Notice of a Meeting

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Friday, 28 April 2023 at 10.00 am
Room 3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

These proceedings are open to the public
If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this Live Stream Link.
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Membership

Chair - Councillor Eddie Reeves
Deputy Chair - Councillor Michael O'Connor

Councillors:	Brad Baines	Damian Haywood	Ian Middleton
	Neil Fawcett	Bob Johnston	
	Donna Ford	Kieron Mallon	

Notes: **Date of next meeting:** *14 July 2023*

For more information about this Committee please contact:
Committee Officer - *Scrutiny Team*
E-Mail: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

April 2023

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 days 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

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

2. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note on the back page

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)

The Committee is recommended to raise any questions, receive information arising from them and, having raised any necessary amendments, **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 as an accurate record.

4. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to the Scrutiny Team at scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

5. 2023/24 Outcomes Framework (Pages 15 - 32)

To consider the Council's Outcomes Framework for 2023/24 within the context of the Council's Strategic Plan. This item will be led by Cllr Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and will be supported by Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications, and Rachel Brolly, Performance and Insight Team Leader.

Having considered the report and presentation, and asked any questions, the Committee is recommended to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make arising therefrom.

6. Communications and Engagement Strategy (Pages 33 - 56)

The Committee is asked to consider the report on the Communications and Engagement Strategy. This item will be led by Councillor Glynnis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and supported by Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications, Kerry Middleton, Head of Comms, Marketing and Engagement, and Carol Stow, Consultation and Engagement Manager.

Having considered the report and presentation, and asked any questions, the Committee is recommended to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make arising therefrom.

7.   LGA Peer Review on Comms 6 Month Update (Pages 57 - 80)

Following the Committee's request at its September 2022 meeting to receive an update on progress made against the recommendations made in the LGA Peer Review on Communications, the Committee is asked to consider the attached update report. This item will be led by Councillor Glynnis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and supported by Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Strategy, Insight and Communications, and Kerry Middleton, Head of Comms, Marketing and Engagement.

Having considered the report and presentation, and asked any questions, the Committee is recommended to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make arising therefrom.

8.   Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the progress of previous recommendations and actions arising from previous meetings, having raised any questions on the contents.

NB This item is to follow and will be issued as an addendum to the agenda
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9.   Cabinet Responses to Performance and Corporate Services OSC Recommendations (Pages 81 - 86)

Attached are the Cabinet's responses to the Committee's recommendations concerning
      i)   the Council's Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025, and
      ii)   the post-consultation Budget proposals

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the responses.

10.   Committee Forward Work Plan (Pages 87 - 126)

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** its work programme for forthcoming meetings**,** having heard any changes from previous iterations, and taking into consideration the Council's Forward Plan and any issues arising.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.
Other registrable interests include:
  a) Any unpaid directorships
  b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

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c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:
Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 19 January 2023 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.17 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Eddie Reeves – in the Chair

Councillor Michael O'Connor (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Brad Baines
Councillor Neil Fawcett
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Damian Haywood
Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Ian Middleton

Also in Attendance: Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council
Councillor Liz Brighouse, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services
Councillor Calum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment
Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy
Councillor Jenny Hannaby, Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety
Councillor Mark Lygo, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality

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.

1/23   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda No. 1)

No apologies for absence were received.

2/23 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE**
(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

3/23 **MINUTES**
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 9 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4/23 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**
(Agenda No. 4)

There were none.

5/23 **UPDATED STRATEGIC PLAN AND FUNDING AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24 - 2025/26**
(Agenda No. 5)

1. The Performance and Corporate Services Committee was invited to consider and comment on:
   a. Proposed strategic Plan for 2023/24 to 2025/26
   b. Updates to revenue budget proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26 by directorate
   c. Proposals for the use of the Budget Priority Reserve
   d. Proposed additions to the capital programme
   e. Review of fees and charges

   STRATEGIC PLAN

2. The Leader of the Council provided an overview of the Council's proposed Strategic Plan for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

3. The 2023-2024 framework was built from nine strategic priorities, 25 commitments and 49 objectives. The latter were SMART and would be summarised in a report to Cabinet on a bimonthly basis. This draft Strategic Plan was to be considered at Council following approval of the budget.

4. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services added that the nine strategic priorities were grouped into three themes – 'greener, fairer, healthier' – and were linked to engagement and consultation feedback received from the Oxfordshire Conversation events, budget consultation and the resident satisfaction survey.

5. Whilst mainly a continuation of the previous Strategic Plan, there were two new objectives which related to the cost of living crisis and the NHS and integrated care system.

6. An annual performance report would capture the achievement, success and challenges throughout the first year of the Strategic Plan. At the end of the fourth quarter, the underlying supporting performance measures across all nine priorities would be reviewed and updated. Targets supporting the delivery of the priorities would also be reviewed, updated and reported within a business management report that was considered at Cabinet on a bi-monthly basis.

7. In response, the Committee explored a number of issues, most notably around which priorities were felt to be the most crucial by the administration; monitoring and reporting arrangements; the benefits and challenges of partnership working; the links between the Strategic Plan and other Budget and Policy Framework documents; green growth and rural transport.

Issues raised by Members:

8. Asked which of the nine priorities was considered the most important in the current financial year, the Leader responded that climate action and tackling inequalities were at the core of the Council's focus. These priorities were reflected across many of the other Council's priorities.

9. A Member enquired as to how the Council would monitor and report – and to what level of detail - on the delivery of the commitments in the Strategic Plan. The Member also asked over what timescale the Council expected to achieve and deliver on the commitments.

10. In response, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services explained that detailed plans underpinned each of the objectives and would be monitored through an action plan. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the importance of specific, measurable outcomes and reassured the Committee that they would be detailed in an annual report and brought to a future meeting of the Committee for discussion.

11. A Member queried whether there were targets and standing commitments in place for achieving specific outcomes with regard to tackling inequality across Oxfordshire.

12. Having explained that some of the Council's work around inequality was being done in partnership with other organisations through the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Leader supported the idea of exploring how they could better communicate targets and commitments in the report.

13. Cabinet Members assured the Committee that the Council was working with the district councils, Oxford City Council and the voluntary sector to identify and help smaller pockets of deprivation within the county. Partnership working was foundational to what the Council wished to achieve and was stated to be the most impactful way of tackling inequality.

14. The Committee recognised the core requirement for partnership working but sought assurance that partnership work was effective and should not obviate the need for the Council to demonstrate that it was making an impact in its own right, irrespective of whether its partners contributed as fully as anticipated.

15. The Vice-Chair stated that the 'Working with Partners' priority lacked detail. The Vice-Chair sought to know with whom the Council was working with, to what purpose, and in what configurations to deliver the broader 'environmental, economic and social' priorities.

16. The Deputy Leader noted that the educational attainment gap was a significant issue in Oxfordshire, particularly given the link between educational attainment, inequality and social justice. Reducing inequality was a thread that underpinned the majority of the Strategic Plan.

17. The Committee stated the importance of demonstrating due regard to capacity building within the organisation to tackle current and anticipated social problems and resultant inequalities, and the importance of target setting as part of the Strategic Plan.

18. The Committee felt it should be able to be assured that the Council's stated aspirations are underpinned by a wider policy framework which also aligns with them. The Committee noted that alongside the Strategic Plan lay 49 objectives which would help illustrate this, but there should be more direct commentary on how the outline of what the Council agreed to do in its Budget and Policy Framework aligned with the strategic priorities it chose to address.

19. Thus, the Committee requested clearer KPIs for measuring the Council's nine strategic priorities. The Committee requested to be consulted on any changes to the ongoing business monitoring and reporting system.

20. A Member felt that the report failed to sufficiently mention a commitment and targeted approach to green growth, green economy and green jobs and the Council's objective to facilitate research and collaboration to drive environmental innovation may not be sufficiently ambitious a response to the Climate Emergency. The Committee believed that further thought as to what else the Council might do to support local green growth was needed.

21. The Committee argued that greater clarity within the Strategic Plan of the importance of rural bus services was needed, specifically regarding minimum service levels and especially given the link between public transport and a number of the Council's strategic priorities. The Committee indicated that the Council might devote more space in its Strategic Plan to this issue owing to the opportunity it affords to make positive contributions to so many of the Council's strategic priorities.

RESOLVED:

> i) **The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDS that the Council demonstrates due regard to capacity building within the organisation to tackle social problems and resultant inequalities.**
>
> ii) **The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMENDS that relevant officers continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).**

SCRUTINY OF POST-CONSULTATION BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24 – 2025/26

22. The Cabinet Member for Finance thanked the Committee for its observations following the 9 December 2022 meeting and provided a verbal response to the following action from the 9 December 2022 meeting of the Committee:
    a. *"That the Cabinet Member for Finance write to the Committee outlining how the Committee's comments and recommendations from the previous year's budget scrutiny had been incorporated into budget management over the previous 12 months".* The Committee requested that the Cabinet Member for Finance provide this response in writing.

