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**For more information about this Committee please contact:**

| Chairman | - | Councillor Melinda Tilley |
| | | E.Mail: melinda.tilley@oxfordshire.gov.uk |
| Committee Officer | - | *Claire Phillips, Tel: (01865) 323967* |
| | | *claire.phillips@oxfordshire.gov.uk* |

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

May 2011

**About the County Council**
The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 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
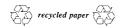
Scrutiny is NOT about:
- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

**What does this Committee do?**
The Committee meets up to 6 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

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**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.**

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*recycled paper*

# AGENDA

1. **Election of the Chairman for the 2011/12 Council Year**

2. **Election of the Deputy Chairman for the 2011/12 Council Year**

3. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

4. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**

5. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 4)

   To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2011 (**SYP5**) and to note for information any matters arising on them.

6. **Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**

7. **Director's Update**
   **10.10**

   The Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer will give a verbal update on key issues.

   ## SCRUTINY MATTERS

8. **Pension Fund Committee - Question & Answer session**
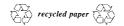   **10.25**

   Cllr David Harvey, Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee and Sean Collins, Assistant Head of Oxfordshire Customer Services - Financial Services will attend for a question and answer session following the introductory presentation at the previous meeting.

   Members of the committee should submit questions for Cllr Harvey and Mr Collins in advance of the meeting.

9. **Local Enterprise Partnership Update** (Pages 5 - 8)
   **10.50**

   Report (**SYP9**) of the Head of Sustainable Development on the progress of the development of the Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership and work programme.

   Contact officer: Martin Tugwell, Head of Sustainable Development

## 10. Annual Update of Local Code of Corporate Governance (Pages 9 - 36)
**11.10**

The Strategy and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has within its Terms of Reference responsibility for corporate governance.  The views of the Committee are therefore sought on the annual update of the Local Code of Corporate Governance (**SYP10**). The proposed changes to the Code are highlighted in the Annex to the report, for ease of reference.

The Head of Law & Governance will present the updated code.

## 11. Members' Communication Protocol (Pages 37 - 40)
**11.20**

At the meeting of this Committee in March 2010, members agreed that the Council's communication with members of the council should be a priority. The Committee further commented in July 2010 that such communications should be consistent with the protocols agreed by the Council in 2009/10.  The Committee wished to ensure that compliance with the protocols was taking place and therefore intended to consider the matter periodically. The Head of Law & Governance will present this report (**SYP11**) summarising the current position and invites the Committee to consider experiences and progress to date.

## BUSINESS PLANNING

## 12. Business Management (Pages 41 - 42)
**11.30**

The committee will be given an overview presentation on the council's Business Strategy and corporate approach to business management for 2011/12. Attached is an overview paper on the Business Strategy (**SYP12**).
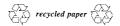
Contact officer: Alexandra Bailey, Senior Policy Manager

## 13. Forward Plan
**11.45**

The Committee is asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan on which it may wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision is taken, together with details of what it thinks could be achieved by looking at any item and propose any other relevant items for the committee to consider.

## 11.55 Close of Meeting

# Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

**The duty to declare …**
You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):
(i)      any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
(ii)     your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

**Whose interests are included …**
"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions.  For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

**When and what to declare …**
The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".
In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

**Taking part if you have an interest …**
Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

**"Prejudicial" interests …**
A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

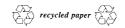**What to do if your interest is prejudicial …**
If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

**Exceptions …**
There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one.  These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

**Seeking Advice …**
It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

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# STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 17 March 2011 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.30

**Present:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Voting Members:** | Councillor Melinda Tilley – in the Chair |
| | Councillor Nick Carter (Deputy Chairman)<br>Councillor Jean Fooks<br>Councillor Norman Bolster<br>Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE<br>Councillor Patrick Greene (in place of Councillor Dr Peter Skolar)<br>Councillor Peter Jones<br>Councillor A.M. Lovatt<br>Councillor David Wilmshurst |
| **Other Members in Attendance:** | Councillor David Robertson, Deputy Leader<br>Councillor Jim Couchman, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property |
| **Officers:** | |
| Whole of meeting | Stephen Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive<br>Lorna Baxter, Acting Head of Corporate Finance<br>Claire Phillips, Senior Performance and Review Office |

| Agenda Item | Officer Attending |
|---|---|
| 7 | Sean Collins, Assistant Head of Oxfordshire Customer Services - Financial Services |
| 8,9,10 | Claire Moore, Strategic Partnerships Manager |

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.*

## 9/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Dr Peter Skolar (Councillor Patrick Greene substituting) and Councillor Chip Sherwood.

## 10/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE
(Agenda No. 2)

Cllr Fooks noted that she is a member of the Pension Fund committee.

Cllr Brighouse noted that she is a member of the Oxfordshire Pension Fund.

**11/11  MINUTES**
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011 were approved and signed subject to the amendment that Cllr Wilmshurst was present at the meeting

**12/11  DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**
(Agenda No. 5)

Stephen Capaldi, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy) updated the committee on arrangements for design and printing publications. Positive progress continues in reducing the amount of printed publications and the associated costs which has been achieved through implementation of a tight approval process.