23. The Cabinet Member presented to the Committee on the main changes between the consultation and post-consultation budget proposals, and explained that the Council's funding position had been updated since the 9 December 2022 meeting of the Committee, based on information received following the Local Government Policy statement published on 12 December 2022, as well as changes to the budget proposals published as part of the report for the Committee on 9 December 2022. Changes also reflected feedback from the budget engagement and consultation and the Committee's observations following the previous meeting.

24. The Council's goals were threefold: repair finances and ensure preparedness for the future; ensure sufficient funding to deliver key frontline services; and take into account the consultation findings when planning areas of savings and investments.

25. The Cabinet Member reminded the Committee that the budget had been set within a period of significant financial pressure driven by inflation and demand. The political and economic situation was volatile and further pressures that emerged since the Autumn Statement totalled £19.4m. On top of the £8.7m budget gap per the Committee's December report, the total budget gap before provision local governance finance settlement totalled £28.1m.

26. The Cabinet Member elaborated on the following key points:

a. Total funding changes for 2023/24 totalled £37.1m;

b. There was £9m remaining funding available to respond to the consultation outcomes, reduce savings or fund further pressures;

c. Total proposed changes to savings came to £5.1m;

d. Total proposed budget increases came to £3.8m;

e. In addition to the above revenue sums, the Council tax surplus notified was £10.1m more than expected and available one off in 2023/24;

f. There was a further £0.8m available in the budget priorities reserve, totalling £8.5m. There was still £7.1m to be allocated, of which there were proposals to allocate £4.2m to fund capital investments;

g. £0.6m remained to support the implementation of further initiatives in the revenue priority fund; and

h. The balance in the investment pump priming reserve was £2m which had been allocated to three main areas.

27. In response, the Committee focused its queries on a number of issues, particularly the current risk profile of capital spending and its alignment with the Council's strategic priorities, inflation expectations, fees and charges, and issues surrounding proposed reversals to revenue-funded projects – in particular drainage, tree-planting and highway, cycleway and pavement improvements.

Issues raised by Members:

28. Members queried the level of detail of proposed capital schemes and questioned whether the capital budget was truly aligned with the Council's priority areas.

29. The Committee expressed its desire for closer engagement with the relevant Cabinet Members and senior officers to ensure effective and meaningful ongoing budget monitoring and scrutiny of both capital and revenue spend, with said Cabinet Members reporting proactively to the Committee on any in-year areas of concern as soon as reasonably practicable.

30. The Vice-Chair questioned the Council's ability to finance borrowing to part-fund its capital pipeline and larger infrastructure schemes (eg housing infrastructure fund 1 (HIF1)). The year previous, the Committee was informed that costs would be controlled by value engineering and cost management. In an inflationary environment, the capital programme carried an increased risk, and the Vice-Chair sought an honest assessment of the risks involved in big schemes and whether work on value engineering and cost management had started.

31. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that a significant proportion of funding for major infrastructure projects came from national government grants. With regard to HIF1, inflationary pressures were contained, all HIF

schemes were being reviewed, and a significant level of contingency was built into the budget. The next stage was test market pricing against schemes, at which point inflationary pressures could be managed.

32. On the revenue side, the Cabinet Member assured the Committee that each service was expected to pay close attention to market engagement feedback i.e., it was not simply a crude application of OBR forecasting, rather a reflection of a service-by-service estimation based on higher quality, granular knowledge.

33. The Cabinet Member for Travel and Development reiterated that the Council was aware of and closely monitored - partly via the Council's Capital Board - risks associated with HIF schemes and housing and growth schemes. Prior to implementation of large, proposed schemes, evidence that they were fully funded was required.

34. In reply to a query regarding the status of Contract Purchase Orders (CPOs), the Cabinet Member for Transport and Development explained that Cabinet approved a CPO and side road order for HIF1 in July 2022 and work was now required to prepare for issuing. HIF2 had passed a series of CPOs but was since withdrawn and would be reassessed at Cabinet in February 2023.

35. A Member asked for further information on the £1.2m increase for the Council's street lighting replacement programme.

36. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that the LED replacement scheme, predicated on 'invest to save', made savings that were built into the budget. The £1.2m reflected the significant increase in energy costs, and was a cost that would not be offset. It was evidence that the 'invest to save' approach had been successful, however.

37. A change in policy meant that lighting could now be switched off given certain conditions, eg on quiet, rural highways. Plans needed to be drawn up on implementation of a central controller to enable remote control and improve efficiency, subsequently reducing the energy and environmental impacts of street lighting.

38. While welcoming the increased budget for flood and drainage work, a Member was concerned how residents and community groups might access any funds available and asked whether there were specific plans in place to facilitate access.

39. In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance assured the Committee that the implementation of the flooding and drainage scheme would be communicated to Members. There were two elements to tackling the areas most prone to flooding and implementing practical projects and proactive clearance: rapid response on known issues and engagement with community groups on their flood resilience plans. The Cabinet Member understood the importance of local approaches to supporting flood resilience across the county.

40. The additional £1m for improvements to highways, cycle-paths and pavements was acknowledged. Members were sceptical how much of an impact this increase would truly have and asked whether there was any scope for this figure be increased.

41. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated the importance of a localised and active approach to the improvement of highways, cycle-paths and pavements, responding actively to issues highlighted by Members and local groups. The Council needed to make the most of the funding available via an 'invest to save' approach, and engage with communities to identify priority areas.

42. The £2m budget to address the backlog of road repairs was noted by Members. The Committee asked what material impact this funding would have on the county's road network.

43. The Cabinet Member for Finance responded that the state of highways was of considerable concern. Highway maintenance was expensive and the approximate £11m funding from national government did not cover the approximate £30m annual cost of maintaining the network. This was an area of recurrent and significant capital investment and was thus a difficult funding gap to bridge.

44. An additional £3m had been allocated to support climate action, including tree replacement. Members queried whether this was sufficient to achieve the target of planting of 23,000 trees, plus an additional 3,942 which was a deficit from highways felling. The Council was already responsible for 400,000 highways trees and an additional 160,000 across Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) land.

45. In reply, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment explained that the cost of out-sourced, contracted planting and tree management was extremely high and inefficient. The Council needed to work and engage with parish councils and volunteers to reduce costs and improve the efficiency of tree planting and management. The Council had also bid for match funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to fund the planting of 6,600 trees across Oxfordshire over a four-year period.

46. The Committee emphasised the importance of ongoing dialogue with parish, town, city and district councils and community groups to develop a clearer understanding of the financial and legal issues involved in joint working with regards to tree-planting and maintenance. The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that the council would work with parishes during the summer, before the planting season, on this issue.

47. It was agreed that the Council should track and report on the number of trees it was responsible for planting over the coming year and the net impact once trees which had been felled where also considered.

48. A Member requested an update on the impact of the termination of the Section 113 shared services agreement with Cherwell District Council.

49. The Cabinet Member for Finance explained that there was an annual direct cost impact of £276,000 going forward. This reflected the cost of the employment liability of senior staff. The Council had benefited from more senior staff time, so it was not a 'wasted' cost. The new Chief Executive would review allocation of senior officer time.

Business was adjourned for fifteen minutes and resumed at 12:17pm.

50. A Member noted that "no revenue proposals were identified as materially negatively impact the council's overall ability to meet its climate action commitments" and asked how confident the Committee could be that this was a truly climate-positive budget that would establish the Council as a national leader on environmental and climate issues.

51. Cabinet Members reassured the Committee that there was a cross-organisational work programme to deliver on the Council's climate commitments.

52. The Committee supported the Council's policy of undertaking a Climate Impact Review of its budget proposals but suggested that this undertaking was not as effective as it could be. The Committee's view was that to address this the Council needed to further embed the consideration of climate impacts into the consideration of budget proposals. The decision making should be able to be evidenced in the presentation of the budget and accompanying narrative.

53. In response to being asked about how fees and charges were determined and used for raising revenue, the Cabinet Member for Finance reported that all services were asked to consider appropriate opportunities to increase their fees and charges in the forthcoming year to raise additional revenue. Some fees and charges were not subject to an inflationary rise by the Council to protect the county's more vulnerable citizens.

54. Given the scale of the fees and charges schedule, there was an annual process of due diligence. The Cabinet Member indicated that perhaps more could be done to remind officers who developed such policies to seek opportunities to fund policy objectives.

55. The Chair observed that it was difficult with the current schedule of fees and charges to unpick whether opportunities for income maximisation or positive behavioural change were being taken. The Committee would expect in future years a fuller narrative to explain the basis by which proposed feeds and charges levels were set.

56. The Chair emphasised the importance of measuring how additional investment was spent and allocated relative to the nine strategic priorities. The Committee

recommended that the Cabinet provide within the Budget Council meeting pack a table showing how reversed savings proposals correspond to the feedback and level of support expressed by the consultation.

57. The Committee found it difficult to get a sense of how money had been spent and how or whether that spend related to the Council's priorities. Thus, the Vice-Chair put forward the view that the Council develop an agreed framework through which to judge and rank pipeline revenue projects, to provide a more objective way of identifying which proposals should, when they are being compared, be funded and which should be put up as savings, and how they contribute towards the Council's strategic aims.

58. With inflation strongly influencing the budget, the Chair summarised that the Committee expected the Council to ensure inflationary pressures on contracts reflected service-level inflation as well as nation-wide OBR inflation; that directorates' estimates follow a best practice procedure and are checked centrally' and that in the next budget the Council provided a table showing the inflation outturn versus budgeted estimates.

59. The Cabinet Member for Finance offered to provide a written response to a Member's query regarding increased parking charges in Henley and Abingdon.

ACTIONS

I.   **That the Cabinet Member for Finance provide a response in writing outlining how the Committee's comments and recommendations from the previous year's budget scrutiny had been incorporated into budget management over the previous 12 months.**

II.   **That the Cabinet Member for Finance provide a written response to a Member's query regarding increased parking charges in Henley and Abingdon.**

RESOLVED

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that:

i)   **Cabinet agree that relevant officers continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committee to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).**

ii)   **Cabinet report back to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee as large capital projects develop in addition to oversight by the Audit and Governance Committee.**

iii)   **Cabinet Members for Finance and Corporate Services maintain a close ongoing dialogue to ensure effective ongoing monitoring of**

both the revenue and capital sides of the budget, with said Cabinet Members reporting proactively to the Committee on any in-year areas of concern as soon as reasonably practicable.

iv) Council ensures that directorates' reported service pressures from inflation reflect specific service-level inflation where relevant rather than nation-wide OBR inflation

v) Directorates' estimates follow a best practice procedure and are checked at central level.

vi) That in the next budget the Council provides a table showing the inflation outturn versus budget estimates.

vii) That the Council develops a revenue pipeline of projects whose order of priority is justified by agreed principles, including their contribution towards the Council's strategic aims.

viii) Cabinet provides within the Budget Council meeting pack a table showing how savings proposals which were reversed after the consultation budget correspond to the feedback and level of support expressed by the consultation.

ix) The Council give closer consideration in forthcoming financial years to mainstreaming tackling the climate crisis as a principle of budget design with proposals evaluated at the earliest opportunity according to their impact on the Council's climate targets. The decision making should be able to be evidenced in the presentation of the budget and accompanying narrative.

x) The Council works with parish, town, city and district councils to develop a clearer understanding over the financial and legal issues involved in joint working with regards to tree-planting.

xi) The Council tracks and reports on a) the number of trees it is responsible for planting over the next year, and b) the net impact once trees which have been cut down are also considered.

6/23 COST OF LIVING
(Agenda No. 6)

1. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was invited to consider and comment on:
   a. The measures that Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have put in place to mitigate the effect of the cost of living crisis on residents across Oxfordshire; and
   b. Planned and proposed future measures.

2. The Cabinet Member for Health and Equalities introduced the report which provided an update on OCC's response to the cost of living crisis and the measures the Council implemented to help residents, lessons learned and planned and proposed work.

Issues raised by Members:

3. A Member noted that current interventions seemed to focus more heavily on crisis intervention and responding as issues emerge, and less on strategic planning to prevent poverty. In the long-run, both were required but the Council should develop more ideas around the latter.

4. Members were concerned that there remained groups for whom accessing the Council's support was challenging. The Committee hoped that the Council would seek to engage a genuine diversity of community organisations as awareness-raisers and take measures to ensure ease of access for the digitally-excluded.

5. In response, the Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Council worked closely with districts, community champions and the voluntary sector to ensure work was happening at a community level. The importance of partnership working to tackle poverty and inequality was emphasised.

6. The Committee observed that money being sent to those in poverty was utterly vital to its recipients, and this being the case the Council should be mindful to ensure that money disbursed to other organisations was being spent correctly. Given this, the Council should give consideration as to whether to undertake an independent audit to ensure funds were reaching the intended recipients.

RESOLVED:

i) **The Committee RECOMMENDED that the Council report regularly to the Locality meetings on the spending and activity relating to the cost of living within that locality.**

7/23   ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER
(Agenda No. 7)

1. The Principal Scrutiny Officer provided an update on the Committee's Action and Recommendations Tracker.

2. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the Action and Recommendation tracker.

3. The Committee requested that indicative timescales for response be allocated to all items on the action and recommendation tracker going forward.

8/23   COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PLAN
(Agenda No. 8)

1. Members received an update on the Committee's proposed work programme for 2023/24.

2. The Principal Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that every two months the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council's committees met to discuss the BMMR and any issues arising that necessitated scrutiny involvement. The group had noted the high number of red RAG rated indicators within Children's Services as a concern and a priority for scrutiny by the People Committee. Thus, it was suggested that the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee defer its scheduled Social Value item at its subsequent meeting if workload support across the scrutiny committees was required.

3. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with their People Committee counterparts to discuss the approach to the urgent Children's Services item. A meeting of the Performance and Corporate Services Committee would then be scheduled via Microsoft Teams to discuss and agree its forward work plan for subsequent meetings.

4. The next meeting was scheduled to take place during the pre-election period. It was agreed that this meeting be rescheduled to an appropriate date following the election.

.... in the Chair

Date of signing   ....

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Divisions Affected – All

Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
28 April 2023

Outcomes Framework 2023/2024

Report by the

Corporate Director for Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1.   The Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on:

   •   The Outcomes Framework for 2023/24.

Executive Summary

2.   This report sets out the updated outcomes framework supporting the performance reporting against the delivery of the strategic plan 2023 – 2025 priorities up. It provides the opportunity for the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment.

3.   The following annexes are attached to this report:
   •   Annex 1 – Outcomes Framework 2023 - 2024

Background

4.   The refreshed Strategic Plan 2023-2025 sets out the council's vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. To do that the council will:

   1.   Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
   2.   Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
   3.   Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
   4.   Support carers and the social care system.
   5.   Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
   6.   Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
   7.   Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
   8.   Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

5. The tenth priority, Running the Business covers the customer contact centre and financial measures.

6. In addition to the Outcomes Framework, the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) support the strategic plan and are reviewed and updated on an annual basis, along with the strategic plan, through the budget & business planning process.

Introduction

7. The Outcomes Framework is a suite of high level key performance indicators and progress measures supporting delivery reporting against the overarching strategic priorities and objectives of the current strategic plan.

8. This suite of performance indicators and measures contained within the outcomes framework is fluid, services may add and or remove measures throughout the year with supporting narrative to explain any changes.

9. Targets and tolerances for 2023-2024 will be confirmed post the final outturn position of the current 2022-2023 performance measures and will be included as part of the Business Management and Monitoring reporting cycle.

10. Services will continue to review throughout the year outcome focussed measures, service level, team level and individual key performance indicators/objectives.

11. There is a further suite of operational service, team, individual sets of performance measures enabling the golden thread of good performance management in reporting progress, alerting areas of concern and associate actions plans. These are reported locally within the service area to aide early identification of areas of concern, risks associated with the achievement of any of the strategic priorities.

Strategic Plan and Outcomes Framework

12. The council's Strategic Plan and outcomes framework has been reviewed and updated for 2023/24, this was presented to this committee on 19 January 2023.

13. The nine strategic priorities are unchanged, the areas of focus have all been refreshed and updated into objectives to reflect the council's current ambitions. The objectives are core to the outcomes framework, outlining what good looks like in delivering these outcomes against the existing strategic priorities. The organising structure of the outcomes framework also includes a number of key performance indicators and progress measures which will be reported against regularly to demonstrate progress and address areas of development.

14. The outcomes framework represents a high-level overview of the council's priorities. It does not represent all metrics, measures and targets that the council 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.

15. The 2023 – 2024 outcomes framework is built from the following organising structure: Nine strategic priorities, 25 commitments and 49 objectives. The nine priorities have been grouped into three key thematic areas; Greener, Fairer and Healthier highlighting the positive change Oxfordshire county council is striving to achieve.

16. Supporting the delivery of the objectives, commitments and strategic priorities are a number of key performance indicators and progress measures which have been agreed ready for reporting during 2023-2024.

Risk Management

17. The strategic risk register forms part of the suite of information included in the Business Management and Monitoring Reports. The strategic risks are associated with the current nine strategic priorities.