Stephen Capaldi gave background to the manager assessment process that is ongoing. All senior managers are undergoing a series of assessments and interviews as part of the business strategy commitment to reduce the overall management of the organisation. It was noted that one of the products of the assessments will be that each manager will have a personal development plan. Skills that will be important are those for working in political and partnership environments. A number of services have already or are in the process of restructuring.

Stephen Capaldi gave an overview of the locality review meetings with councillors. All have had initial meetings and will be considering bids to the Big Society Fund. He also noted that discussions are ongoing with the voluntary sector about Big Society.

It was noted that the final payment of Local Area Agreement reward grant funding has just been paid and that the Public Service Board will be discussing how to allocate it.

**13/11  FINANCIAL MONITORING OVERVIEW 2010/11**
(Agenda No. 6)

The financial monitoring report was noted including the underspending on two large projects in ICT and efforts to increase road maintenance before year end.

The committee requested to have more detail about borrowing and debt reduction in the financial monitoring report at a future meeting.

**14/11  OXFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND**
(Agenda No. 7)

The committee received a presentation on the Oxfordshire Pension Fund and the role and functions of the Pension Fund Committee.

It was agreed to invite the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee to the next meeting to discuss the committee's approach to managing the fund.

**15/11 BIG SOCIETY FRAMEWORK**
(Agenda No. 8)

Claire Moore gave an introduction to the council's approach to the Big Society and key areas of focus. It was noted that there is a lot of work ongoing which supports the Big Society.

It was noted that small and medium enterprises play an important role in communities.

The differences between rural and urban communities was emphasised and the lack of town and parish councils in urban areas making it more complex.

**16/11 LOCALISM BILL**
(Agenda No. 9)

The briefing paper was noted and the current passage of the bill through parliament. The committee expressed interest in exploring elements of the bill further when more details are available. Particular areas of interest noted were around predetermination and neighbourhood planning.

**17/11 UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**
(Agenda No. 10)

The partnership update report was noted and it was AGREED not to include district Local Strategic Partnerships and the stronger communities alliance in future reports as these are not partnerships whose activities are driven by the county council.

It was AGREED to review progress of the Local Enterprise Partnership as it develops.

**18/11 FORWARD PLAN**
(Agenda No. 11)

Items proposed for future consideration by the committee include borrowing and debt reduction; activity of the Pension Fund committee and the progress of the Local Enterprise Partnership.

.......................................................................... in the Chair

Date of signing  ...................................................

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Division(s): N/A

**STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011**

**OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP: UPDATE**

**Report by Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)**

1. The Executive Board of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has been meeting on a monthly basis since the beginning of the year. This has enabled good progress to be made with getting the Partnership up and running, using the framework set out in the original proposal to Government as the template. This in turn enabled the Government to formally approve the Partnership at the beginning of March.

2. The focus of the Partnership lies in supporting and encouraging the development of the drivers for innovation and wealth creation in the key economic sectors for the future.

3. The approach of the Partnership is to draw on the strengths of existing working arrangements wherever possible, encouraging simplification and clarification to reduce duplication and make it easier for businesses to gain access to the support they need in a timely manner.

4. The philosophy of the Partnership is that it 'cheers' those initiatives that are well established and making good progress; helps 'steer' with others those initiatives that need some co-ordinated action to make them happen; and 'rows' where there is currently no clear leader for a particular initiative.

5. The key issues on which the Enterprise Partnership is providing leadership come from the outcome of the Local Economic Assessment. The remainder of this update provides a summary of the progress made to date on these issues.

*Addressing Skills Deficiencies*

6. A review of the existing working arrangements in the skills area will be concluded shortly. Out of this a new model of governance is emerging a proposal to form a new overarching strategic group of representative local stakeholders – the Oxfordshire Skills Board.

7. The role of the Oxfordshire Skills Board will be to support all learners, employers and providers to identify and understand the collective skills needs of Oxfordshire. The Skills Board will be supported and facilitated by the County Council's Business and Skills team.

8. The Enterprise Partnership is providing leadership in the preparation of the Oxfordshire Skills Needs Analysis. This will form the 'script' against which skills providers across the County will be encouraged to deliver. The Enterprise Partnership, working with the Skills Funding Agency, will monitor progress in delivering the script using information collated by the Agency. The ambition is to have the first skills needs analysis published in the autumn.

9. The Enterprise Partnership will seek to ensure that the Skills Needs Analysis accurately reflects the needs of the business community. To that end it is currently looking at how it might build upon the fact that the County Council currently visits 3,000 businesses a year and is in contact with 8,000 businesses a year regarding work experience placements. The Partnership has quickly identified that this represents an opportunity to improve its knowledge of the needs of the SME community.

10. The Partnership is helping to bring together the business community and education providers with a view to exploring the potential to develop a collaborative approach to the training of apprentices.