Equality & Inclusion and Sustainability Implications

18. There are no implications associated.

Financial implications

19. There are no financial implications associated.

Legal implications

20. There are no legal implications associated.

Comments checked by:
Anita Bradley
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Claire Taylor, Corporate Director of Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

Annexes:
- Annex 1 Outcomes Framework for 2023/24

Contact Officers: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

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OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

2023/2024

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

OCC Outcomes Framework is a strategic approach which provides a set of tools and techniques to plan regularly, monitor, measure and review performance of the organisation.
The framework consists of a number of measures at different levels that Oxfordshire County Council will use to measure delivery of our 9 strategic priorities.

The framework supports the 'golden thread' building blocks of:

- Our strategic priorities.

- Our commitments.

- Our objectives.

- Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & Progress Measures

- KPIs & Progress Measures are used to measure and monitor Oxfordshire County Council's delivery progress.

- KPIs & Progress Measures are collated and reported through a variety of patterns: monthly, quarterly, termly, bi-annually and an annual basis.

- The collective Oxfordshire County Council position is reported on a bi-monthly basis with the Council's Finance and Risk position in the Business Management and Monitoring Report.

- There are a number of service level KPI's and Progress Measures which are collated and reported internally at service level and not included in the following extracts.

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Our nine priorities

Our vision:

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

1. **Put action** to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

2. **Tackle** inequalities in Oxfordshire

3. **Prioritise** the health and wellbeing of residents

4. **Support** carers and the social care system

5. **Invest** in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

6. **Preserve and improve** access to nature and green spaces

7. **Create opportunities** for children and young people to reach their full potential

8. **Play our part** in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

9. **Work with** local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

Greener

Fairer

Healthier

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: PUT ACTION TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK.

Our Commitments: We will lead by example, setting ambitious targets to reduce our own carbon emissions and aligning our carbon net zero commitments to the principles of the Climate and Ecology Bill.

Greener Objectives 23/24	
Implement together the county's "Pathways to Zero Carbon" route map, a comprehensive plan for decarbonising Oxfordshire.	Work with partners to continue to build a greener, more resilient, fairer renewable energy network.
Work to bring our own buildings and operations to net zero by 2030 and increasingly align our supply chain emissions with our net zero ambitions.	Support community and business activity to cut carbon emissions and accelerate a shift to a resilient and locally focused zero carbon economy.
Support and promote a shift towards active travel (walking, cycling and use of public transport), reducing the need for private cars and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) by expanding charging capacity across the county.	Accelerate work on supporting biodiversity and nature recovery in parallel with adaptation to climate change, including potential impacts of extreme weather and supply chain disruption.
Deliver our LED street lighting replacement programme to further reduce the energy, visual and environmental impacts of street lighting.	

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
% reduction in corporate emissions within our Net Zero by 2030 target.	Number of trees planted & established on land Oxfordshire County Council own & manage.
Level of engagement with Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Oxfordshire website.	Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns by March 2024.
Total % of household waste reused, recycled or composted.	Total number of electric vehicles charging points on county owned land by end of March.
Number of retrofits of homes in fuel poverty completed.	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN OXFORDSHIRE.

Our Commitments: We will work with our partners and local communities to address health, social and educational inequalities focusing on those in greatest need.

Fairer Objectives 23/24	
Address the drivers and impact of disadvantage through practical plans delivered with partners to create a more inclusive and sustainable Oxfordshire.	Provide technology to improve processes around signposting, self-assessment and information about sources of help to local residents.
Work with the communities in the County most at risk of poor health to improve local residents' health, gathering insight to understand the causes of poor health and developing funded action plans.	Implement the delivery plan for Oxfordshire's digital inclusion strategy together with partners, including how assistive technology can support vulnerable groups to access services and lead a better quality of life.
Deliver support programmes to help mitigate the impact of ongoing rises to the cost of living, including launching a crisis fund to support those in most financial need.	Address local health inequalities through the establishment of a Health Inequalities Forum for Oxfordshire within the new Integrated Care System.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Launch new crisis fund by end of May 2023 and deliver 75% take up of the 'cost of living support' for those only in receipt of Housing Benefit only by end of March 2024.	% of premises in Oxfordshire below legal Universal Service Obligation (USO) of 10Mb/s
Number of physical visits to libraries.	Complete 275 home visits to give advice and practical help to reduce energy use and costs for low-income households.
Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of public computers in libraries)	Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (female) - this measures in years the difference in life expectancy between Oxfordshire residents experiencing the most and the least socio-economic deprivation.
Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (male) - this measures in years the difference in life expectancy between Oxfordshire residents experiencing the most and the least socio-economic deprivation	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PRIORITISE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF RESIDENTS.

Our Commitments: We will work with the health and wellbeing board and our partners to deliver and support services that make a vital contribution to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing. We will support the wellbeing of those in our community who have been affected, physically and mentally, by the COVID 19 pandemic and will continue to support our volunteers and the voluntary sector.

Healthier Objectives 23/24	
Lead on an update to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy which includes; Implementation of the domestic abuse strategic action plan. Combatting the harm caused in local communities from illicit drug use. Making Oxfordshire Smoke free by 2025. Promoting better mental wellbeing across the whole life-course and preventing self-harm and suicide.	Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Strategy enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant VCS in Oxfordshire.
Address worsening rates of unhealthy weight in Oxfordshire, including addressing a range of underlying factors that cause this worsening trend.	Maximise access to the opportunities provided by libraries, museums, nature and green spaces and other services to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
% of successfully treated opiates users not requiring treatment again within 6 months.	% of successfully treated alcohol only users not requiring treatment again within 6 months.
Live well - promote and prevent Smoking prevalence in adults (18+) - self-reported current smokers (2020 definition) .	% of mothers receiving a Maternal Mood Review in line with local pathway by aged 8 weeks.
Number of people contacted via Making Every Conversation Count.	Of those residents invited for a NHS Health check, the % who accept and complete the offer.
Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime and other forms of financial abuse.	Reduce the % of women smoking in pregnancy to contribute towards Oxfordshire smokefree strategy.
Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire.	Number of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support.
% of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit.	Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: SUPPORT CARERS AND THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM.

Our Commitments: We will engage nationally to push for a fair deal for the funding of social care.
Locally, we will support carers, including young carers and help those who want to live independently.
We will work with communities and the voluntary sector to explore new ways to provide services and focus on preventative services, helping people to stay active and supported at all stages of their lives.
We will support intergenerational programmes to build strong and resilient communities. We will work in collaboration across the health and social care system.

Healthier Objectives 23/24

Co-produce with carers a refreshed All Ages Carers Strategy for the health and social care system, which improves carers' wellbeing and invest in practical solutions to help carers maintain their caring roles.	Co-produce a refreshed Workforce Development Strategy that addresses challenges around recruiting and retaining social care workers. Focusing on outcomes for our residents, evaluating what we do well and what we can improve.
Invest in assistive technology and apps which promote independence and enable self-assessment where appropriate.	Champion strengths-based approaches across the health and social care system to reduce demand and ensure resources are used as effectively as possible.
Facilitate access to resources across the community through social prescribing and other referral routes that divert demand away from statutory services.	Help people to live independently and support themselves through personal and local facilities, using the Oxfordshire Way approach.
Work with service users and providers to find new ways to promote self-directed support, increasing choice and control for individuals.	Prepare for Care Quality Commission Assurance working with residents and partners to triangulate evidence and further embed continuous improvement.
Focus resources on areas of high deprivation to tackle social isolation and reduce health inequalities.	

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures

Number of people supported with on-going care.	% of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home.
% of residents aged 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family.	% of residents aged under 65 receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment.
% of residents aged 65 plus receiving Adult Social Care (ASC) who manage their care by using a direct payment.	Number of carers who have received a direct payment.
Number of visits to Live Well Oxfordshire.	Number of residents who have received a formal assessment of their role as a carer for a member of the family or a friend.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: INVEST IN AN INCLUSIVE, INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK.

Our Commitments: We will create a transport network that makes active travel the first choice for short journeys and invest in public transport to significantly reduce our reliance on car journeys.
In areas of planned housing growth, we will prioritise active and public transport over road capacity for cars.

Greener Objectives 23/24	
Prioritise active travel and public transport interventions on the existing and planned highway network to support healthy lifestyles and address inequalities in transport.	Develop and implement a plan for improved strategic routes for freight including exploring rail and reducing large vehicle movements on non-strategic roads.
Develop and approve priority local transport and connectivity Plan Part 2 - Area Travel Plans.	Deliver our commitments within the bus service improvement plan and Enhanced Partnership.
Deliver the countywide 20 mph programme in line with recently agreed policy.	