*Securing Investment for Infrastructure Priorities*

11. The Enterprise Partnership looks to the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP) to provide advice and guide the work on infrastructure.

12. The shared ambition of the SPIP is to deliver sustainable communities. This requires the alignment of investment in infrastructure and services at a number of levels, including but by no means limited to the investment required to support new development.

13. An initial 'infrastructure framework for Oxfordshire' is now being prepared and will be considered by the SPIP in the autumn. The framework will build upon the work that fed into the Local Investment Plan that was prepared in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency. However the infrastructure framework needs to be extended to cover a much broader range of investments.

14. Improvement to the access to Broadband services is a specific priority for the Enterprise Partnership. Building on the back of work by the County Council to develop a digital strategy for Oxfordshire, the Partnership is providing leadership with the submission of a funding bid to the Government backed Broadband Delivery UK.

15. The Enterprise Partnership actively supported a bid to the first round of Regional Growth Fund – in conjunction with other enterprise partnerships – to secure development funding for the East-West Rail project. Whilst the bid was unsuccessful, feedback from Government departments indicates that the strategic significance of the project is recognised. Government departments are continuing to work closely

with the local authority led consortium that is promoting the project to identify a way forward.

*Business Support, including Inward Investment*

16. There is a wide range of agencies and organisations providing support to businesses, reflecting the fact that the needs of businesses themselves vary considerably depending on their size and stage in their development.

17. The Enterprise Partnership is developing an overview of the current range of business support opportunities in Oxfordshire. This will serve two purposes: firstly it will enable a route map to be prepared that will provide much needed clarity to businesses. Secondly it will enable gaps in the current support arrangements to be identified. The Enterprise Partnership will then work with partners to see how those gaps might be addressed.

18. Related to this is the role of the Enterprise Partnership with regard to inward investment. The Government has appointed PA Consulting to support its work – channelled through UKTI – on inward investment. All the initial indications to date re-emphasise the importance given by Government to establishing a strong link between its consultants and enterprise partnerships.

19. PA Consulting took on their role at the beginning of May and hence it is still early days. However, the Enterprise Partnership is already working to define the inward investment 'offer' that it will seek to offer at the local level. This will provide the basis for a further discussion with PA Consulting. It will also provide the basis of promotional material that will, in due course, be available via the Enterprise Partnership.

*Enterprise Zones*

20. In the 2011 Budget the Government announced its proposal to establish 21 Enterprise Zones across the country. The location of the first 11 Enterprise Zones was included as part of the Budget announcement. At the same time the Government invited those Enterprise Partnerships that did not already have an Enterprise Zone announced to date to come forward if they were interested in the potential.

21. The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has expressed its interest in the concept. At this stage the criteria for an Enterprise Zone remains unclear. The Partnership is seeking clarity from Government as to how the mechanisms potentially on offer within an Enterprise Zone might address the barriers to sustainable economic growth.

22. The Executive Board of the Enterprise Partnership is working with potential candidates for an Enterprise Zone to ensure that there is a clear and transparent process for considering, and potentially selecting a candidate to go forward to Government.

*Communications*

23. The Enterprise Partnership's website went live in March as part of the formal launch of the Partnership. Further work is required to develop this as the primary means of communicating the Partnership's work to the wider community. This is being addressed as the Partnership moves beyond its initial set up phase.

   **RECOMMENDATION**

   **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to note the progress made by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.**

Martin Tugwell
Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Contact Officer:     Martin Tugwell      t: 01865 815113
                                                    e: martin.tugwell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

May 2011

**STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011**

**CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer**

## Introduction

1.  The Strategy and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has within its Terms of Reference responsibility for corporate governance.  The views of the Committee are therefore sought on the proposed revisions to the Local Code of Corporate Governance.  These changes to the Code are highlighted for ease of reference, in the Annex to this report.

2.  The Code is a key feature of the Council's corporate governance framework. The current Code was last approved by the Council's Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee in March 2010 and is reviewed annually.

3.  The Monitoring Officer has undertaken a review of the Code, involving key managers, and has updated the evidence. The review has taken place at a time of significant change for the Council, in the context of a new Coalition Government and the different emphases and priorities that this has brought both for the Council and for the governance regime for local government. These changes are reflected in the Code.

## Origin and purpose of the Code

4.  The Local Code of Corporate Governance builds on the key elements of good governance including:

    - robust systems and processes
    - effective leadership
    - high standards of behaviour
    - a culture based on openness and honesty and
    - an external focus on the needs of service users and the public.

5.  A framework of national guidance on corporate governance was therefore developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives.  This has been widely adopted by individual local authorities – including Oxfordshire - within their local codes.  Until recently, external auditors' judgements on the Council's performance also took the Code into account.  This is no longer the case.

6.  Now, within the changing context of local government, with less emphasis on external assessment, the Code serves more as a practical evidence base for the Council as to its own practical commitment to good governance.  The

Code therefore fulfils an important part of the Council's corporate governance framework. It sets out how the Council is achieving good governance.

7. It is proposed that the Code now be formally reviewed every two years.

## Content and amendments

8. The Code is structured around six principles:

- An emphasis on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community; creating and implementing a vision for the local area
- Councillors and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles
- Promoting the values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk
- Developing the capacity and capability of councillors and officers to be effective
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

9. A range of evidence is therefore listed under each of these themes within the Code. Key officers, including the Chief Executive, have suggested some amendments to it. These are highlighted in bold text in the revised draft attached. No major changes are envisaged. Rather, the suggested amendments update the 'evidence column' to include more recent initiatives, policies and plans which demonstrate the Council's compliance.

## RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

   **(a)    comment upon the revised Code**

   **(b)    subject to any amendments agreed at the meeting, amend and update the Code of Corporate Governance for Oxfordshire County Council**

   **(c)    agree that the Code be reviewed every two years.**

P G CLARK
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers: Nil
Contact Officer:      Peter Clark Tel: (01865 815363)
May 2011

**Annex:**

| Principle 1 – Focussing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 1.1 exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users | 1.1.1 develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision | Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan<br>Oxfordshire 2030 (Countrywide Community Strategy)<br>Comprehensive Equality Policy<br>Children & Young People's Plan and the Local Transport Plan |
| | 1.1.2 review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements | **Annual refresh of Corporate Plan**<br>**Directorate Business Strategies**<br>**Corporate Balanced Scorecard – quarterly reporting to CCMT and Cabinet**<br>Oxfordshire 2030 –cabinet report on 2030<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework |
| | 1.1.3 ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners | Oxfordshire 2030: Sustainable Community Strategy plus thematic partnerships' strategies and plans<br>Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan<br>Partnership update reports to informal Cabinet and every other Full Council meeting 3 times a year |

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| | | 1.1.4 publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance | Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme<br>Progress on accounts monitored within the Corporate Plan<br>Annual Governance Statement (incorporating Statement on Internal Control)<br>Annual Audit Letter |
| 1.2 | ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning | 1.2.1 decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available | Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan<br>Directorate Business Strategies and individual service plans<br>Oxfordshire 2030<br>Charter Mark Accreditation<br>External inspection regimes – from Ofsted and CQC |
| | | 1.2.2 put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery | Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure – **delegated arrangements to build on effective local decision making supported by corporate advice.**<br>**Comprehensive intranet pages of support including templates and FAQs to ensure consistency of approach**<br>Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter<br>Quarterly Performance Reports to CCMT and Cabinet<br>Scrutiny, Service and Cabinet Reviews |
| 1.3 | ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and that tax payers and service users receive excellent value for money | 1.3.1 decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value | Council's Business Strategy<br>External Auditors (District Audit)<br>Report to Audit Committee on Best Value |

| | | |
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| | for money and performance effectively. Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions | Annual Governance Statement Medium Term Financial Plan Services and Resource Planning Process |

**Principle 2 – Councillors and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles**

| Supporting Principles: | Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to: | Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements: |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1 ensuring effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function | 2.1.1 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the cabinet and of the cabinet members individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice | The Constitution<br>Schemes of Delegation<br>Portfolio Holders Reports to Council<br>The Council, Cabinet and Council Committee Agendas and Minutes<br>Scrutiny Committees recommendations to Cabinet<br>The role of Scrutiny in Policy Development and Review (Terms of Reference – Constitution Article 7)<br>Appraisals<br>Training to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities |
| | 2.1.2 set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of county councillors and of senior officers | The Constitution, including:<br>• Code of Conduct<br>• Protocol on Member' Rights and Responsibilities<br>• Protocol on Member/Officer Relations<br>• Member Champions (Article 2, Appendix 1 of the Constitution) |

| 2.2 ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between councillors and officers and that the responsibilities of councillors and officers are carried out to a high standard | 2.2.1 determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required | The Constitution<br>Annual Review of the Constitution<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>**Directorate schemes of delegation** |
|---|---|---|
| | 2.2.2 make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the authority for all aspects of operational management | Chief Executive<br>Job Description<br>The Constitution<br>Scheme of Delegation |
| | 2.2.3 develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive (or equivalent) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained | Protocol on Member/Officer Relations<br>Regular Meetings<br>Appraisal<br>Joint Staff Briefings (One Team) |
| | 2.2.4 make a senior officer (the S151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control | Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)<br>Member of County Council Management Team<br>Job Description<br>Constitution<br>Role of Officers – Intranet<br>Scheme of Delegation |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2.2.5 make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with | Head of **Law and Governance** and County Solicitor (Monitoring Officer) Regular attendance at County Council Management Team as ex officio member Job Description Constitution Scheme of Delegation Role of Officers – Intranet Monitoring Officer Protocol Corporate Governance Assurance Framework |
| 2.3 ensuring relationships between the authority and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other | 2.3.1 develop protocols to ensure effective communication between councillors and officers in their respective roles | Protocol on Member/Officer Relations Constitution Protocol on Members' Rights and Responsibilities Political Group Leader Meetings Regular briefing meetings |
| | 2.3.2 set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of councillors and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable) | Independent Remuneration Panel Published Scheme of Allowances Constitution Job Evaluation Joint Consultative Committee Job Descriptions |
| | 2.3.3 ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery | Quarterly Performance Reports Balanced Scorecard Independent Inspections Charter Mark Accreditation |