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Percentage of residents walking / cycling.	% of delivery against Countywide 20mph plan.
Number of cycling trips.	Number of bus passenger journeys.
Number of park and ride bus journeys.	% of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).
91 KM (2%) of the highway to be treated.	Public satisfaction in the condition of Highways.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: PRESERVE AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO NATURE AND GREEN SPACES.

Our Commitments: We will work with partners to provide safe and clean green spaces across the county that support the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents.
We will take action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in both rural and urban environments.

Greener Objectives 23/24	
Support and enable the activities from Oxfordshire's community action groups, to improve local environments and make nature more accessible.	Improve the amount and distribution of accessible and safe natural green space within Oxfordshire, in conjunction with partners.
Develop a countywide nature recovery strategy, and a tree and woodland plan, that involves taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy programme and support the development of a new local nature partnership for Oxfordshire.	Ensure our public rights of way network are safe and effectively maintained.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Total number of community activities held as part of the Community Action Group network 3,000 target for 23/24.	Number of community-led improvement schemes developed and delivered in year (this would link directly to our partnership with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment TOE).
% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction.	Number of Public Right of Way assessed as poor condition that are improved to good or better condition.
Volunteer hours on the Public Rights of Way network through established groups.	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Our Commitments: We will support all our children and young people, and their families, to achieve their very best and to prepare them for their future, including safeguarding, and supporting those more vulnerable and with additional needs.
We will continue to work with partners to provide help early so children and families are less likely to be in need.

Healthier Objectives 23/24	
Increase activity that supports pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to have needs met in mainstream school settings and deliver our Special School capacity expansion programme.	We will work with partners to increase Early Help, ensuring that children needs are met earlier. We will support families to care for their children at home where it is safe to do so, integrating assessments and support in the community to prevent children needing to come into the care system.
Expand the range of provision for young people and increase take-up in areas of high deprivation.	Support the emotional mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the number of interventions in schools and places which young people frequent.
Deliver our Children's Home programme to provide more places in Oxfordshire.	Respond to the findings of our newly established Education Commission.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Number of Early Help Assessments completed in Oxfordshire by any partner.	Number of children in an independent Non-Maintained Specialist School.
Number of Oxfordshire cared for Children.	Number of children with Educational Help and Care Plans educated in mainstream setting.
Increase the % of children in Foster Care.	Reduce the number of children in residential care.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 8: PLAY OUR PART IN A VIBRANT AND PARTICIPATORY LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Our Commitments: We are committed to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way.
We will engage and listen to Oxfordshire residents.
We will be open to scrutiny and regularly provide progress updates.
We will put the impact on the climate and future generations at the heart of decision making.
We will manage our own resources carefully.

Fairer Objectives 23/24	
Build greater confidence in our consultation and engagement processes by clearly describing how residents' feedback will be used and where it has helped shape policy or decision-making that a broader range of voices are heard and can help shape policy and decision-making.	Improve our approach to equality impact assessments and climate impact assessments, ensuring that we set out the effects of our decisions on particular groups of residents.
Provide regular opportunities for residents to engage in open dialogue with cabinet members, including Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events.	Demonstrate the contribution of each Scrutiny Committee to the development of policy and decision-making through the publication of an annual report.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Routinely update the 'you said, we did' section on Let's Talk Oxfordshire to demonstrate the impact of consultations.	Deliver two sounding board events for children and young people to provide deep dive opportunities.
During 2023/2024 to develop and further embed a public facing performance management portal, to enable better access for customers and scrutiny and further improve digital access.	Deliver two series of themed Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events in 2023/2024, including a mix of in-person and online sessions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 9: WORK WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PARTNERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFIT

Our Commitments: We will help Oxfordshire become a recognised centre of innovation in green and sustainable technologies.
We will use our purchasing power for environmental, social and economic benefit and ensure that our pandemic recovery planning supports sustainable job creation.

Fairer Objectives 23/24	
Work with partners, including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), to enable long-term job creation for local businesses through apprenticeships and business support.	Work with suppliers to maximise additional social and environmental value, as part of our progressive procurement policy and development planning processes, which will benefit local communities.
Promote career pathways in health and social care for local people and encourage those who are looking to change their careers to start their own enterprises in the sector.	Facilitate collaboration between businesses, the universities, OxLEP and our health and local authority partners to maintain Oxfordshire as a centre of innovation, turning ideas into real-life solutions in areas including transport, climate, energy and healthcare.

Key Performance Indicators and Progress Measures	
Participation in innovation funding bids and new projects.	% of Full Fibre To The Premises broadband (FTTP) in Oxfordshire.
Number of Trading Standards interventions conducted with businesses (including visits, provision of advice, sampling, and testing activities).	Reduce the number of overdue inspections from Risk Based Inspection Programme. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
% of Gigabit capable (DOCSIS 3.1 or Full Fibre) premises in Oxfordshire.	Sites delivered by NEOS Networks Limited under the Giga Hubs contract.
A minimum of £1m to be generated through commitment in tenders to social value, from suppliers who have been awarded contracts with Oxfordshire County Council.	

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Divisions Affected - All

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 April 2023

Update on progress against Oxfordshire County Council's Consultation and engagement strategy 2022-25

Report by Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

Note the update provided on the council's consultation and engagement strategy 2022-25.

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress against key actions in the council's consultation and engagement strategy 2022-25 and to set out milestones for the year ahead.

Background

2. In February 2022 Cabinet agreed a new consultation and engagement strategy for the council for the period 2022 – 2025. The strategy sets out a new approach to consultation and engagement, putting residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong, active and inclusive communities.

3. The strategy has two key aims:

    - To engage with and listen to residents and other partners in a more active and inclusive way. This includes listening to what residents value most, involving them in conversations about the things that affect them, and then using that feedback to help shape or improve services.

    - To widen the council's reach so that we listen to diverse communities and audiences. This includes those whose voices are seldom heard, such as young people and the digitally excluded.

4. To achieve these twin aims, the strategy sets out a range of ways the council will provide for residents to have their say, across multiple channels, both on and offline. This will include using new methodologies and being more proactive – so going to the places where we can reach residents and stakeholders, rather than expecting them to come to us.

5. The strategy also outlines the council's guiding principles for participation in all consultation or engagement activities and seeks to build on good practice both within the council and outside.

6. Accompanying the strategy is a detailed action plan, with clear targets and measures, which has been developed to ensure that progress is on track and there is a continued commitment to two-way engagement with residents.

Progress against key actions for 2022-23

7. The following three tables provide a summary of progress against the key actions from the strategy for 2022-23. These focus on the three pillars from the strategy: i) building the right foundations; ii) enabling two-way conversations; and iii) expanding the council's reach and being inclusive.

8. The consultation and engagement strategy has already started to drive improvements in the council's consultation and engagement practice. Whilst not all targets have been reached, or their focus has shifted, significant progress has been made across all three pillars of the strategy.

Table 1: Building the right foundations

Embed and develop the use of a new digital consultation and engagement platform 'Let's talk Oxfordshire' across the council	Protocols and best practice standards for Let's Talk Oxfordshire have been collated into a self-serve tool for all users of the platform. This is accompanied by in-person support and guidance from the consultation and engagement team.
Refresh the council's best practice consultation and engagement guidance	The council's consultation and engagement toolkit has been refreshed and updated and now includes best practice guidance on how to effectively include young people, the seldom heard and those who are digitally excluded. This guidance also includes new protocols and workflows for best practice consultation and engagement and a specific briefing on consultation and the law, upholding the council's commitment to the Gunning Principles. The council's co-production handbook has also been refreshed and new video content produced to explain co-production to different audiences.

| | Maximise the value of council professionals to support effective consultation and engagement. | A network of staff with responsibilities for consultation and engagement has been established alongside a Let's Talk Oxfordshire super users group. There is also a thriving co-production network.

During 2022-23, teams across communications, strategy and insight have come together to support service areas across the council to deliver strategic consultations and engagement activities, including adult social care, education, public health, transport and waste management. |
| --- | --- |
| Offer new training and support opportunities | The council has invested in best practice training from the Consultation Institute, targeting staff in the communications, marketing and engagement service initially.

A large number of training sessions have been run on how to use Let's Talk Oxfordshire, led by the consultation and engagement team.

During 2022-23 over 70 people have taken part in co-production training. |

Table 2: Enabling two-way conversations

Priorities	Actions
Introduce new public engagement opportunities for people to hear from and ask questions of the council's Cabinet.	The council's first set of Oxfordshire Conversations events were trialled between 18 and 21 October. Three online meetings were promoted, with 122 people attending (194 signed up) and nearly 100 questions were submitted in advance. These replaced a fuller programme of in-person and online meetings, which were cancelled as a mark of respect following the death of Her Majesty The Queen.
Introduce a wider set of tools that will facilitate a shift away from a 'transmit' approach to consultation to having a two-way dialogue	We exceed our target of at least 10 per cent of projects on Let's Talk Oxfordshire using at least one of the new engagement tools. The mapping tool, which enables people to drop pins on online maps and post comments, was the most frequently used new tool.