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| | 2.3.4 ensure that the organisation's vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated | Corporate Plan, **Directorate Business Strategies and individual service plans** Oxfordshire 2030 (Community Strategy The Quality Standard for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; EQIA process; Social Inclusion Reference Group Service and Resource Planning Corporate Consultation Programme (including Citizens' Panel, Budget Consultation, Residents Surveys, Statutory Surveys), service level consultations eConsult Portal, Customer group specific mechanisms (including Sounding Boards, users groups etc.) |
| | 2.3.5 when working in partnership, ensure that councillors are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively in relation to the partnership and to the authority | Declarations of Interest and Related Party Transactions (Local Government Act 1972 Section 117) Guidance to Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies (endorsed by Cabinet, Nov 2009 |

| | 2.3.6 when working in partnership:<br>• ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership<br>• ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions | **Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework Partnership guidelines – on website**<br>**Partnership development group - meets 6 times a year which consists of the main lead officers for each of the thematic partnerships. This meeting is used to discuss changes in partnership focus and progress made in priority areas.** |
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| **Principle 3 - Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour** | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 3.1 ensuring councillors and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance | 3.1.1 ensure that the authority's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect | Lead Oxfordshire Programme – including 360° Reviews<br>Publication Scheme<br>Standards Committee Work Programme 2010 - 2012<br>Equality and Diversity Schemes<br>Codes of Conduct<br>The Council's Values (CHOICE)<br>County Council Management Team's – "Agreed Team Behaviours"<br>Whistleblowing Policy<br>Monitoring Complaints – Standards Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report)<br>Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group<br>General Publics Right to attend and address Council Meetings and submit Petitions<br>Scrutiny Process<br>Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) |

| | 3.1.2 ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of councillors and officers, of work between councillors and officers and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols | Members' Code of Conduct<br>Councillors' Planning Code of Practice<br>Officers' Code of Conduct<br>Gifts and hospitality registers (Member and Officer)<br>Protocol Member/Officer Relations<br>Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework.<br>Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officer Group **– now within the Corporate Governance Working Group**<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report |
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| | | 3.1.3 put in place arrangements to ensure that councillors and officers of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice | Members' Code of Conduct Councillors' Planning Code of Practice Officers' Code of Conduct Declarations of Interest Policy (Member and Officer) Gifts and Hospitality Policy (Member and Officer) Corporate and Directorate Induction Whistleblowing Policy (part of Raising Concerns at Work Policy) Training and Seminar Briefings Corporate & Directorate Equality groups; the Equality Framework for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; SCIA process Pro-active monitoring by Monitoring Officers Group – now within the Corporate Governance Working Group Corporate Governance Assurance Framework Standards Committee Terms of Reference and Annual Report |
| 3.2 | ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective | 3.2.1 develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and officers reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with councillors, officers, the community and partners | The County Council's Values (CHOICE) CHOICE Awards Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan Oxfordshire County Council's Website Statutory equality schemes; diversity champions |

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| | 3.2.2 put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice | Ethical Governance Audit<br>Corporate Governance Working Group Terms of Reference<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Group Terms of Reference<br>Monitoring Officer Group<br>Service Reviews<br>Standards Committee Work Programme 2010 – 2012<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework<br>Annual Monitoring Officer report |
| | 3.2.3 develop and maintain an effective standards committee | Ethical Governance Audit<br>Standards Committee Work Programme 2009 – 2012<br>Standards Committee Terms of Reference<br>Four Independent Councillors on Standards Committee<br>Cabinet member on Standards Committee<br>Independent Chairman and Deputy Chairman<br>Person Specification for Independent Councillors<br>Monitoring Officer Group (now within the Corporate Governance Working Group)<br>County District and City Monitoring Officer Liaison Group |

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| | 3.2.4 use the organisation's shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority | **Corporate Plan, Directorate Business Strategies, business strategies and individual plans** Ethical Governance Audit Website Corporate and Directorate Induction Processes One Team Events The County Council's Values (CHOICE) |
| | 3.2.5 in pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision-making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively | Children's Strategy Board (Children Young People & Families) Oxfordshire Partnership Governance Framework. |

| Principle 4 - Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 4.1 being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny | 4.1.1 develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible | **Financial Management Training** Scrutiny Review of Budgets Exercise of Call-in Procedures Constitution Scrutiny Review Scrutiny Work Programme Scrutiny Annual Report Scrutiny Handbook |
| | 4.1.2 develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based | Committee Services Committee Agendas and Minutes Committee Reports Template Constitution Capital Handbook Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers Publish and **consult on SCIAs** |

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| | 4.1.3  put in place arrangements to safeguard councillors and officers against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice | Declarations of Interest (Members and Officers)<br>Monitoring Officer Annual Review of Registers<br>Codes of Conduct |
| | 4.1.4  develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee | **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Self Assessment**<br> External Auditors Inspection<br>Audit Working Group (Co-opted Independent Chairman)<br>Regular training<br>Constitution<br>Independent Councillors<br>Independent Councillor provides scrutiny<br>Corporate Governance Assurance Framework |

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| | | 4.1.5 ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints | General public – Whistleblowing Policy<br>Annual Report (Complaints) to County Council Management Team<br>Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter<br>Complaints Coordinators Group Meetings<br>Corporate Complaints Policy<br>Guidance to staff handling complaints<br>Statutory Complaints Procedures<br>Monitoring Complaints – Standards Committee (Monitoring Officers Annual Report)<br>Charter Mark Accreditation |
| 4.2 | having good-quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs | 4.2.1 ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications | Oxfordshire Data Observatory<br>Committee Reports Template<br>Report Timetables<br>Cabinet Forward Plan<br>Report Clearance process<br>Specialist guidance available on the Council's intranet 'Insite' in the support section<br>Monitoring of expenses claimed |
| | | 4.2.2 ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately | Committee Reports Template<br>Monitoring Officer Group<br>Legal Management Team Meetings<br>Special Risk Notices |

| 4.3 | ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place | 4.3.1 | ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with councillors and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs | Risk Management Strategy Compliance with Programme and Project Management Framework Quarterly Reports Internal Control Checklist Annual Governance Statement |
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| | | 4.3.2 | ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access | Whistleblowing Policy General Public Whistleblowing Policy Monitoring Officer Annual Report |
| 4.4 | using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area | 4.4.1 | actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine (beyond the legal powers of the council) but also strive to utilise their powers to the full benefit of their communities | Constitution, including:<br>• Finance Procedure Rules<br>• Contract Procedure Rules<br>• Committee Reports Template<br>Corporate Legal strategy<br>Implementing New Legislation Protocol<br>Virement Rules<br>Financial Regulations<br>Council's Policies and Procedures<br>Monitoring Officer Group |
| | | 4.4.2 | recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law | Implementing New Legislation Protocol Corporate Legal Strategy Monitoring Officer Protocol Constitution Committee Report Checklist Service Level Agreements between Directorate and Legal Services. |

| | 4.4.3 observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law <br><br> • rationality, legality and natural justice <br> • into their procedures and decision making processes | Corporate Legal Strategy <br> Monitoring Officer Protocol <br> Constitution <br> Committee Report Checklist <br> Service Level Agreements between Directorate and Legal Services. <br> Monitoring Officer Group <br> **Budget SCIAs sent to all councillors** |
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| Principle 5 - Developing the capacity and capability of councillors and officers to be effective | | |
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| **Supporting Principles:** | **Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to:** | **Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements:** |
| 5.1 making sure that councillors and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles | 5.1.1 provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for councillors and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis | Corporate and Directorate Induction <br> Corporate Investors in People Accreditation <br> Learning and Development Plan <br> Induction and Review New Starters <br> Appraisals <br> Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Plan <br> **Councillor Development Group** <br> **Financial Management** Training <br> Member and Committee training <br> Link Officer Scheme for Councillors <br> **Peer support champions schemes** |

| | | 5.1.2 ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority | Schemes of Delegation<br>Roles of Officers – Intranet<br>Constitution<br>Job Descriptions<br>Appraisals<br>Monitoring Officer Protocol<br>Learning and development Plan<br>Staff Survey<br>Induction – Briefings – Road-shows – Seminars – Staff surveys<br>Ethical governance Audit 2007<br>Lead Oxfordshire Programme |
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| 5.2 | developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group | 5.2.1 assess the skills required by councillors and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively | Councillors Development Training Programme<br>**Councillor Development Group**<br>Appraisals<br>Attendance at Conferences/Seminars |
| | | 5.2.2 develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed | Compulsory Professional Development Training<br>Pension Fund – External Fund Managers |
| | | 5.2.3 ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual councillors and agreeing an action plan which might, for example, aim to address any training or development needs | Member Appraisals<br>Audit Committee Training Self Assessment |