On the back of a direct approach from Oxford University the council has explored the use of |

	citizens' juries, at arm's length, learning from best practice. During June and July 2022, Oxford University convened a Citizens' Jury called Street Voice to explores issues related to transport, health and climate change in Oxford. The council actively engaged with the jury at different stages, as invited by the university, and Cabinet formally received a report of the jury recommendations and responded to this.
Widen the reach and overall diversity of young people engaged	This has been a key area of focus for 2022-23. The council has delivered two innovative sounding board events for children and young people, which blended hands-on activities and discussion. The first centred on the council's cultural provision for young people and attracted an audience of more vulnerable young people; the second focused on the future of travel and transport. Both events generated very positive feedback from participants. Strong relationships between the consultation and engagement team and colleagues who lead the council's children in care council and targeted youth support service have been fostered and strengthened across the year, with excellent partnership working on the first sounding board. The council has positively engaged schools, partners and the voluntary sector to reach a diverse range of children and young people, including vulnerable children and young people such as young carers and SEND children and young people. Children and young people have been actively supported by the consultation and engagement team to participate in decision-making boards and advisory groups. They have also been supported to fully participate in adult-focused stakeholder summits. The team has also conducted focus groups, depth interviews and surveys with a wide range of young people to support service-area led work.
Support open and transparent decision-making	During 2022-23 we introduced a 'you said, we did' section on Let's Talk Oxfordshire to outline the actions taken by the council in response to

	feedback. Improving the content of this section remains a key focus for 2023/24.

Table 3: Expanding the council's reach and being inclusive

Priorities	Actions
Build the council's online audiences	Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, approximately 188,000 people visited Let's Talk Oxfordshire, with 11,310 registering their details.

Visitor numbers and registrations spiked when the council was consulting and engaging on high-profile issues. Whilst overall registrations did not achieve the ambitious 15,000 target set in the strategy, we recognise that it is not always appropriate to ask people to register to take part in consultations and engagement exercises, particularly on sensitive issues, and this may in fact deter participation.

To mitigate against this, we introduced opportunities for people to sign up for news, information and consultation or engagement activities of interest in some consultation and engagement exercises. This has resulted in 4,500 people opting into receive communications from the council, helping to build our online audiences. |
| Focus on including everyone, by supporting equal access and inclusion in consultation and engagement practice | We now have a standard template for communications and engagement plans. Stakeholder mapping is crucial to understanding audience groups and remains a key area of focus.

To address digital exclusion, the communications, marketing and engagement team routinely works with libraries to promote engagement and consultation opportunities. This includes providing posters and hard-copy reference documents (eg maps) where appropriate.

We have engaged with councillors and partners – including schools and voluntary and community sector organisations - to provide promotional packs to help make many of our key consultation and engagement exercises more accessible to local people. These packs contain posters for self-printing, content for social media and newsletters etc. |

	A weekly digest of consultation and engagement activities has been introduced for the customer services team. This helps them support customer requests for the provision of materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, Easy Read, interpretation or translation services at first point of contact, to signpost more complex queries efficiently, and answer straightforward queries. During 2022-23 we have effectively used partnership networks to make consultation engagement more accessible for target audiences, particularly within adult social care and children's services. This continues to be an area of focus for other parts of the council.

Key milestones for 2023/24

9. Work continues to further develop the council's consultation and engagement approach and practice. During the 2023/24 we have set the following performance targets:

- Deliver six workshops on consultation and engagement for managers across the council to develop broader and deeper skill sets.

- Routinely update the 'you said, we did' section on Let's Talk Oxfordshire to demonstrate the impact of consultations, being explicit about where feedback has played a part in shaping policy or decision making.

- Deliver two series of Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events, including a mix of in-person and online sessions.

- Deliver two sounding board events for children and young people to provide deep dive opportunities.

10. Over the course of 2023/34, we will also:

- Champion the best practice use of Let's Talk Oxfordshire across the council, utilising all its tools, and ensuring once again that at least 10 per cent of projects on the platform use at least one of the new engagement tools.

- Continue to build engagement, drive traffic to and increase registrations on Let's Talk Oxfordshire where appropriate. We are aiming for a 10 per cent engaged participants rate per consultation led by or significantly supported by the communications, marketing and engagement team and 15,000 new registrations / sign-ups.

- Introduce a tailored monthly e-newsletter from June 2023 promoting opportunities for consultation and engagement and to provide 'you said we did' feedback on previous consultations.

- Help services to be very clear and open on what it is they are consulting on and what aspect people can influence, so that parameters are clearly understood. We will put a specific focus on ensuring each consultation on Let's talk Oxfordshire includes a brief statement about this in its introduction.

- Trial one of the new methodologies listed in the strategy (eg peer research), according to business need, particularly those that make consultation and engagement more accessible for target audiences, including seldom heard groups and the digitally excluded.

- Continue to improve how we support equal access and inclusion in our consultation and engagement practice and widen the reach and overall diversity of young people engaged.

Financial Implications

11. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this update. The targets for 2023/24 can be met within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

12. This update does not raise any legal implications.

Staff Implications

13. This update does not have any staff implications

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. This update does not raise any equality and inclusion implications.

Background papers: Consultation and engagement strategy 2022-25

Contact Officer: Kerry Middleton, Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement.

April 2023

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Consultation and engagement strategy 2022 - 2025

Foreword

Following the local elections in May 2021, the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance formed to lead the county council. Our vision is to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. Nine priorities have been created to deliver this aim, which will form the foundations of a new strategic plan for the council.

As part of 'playing our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy', and 'tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire', the county council has made a commitment to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way. This marks the start of a new longer-term approach to consultation and engagement, which aims to engage with and listen to residents and other partners in a more active and inclusive way.

The council's new consultation and engagement strategy outlines this new approach, putting residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong, active and inclusive communities. It includes examples of best practice and the guiding principles for participation in all consultation or engagement activities.

As always, we are open to listening and look forward to hearing from all our communities across Oxfordshire.

Councillor Glynis Phillips
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Overall approach

1. The council is strongly committed to improving its approach to how it consults and engages with its residents and diverse communities. That includes actively listening to what residents value most, involving them in conversations about the things that affect them and using this feedback to help shape or improve services – both in design and delivery.

2. Oxfordshire County Council's consultation and engagement approach will build on good practice both within the council and outside. The overall council vision is to create a range of opportunities that expand the council's broadcast communications to conversations and two-way engagement. For consultation and engagement activities, these opportunities will ensure the council is inclusive, widening its reach to hear from and listen to diverse communities and audiences. A core focus is listening to what local people say and what really matters to them. This requires a whole organisational response and commitment.

3. This is in addition to continuing to meet more standard requirements for regular consultations, for example highway public notices, planning applications and traffic regulation orders.

4. **Consultation and engagement goals:**

   a. Expand from broadcast communications to two-way engagement and active listening.
   b. Grow and widen the council's audience reach[1] using digital channels that offer opportunities for more people to have their say and for quality engagement in multiple ways.
   c. Be inclusive when seeking the views of residents; this includes reaching the seldom-heard or hard to reach[2] such as young people, vulnerable adults and those who are digitally excluded[3].
   d. Demonstrate where the council has taken the views of consultees into account in its decision-making.

5. This will be achieved by providing a range of ways that residents can have their say, across multiple channels, both on and offline. This will include using new methodologies and being more proactive, going to the places where residents and wider stakeholders[4] are, particularly to gather the views of those seldom-heard, rather than expecting them to come to the council. Approaches and use of methodologies can evolve and develop over the short and the long-term.

Building the foundations

6. To meet the short-term improvement challenge, two key pieces of work are key:
   a. Embed and develop the use of a new digital consultation and engagement platform across the council.
   b. Refresh the council's best practice consultation and engagement guidance.

A new digital consultation and engagement platform

7. 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' is the council's new digital consultation and engagement platform, which offers multiple digital ways of engaging and

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[1] Audience reach is the number of individuals that see a message or communication.

[2] Seldom-heard or hard to reach audiences refers to underrepresented people who use or might use public services but are difficult to engage in public discussion so their needs or views less likely to be heard by professionals or decision-makers.

[3] Digitally excluded people can lack skills, confidence and motivation, along with having limited or no access to online equipment and connectivity.

[4] Stakeholders refer to individuals or groups who may have an interest in council decisions or activities.

consulting people, including map tools; ideas forums/boards; discussion groups; surveys; quality data analysis; as well as a modern, mobile responsive and accessible web presence.

8. Content on the site needs to be developed and grow and service leads need to be trained in its use. The communications, engagement and marketing team will lead this training and will maintain oversight as the 'superusers[5]' and champions of best practice. The platform will help the council grow its online audiences and, together when integrating with existing and new channels, will help to deliver dynamic[6] tailored news and consultation and engagement opportunities of interest to residents.

A refresh of the council's best practice consultation and engagement guidance

9. A refresh of the council's best practice consultation and engagement guidance is required for staff and leaders to support the change in its consultation and engagement approach and the use of Let's Talk Oxfordshire. This will include a workflow outlining responsibilities and timescales as well as any protocols and processes to help guide.

10. The guidance will also make the distinction between different types, scales and levels of consultation, from the controversial, sensitive, complex and/or statutory (for example transport schemes or proposals on services for children with special educational needs and disabilities) – which require simultaneous management of dialogue methods as well as significant internal and external communications support – to smaller or non-statutory consultations.

11. As the professional leads, the communications, marketing and engagement team will continue to champion and advise on best practice standards and commitments when planning consultation and engagement activity. However, a new wider commitment to these standards needs to be upheld by the leadership team and the whole organisation. This will mark a new approach.

12. **So what is consultation and engagement?** The terms consultation, involvement and engagement are often used interchangeably. All three are about listening to the views of local people to shape services, develop policy or take action. Yet, they serve distinct functions. The Consultation Institute helps define these for us.

    a. **What is consultation?** Consultation is the process of dynamic dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action. It is best suited when **there is a decision to be made**.

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[5] A superuser is someone who uses a computer system with special privileges needed to administer and maintain the system.

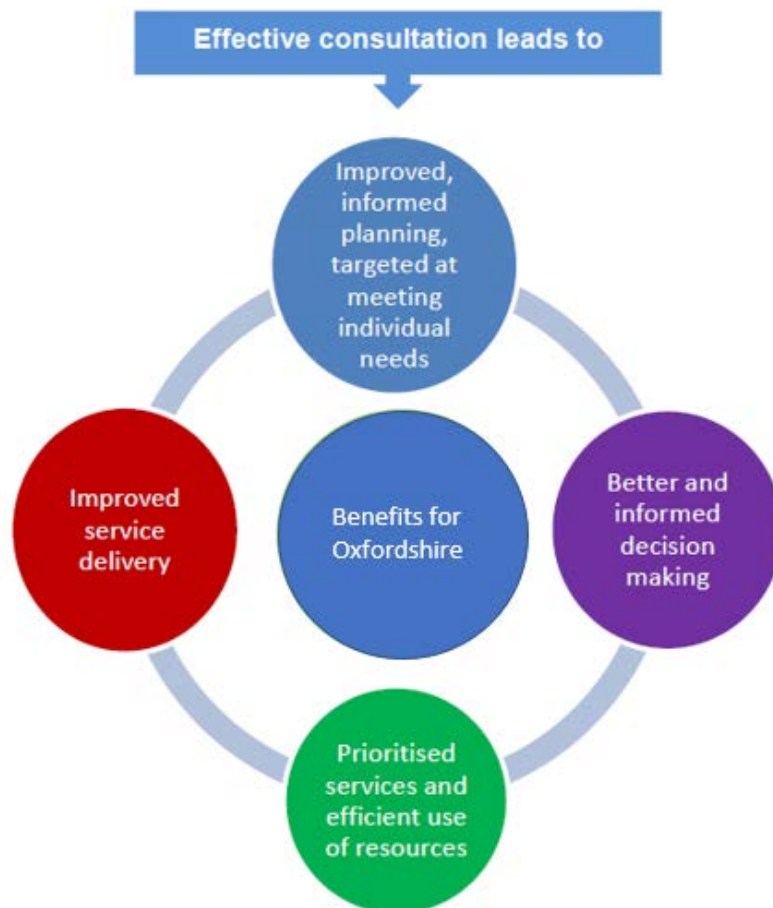[6] Dynamic news is where content changes and is personalised based on people's online interactions.

b. **What is engagement?** Engagement can be defined as actions or processes taken or undertaken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interactions can then take place. Engagement activity can be useful and insightful to help develop proposals before a formal consultation takes place. It is best suited for **fostering effective relationships.**

c. **What is involvement?** Involvement is the effective interaction between planners, decision makers and stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis. It is best suited for when **there is an issue to discuss.**

13. Consultation is an important aspect of the council's work helping to shape priorities and deliver benefits to its communities. Given the wide-ranging areas of work the council engages in, it is essential that the council listens to its residents and wider stakeholders and act on what they say to make improvements and be held accountable for decisions.

14. To make a decision about improving or changing a service, the council needs to be confident the decision is properly informed by public opinion and its key stakeholders. It is important that all council officers think clearly and understand the reasons behind the following commonly asked questions: Why consult? When to consult? When not to consult? The guidance will build on the following:

Why consult?	When to consult?	When not to consult?
To establish the priorities of communities and stakeholders.	When there is a statutory duty to consult with service users i.e. where the provision of a service is statutory or when considering making a significant change to that service.	Where room for manoeuvre is so limited, either by statutory or budgetary restrictions, that there is little real decision-making that the consultation can inform.
To co-design[7] and develop solutions to problems.		
To monitor and measure satisfaction with services.	When an inclusive dialogue is needed between individuals or groups to exchange views to influence a decision.	Where the council has already consulted on the same issue, or where the same groups of people/organisations have recently been approached with a sufficiently similar consultation exercise.
To establish the strength of support for a proposed service, policy or course of action.		
To listen and understand individual preferences where a range of options may be available.		Where the issue should or could be resolved without needing to consult.

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[7] A method where decision-making is shared equally throughout the process.

Effective consultation leads to

- Improved, informed planning, targeted at meeting individual needs
- Improved service delivery
- Benefits for Oxfordshire
- Better and informed decision making
- Prioritised services and efficient use of resources

15. The council's standards and commitments will also be upheld against the following principles:

   a. **The Gunning principles:** The principles are a set of rules for public consultation that were proposed in 1985 by Stephen Sedley QC and accepted by the judge in the Gunning v London Borough of Brent court case about a consultation for a school closure. A supreme court case in 2014 endorsed the legal standing of the principles. Since then, they form a strong legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed. They consist of four rules, which, if followed, are designed to make consultation fair, legitimate and a worthwhile exercise:

      1. Consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage. A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers.

      2. There is sufficient information provided, including the reasons for proposals, to allow for intelligent consideration and response. The information provided must relate to the consultation and

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must be available, accessible and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.

3. There is adequate time for people to consider a proposal, participate and respond. The length of time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation.

4. Conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

b. **Equal access and inclusion**: Having clear communications and engagement plans to support activity is key, with an assessment of the best channels and methods to reach target audiences. Service leads will be responsible for equality impact assessments to support consultation proposals, which will inform the development of these plans, taking account of audiences with protected characteristics[8], those for whom English is a second language and those who may be digitally excluded.

As a minimum standard, the council will consider housing printed copies of consultation surveys in libraries and other relevant public-facing buildings and will offer access to alternative formats – eg Braille, Easy Read or interpretation services. The council is committed to using plain English in all its consultations.

c. **Engagement methodologies:** Guided by the council's communications, marketing and engagement team, the council will start to explore wider tools and ways of gathering feedback from or involving residents in service delivery. This will be assessed as part of the development of communications and engagement plans to support activity, recognising that surveys may not be the only route, or the best route to engage.

This will form part of both a short-term and long-term commitment to provide a wide range of opportunities for people to engage with the council in a more inclusive way. Some activity may stand alone from formal consultations but could be a tool to then use for them.

d. **Timeframes:** Supporting Gunning principle 3, best guidance examples of timeframes will be outlined in the council's refreshed consultation and engagement guidance covering major service changes and statutory consultations to smaller non-statutory activities seeking views.

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[8] The Equality Act 2010 protects us all by making it against the law to discriminate against or harass someone because of a protected characteristic. There are nine protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Changes during the planning phase of a consultation may cause delays to the timeline, which may impact the outcomes that can be delivered. Consultation timelines should not be compressed to meet the council's Cabinet dates and deadlines, or other decision-making meetings, but designed around best practice and the best ways to reach audiences.

It is also key to avoid audience consultation fatigue where too many consultations with the same people result in disengagement – timing and channel prioritisation are important considerations when planning.

e. **Consultation feedback/results:** Providing feedback is key to having and maintaining an ongoing two-way conversation and engagement with residents. Feedback and results must inform decision-making and be published with a clear summary for the 'You said, we did' section of Let's Talk Oxfordshire.

f. **Knowledge, understanding and relationships with communities:** Communities need to be segmented beyond geography to how they self-define (for example, families and their networks; commuters, visitors and communities of interest eg faith groups, recreational etc). This understanding needs to be recognised as constantly emerging and changing – the council will never have a fixed understanding, as communities are fluid.