| 5.3 | encouraging new talent for officers and councillors of the authority so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal | 5.3.1 | ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority | The Framework for Local Government Equality and Diversity Schemes<br>An Equality Employment Report is completed every year, targets for employment are reviewed annually and included in the HR business plan. **Comprehensive data on workforce diversity will be published in the website for the Council and schools after July 2011.**<br>The Council's statutory Equality Schemes **will be replaced by Equality Objectives to be agreed and monitored by Cabinet from December 2011**<br>External Assessment of the Equality Framework<br>Oxfordshire County Council Learning & Development Plan ensures all officers are enabled to mainstream equality.<br>Progress monitored by Social Inclusion Reference Group chaired by Cabinet member.<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br>eConsult Portal<br>Various service user panels including:<br>Children and young people's Sounding Board<br>Children and Young People Involvement Network (ChYPIN)<br>Children in Care Council (CiCC)<br>Citizens' Panel<br>Charter Mark Accreditation<br>Governor Opportunities and Training<br>Work Experience Scheme linking with Oxfordshire Employment Service & Job Centre Plus<br>Protocols for Work Placements established with Refugee Resource |
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| | | Democracy Videos encouraging use of democratic rights **and DVDs subtitled in 6 community languages** |
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| | 5.3.2 to encourage participation and development ensure that the following are in place:<br>• officers career structures; and<br>• an effective councillors development programme | Officers:<br>• Compulsory Professional Development<br>• Learning and Development Programme<br>• Apprenticeships<br>• Emerging Leader's programme<br>• Career progression scheme set up in ICT.<br>• Job Finder Scheme<br>Councillor Induction Programme and Member Development Plan |

**Principle 6 -   Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability**

| Supporting Principles: | Oxfordshire County Council commits itself to: | Evidence that the Council complies with these requirements: |
|---|---|---|
| 6.1   exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships | 6.1.1   make clear to themselves, all officers and the community to whom they are accountable and for what | Constitution<br>Scrutiny Review<br>Scrutiny Work Programme<br>Scrutiny Annual Report<br>Scrutiny Handbook<br>Council Website – Meetings and Decision Making |
| | 6.1.2   consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required | Joint Health<br>Database of Stakeholders<br>Primary Care Trusts<br>Oxford University<br>Oxfordshire 2030: Sustainable Communities Strategy |
| | 6.1.3 produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function | Scrutiny Committees Annual Report |
| 6.2    taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning | 6.2.1   ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively | A corporate Communications Strategy guides delivery of external and internal communications through council publications, the internet and intranet sites and the media. The effectiveness of this service is closely monitored and regularly evaluated through surveys and focus groups. |

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| | 6.2.2 hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality | Constitution<br>Monitoring Officer's Annual Report<br>Forward Plan for Cabinet includes decision which are not 'Key' decisions<br>Delegated decisions taken in public<br>Monitoring of exempt items by Monitoring Officer Group – now within Corporate Governance Working Group |
| | 6.2.3 ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively. These arrangements should recognize that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands | Consultation Team<br>Independent review of Consultation Arrangements completed 01/08<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy and Action Plan<br>Consulting Diversity Guide;<br>Consultation database of community groups.<br>Closer to Communities Strategy<br>The Equality Framework for Local Government; statutory equality schemes; EQIA process<br>**Big Society framework/Big Society fund**<br>**Petition Scheme and ePetition facility**<br>**Modern.gov interactive meetings management system** |

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| | 6.2.4 establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result | Duty to Involve Guidance<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br>eConsult Portal<br>**ePetitions facility** |
| | 6.2.5 on an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period | Corporate Plan<br>Statement of Accounts<br>Oxfordshire County Council publishes a rolling five-year corporate plan on an annual basis, which sets out our vision and priorities; explains our planning framework and links with the five-year Medium Term Financial Plan.<br>**Committees, working groups, Boards and services produce summaries of achievements, including performance information through balanced scorecards for services and corporately**. We produce an annual summary of our accounts, which are also published in full. |

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| | 6.2.6 ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its officers and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so | Constitution Strategy<br>Access to Information<br>Ask Oxfordshire Consultation & Involvement Strategy<br><br>The Council's Website<br>**£500 spend – publication.**<br>**Freedom of Information policies and devolved arrangements within directorate and supporting info, advice and templates** |
| 6.3 making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to officers | 6.3.1 develop and maintain a clear policy on how officers and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making | Organisation Development Strategy<br>Programme of staff research, including staff surveys and staff panel activities<br>Appraisal Process<br>Manager's Competency Assessment<br>The Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy<br>Various focus groups are held to "test" policy/process developments and we have various fora involving our unions and officers representative groups. |

<u>**STRATEGY & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**</u>

<u>**THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011**</u>

**COMMUNICATION WITH COUNCILLORS**

**Report by the County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer**

### Introduction

1.  At the meeting of this Committee in March 2010, members agreed that the Council's communications with members of the council should be a priority. The Committee further commented in July 2010 that such communications should be consistent with the protocols agreed by the Council in 2009/10. The Committee wished to ensure that compliance with the protocols was taking place and therefore intended to consider the matter periodically.

2.  This report therefore summarises the current position and invites the Committee to consider progress to date. The annex to this report summarises the activity to date.

### Background

3.  The Council's Constitution contains a Protocol on Members' Rights and Responsibilities. Part 10 of this sets out the principles and expectations for 'Effective communication with members'. The measure of success of such principles will always be feedback from members. For instance, no elected member should hear about a significant issue which directly affects (or will affect) her/his division from a member of the public or the news media.

4.  The County Council's Management Team, and Directorate Management Teams, have sought to ensure that commitment to such communications have a higher profile among service managers.

### Review

5.  Directorates, in 2010, have agreed to implement arrangements to ensure that communications with elected members are a priority and that understanding of these principles is taking place. This has involved:

    ▪ Identifying points of contact in each directorate to oversee local arrangements and to respond to any councillor concerns or queries
    ▪ Briefing relevant staff
    ▪ Maintain the profile through induction for staff

6. Some work remains to be done in further raising the profile of these principles across the council as a consequence of the restructures of some directorates. This has largely led to the cessation of directorate-level newsletters but the opportunity for achieving council-wide messages now is much clearer. In addition, with structural changes and in response to corporate priorities, directorate specific induction briefings have largely given way to corporate induction events. Previously, publicity of the principles for communicating with members was cascaded in part through these means, within directorates; this is now being reviewed to ensure that changes to the structure of the council do not lead to these messages being lessened. There also needs to be a greater focus on reporting performance to the Monitoring Officer.

7. A summary of some actions taken by directorates is included as an Annex to this report.

## Councillor perspective

8. A small number of members have raised issues of concern with the Monitoring Officer.

9. The Committee is asked to consider and comment upon members' experience of local communications.

## RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to comment on communication with elected members and whether any further improvements can be made.**


P G CLARK
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers: Nil

Contact Officer:     Peter Clark Tel: (01865 815363)

May 2011

# Annex: Effective Communication with Members

| Action | Updates | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **CEF** | **CEO** | **E&E** | **F&R** | **S&CS** |
| Points of contact - with the awareness and sensitivity to oversee the scheme in each Directorate and deal with Member queries/complaints. | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Brief relevant staff and involve them in agreeing what information is significant and appropriate and how it will be shared. | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Include in Directorate inductions. | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |
| Regular reminders through Directorate newsletters/events. | Not so far | Not so far | Not so far | Not so far | Not so far |
| Report performance quarterly to Monitoring Officer | To be actioned in 2011 | To be actioned in 2011 | To be actioned in 2011 | To be actioned in 2011 | To be actioned in 2011 |

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**STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 26 MAY 2011**

**BUSINESS STRATEGY PROGRAMME**

Background:

1. The changing external environment means that there is much the Council needs to do to ensure we are geared up to face further financial challenges whilst continuing to serve the people of Oxfordshire well. To deal with this we have developed a new Business Strategy.

2. Our current structures have served us well in a period of growth but we are now moving into some very lean years and there is a need for a shift in the way we do business to reflect more difficult times. Last year the level of savings in our efficiency programme was increased to set some very ambitious targets. We need to change quickly, be really customer focused and lose some of the professional silos that remain in place. Now the time has come to put the delivery of the efficiency strategy at the heart of our business.

What does it mean in practice?

3. To deliver the Business Strategy, a number of different work streams are being brought together to manage the Council's approach to delivering the estimated £200m of savings required by 2015. These are:

### 1. Changing the way we work
This project will drive cultural change across the organisation to equip and empower staff to do their jobs differently. This includes setting clear expectations of staff and streamlining central processes through, for example, delegating decision making to lower levels, developing an effective staff engagement strategy and encouraging better use of technology to support more flexible working.

### 2. Reshaping Management
To enable the organisation to become more streamlined and deliver more cost-effective services, this project will aim reduce the numbers of managers by 25%, rationalise management layers and ensure there is support for employees leaving the organisation.

### 3. Future of Shared Services and creation of Customer Service Centre
This work stream aims to deliver the next-generation of Shared Services, by evaluating different operational models and developing a cost-effective solution which will deliver high levels of customer service.

**4.** Developing a comprehensive **Asset Management strategy**

The strategy will set the vision for OCC property assets, to ensure they are properly planned, used and managed to support the work we do and will enable significant savings to be made.

**5. Customer Focus**

This project will ensure we are working to achieve better customer service and effectively managing the Council's reputation in difficult financial times.

**6.** Streamlined **Service and Resource Planning** processes and delivery of **efficiencies** by Directorates

This will develop a 'light touch' process to ensure that delivery of previous years savings are managed, new savings identified and re-invested savings are challenged. Each Directorate's leadership team will monitor and review the projects that comprise the individual directorate strategies on a monthly basis. Quarterly updates on progress against the strategies will be reported to the Business Strategy Group.

**7. Community self-help/ Big Society**

This project aims to reduce barriers so that individuals and communities are more able to help themselves and to facilitate joint working to enable partners and voluntary organisations to support this.

**8. ICT** underpins many of these projects and will be crucial in ensuring we can transform into a more modern, effective organisation.

What will we achieve?

4. Integrating these workstreams will ensure that over the next few years we will become a more streamlined and more dynamic organisation in which the workforce feels more empowered to develop our services to reflect our customers' aspirations through difficult financial times.

Alexandra Bailey
Senior Policy Manager
May 2011