Training and support

16. A staff training and support programme will be implemented to support the council's commitment to more active listening and engagement and the rollout of Let's Talk Oxfordshire. As part of this, the communications, marketing and engagement team will look to train staff within council service departments and create a network to promote best practice across the council. The remit of the network and their connection to the communications, marketing and engagement team would need to be clear and not just focused on online consultation processes and the support and use of Let's Talk Oxfordshire.

17. The communications, marketing and engagement team will provide quality co-ordination, oversight and an overarching communications and engagement approach. It will advise, guide, support and facilitate action, as well as deliver accompanying campaigns or publicity activity.

18. The council's insights team will play an active role in providing behavioural insight so that consultations and community engagement projects can be more targeted and appropriate.

19. All these actions will help the council improve consistency of standards and approach towards consultation and engagement activity and facilitate two-way engagement.

Two-way conversations, expanding reach and being inclusive

Oxfordshire Conversations

20. To support the new approach, the council will introduce a series of engagement events that will offer opportunities for residents to hear from and ask questions of members of the council's Cabinet. Events will be themed but will include an element of an open question and answer session to allow for conversations on wider issues that matter most to residents.

21. These events will be inclusive to all, offering people the greatest choice to access these conversations both face to face (COVID permitting), online or hybrid – a mixture of both. Events will both enable those who are digitally excluded and those who might be physically or mentally excluded[9] to participate.

New methodologies and tools

22. The council uses a range of community engagement tools, including surveys and discussion groups. The council will start to introduce, where appropriate, a wider set of tools that will facilitate a shift away from a 'transmit' approach to having a two-way dialogue.

23. This may include using peer research, citizens' juries and appreciative inquiry. Existing community networks and volunteer groups can also be built upon, working with the council's district, city, health, education and business partners. A collaboration with a key partner, such as Healthwatch, could be considered.

    a. **Peer research** is where community members are recruited, trained and supported to carry out research and consultation within their own community networks. It is a collaborative approach, where organisations and local people work together for the common good. All parties achieve a better understanding of alternative perspectives and relationships are enhanced by working collectively.

    b. **Appreciative inquiry** is a methodology that systematically facilitates individuals and groups to define, agree and then build on what is good and effective within their organisations and communities. It involves facilitation through a four-step process, which is based on focusing on the strengths and assets of people and communities as well as their needs.

    c. **Citizens' juries** involve specially recruited members of the public (around 12 - 16 people), researchers and policy makers coming face to face to deliberate research, policy evidence and expert opinion over a

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[9] There are some people who are digitally included but who find it difficult to attend events face to face due to social or economic factors or physical disabilities. Some may lack the confidence or may have a mental illness that makes it challenging for them to physically participate in public events.

three or four-day period. In relation to a specific policy issue of public importance, citizens are supported to pose questions to, and engage in debate with, policy makers and experts and then to reach a decision and/or set of recommendations.

    d. **Co-production** is where citizens are involved in the creation of public policies and services. The council has a number of existing co-production groups in children and adult services and can utilise them to jointly develop, design and contribute towards a service change or proposal.

25. Some of these new methodologies will help to ensure the council is offering a wide range of opportunities to engage residents, including those whose voices are not always harnessed and heard.

26. Councillors also play a key part here in providing key intelligence for how local people and communities are viewed and how best to reach them.

27. Methodologies will be chosen depending on the type of engagement, consultation or involvement required (as outlined in paragraph 14) and level of participation desired based on an assessment of need. The use of more than one methodology is achievable and possible depending on the target audience(s).

28. This will be outlined within supporting communications and engagement plans for engagement and consultation exercises.

29. The table on page 10 builds on and outlines Roger Hart's ladder of participation from broadcast sharing of information to empowerment. It shows the various participation levels within this range and people's ability to influence decision-making or change within them. It also gives examples of methodologies. To note some of the same methodologies can be used for different participation levels.

Participation types, influence and methodology examples

Level	Mode	Ability to influence	Definition	Examples
Insight	One-way	None	Gathering data and published information to inform communication, engagement and consultation plans with no channel provided for feedback.	Census, JSNA, lifestyle data sets, published research etc.
Information	One-way	None	Transmitting information, with no channel provided for feedback.	Media release, website, newsletter, poster etc.
Engagement	Two-way	Limited	Inviting views and sharing experiences, with the objective of gaining insight to help develop ideas, proposals and programmes of action. It can also be used to build longer-term relationships to enable views to be exchanged on an ongoing basis.	Forums, network meetings, quick polls, workshops, events, participation and discussion groups etc.
Consultation	Two-way	Limited	Ask and listen to people to influence decisions, policies or programmes of action.	Polls and surveys, in-depth interviews, focus groups, online ideas boards, digital mapping tools, citizen juries etc.
Collaboration and coproduction	Dialogue based	Moderate	Working together for a defined and common purpose such as identifying issues, delivering actions, and making decisions together	Peer research, co-design work, appreciative enquiry, recruitment, commissioning and evaluation panels etc.
Empowerment	Dialogue based	Full control	Organise events for citizens, place the full decision-making power in their hands and implement what they decide.	Citizen proposals, community-run committees

Building the council's online audiences

28. Work to review and map the council's existing networks and community groups and establishing a single stakeholder database (compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation) has already begun by the communications, marketing and engagement team as part of its strategy to grow the council's online audiences. This includes separating audiences by areas of interests and being able to provide individuals with targeted and tailored e-newsletter content – news, information and consultation or engagement activities of interest. Let's Talk Oxfordshire will offer another opportunity for audience growth, integrating with the council's online newsletter platform.

Partnership working

29. The council will build on existing partnerships and networks that are facilitated and supported by the council – for example the districts and city, health (and Healthwatch), business and academic institutes – to expand the number of channels that the council can use to reach people.

30. Partner agencies, in particular health, also have integrated community engagement approaches (eg participation groups) and these could be harnessed to expand the council's audience reach and develop effective joint working. The council will also ensure it works closely with town and parish councils, as well as councillor networks, to enhance hyperlocal[10] engagement, particularly with people that are harder to reach. This will make engagement more accessible for local people.

31. The council will also ensure it continues to work closely with voluntary groups and partners. The Oxfordshire Compact (2004)[11] includes a consultation code that sets out ways in which statutory agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations should consult with one another in relation to:
    a. Effective consultation as a key part of the policy-making process.
    b. People's views shaping policies and setting the agenda for better services.
    c. Consultation as a two-way process in which all are equal partners, and both statutory and voluntary and community sector organisations have duties and responsibilities when consulting or being consulted with.
    d. Taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the processes and procedures are as inclusive as possible.

32. The council is currently coproducing a new voluntary and community sector strategy with the sector for agreement later in 2022. The aim of the strategy is to reiterate its commitment to the voluntary and community sector and to ensure all parties are appropriately aligned with each other. As part of the new

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[10] Relating to or focused on matters concerning a small community or geographical area.
[11] A non-legal partnership agreement between statutory bodies, such as local authorities and the NHS, together with voluntary, community and faith organisations to work more effectively together for the people of Oxfordshire.

strategy, the ambition is to include a review of the Oxfordshire Compact, which will be coproduced both internally and with the sector.

Listening to the voices of young people

33. Children and young people (aged 0 - 17) make up one in five of Oxfordshire's population. The council has been proactive for many years in ensuring the voice, rights and responsibilities of children and young people are central to what the council does, using a variety of approaches to involve young people. Youth voice and youth participation is built into service delivery across children's services.

34. The current consultation and engagement opportunities for children and young people include: the Children in Care Council; the Voice of Oxfordshire's Youth (VOXY) – a countywide forum that provides a voice for young people to make decisions about matters that affect change; interview, commissioning and evaluation panels; oxme.info – a website for young people, which provides work experience opportunities; and topic and service-specific consultations.

35. Following a review of VOXY (May 2021), the council will aim to widen the reach of young people engaged and increase the overall diversity of children and young people the council hears from. This includes developing insight so that the council better understands its audiences; building stronger relationships with Children in Care Council, service areas, school councils, partners and the voluntary sector so it can reach more children and young people; creating a virtual youth opportunities network on Let's Talk Oxfordshire; reintroducing topic-specific sounding boards; and working with oxme.info and activitiesoxfordshire.info to target the promotion of youth voice opportunities and to cascade findings and actions.

Monitoring progress and review

36. The success at engaging with and listening to residents and other partners in a more active and inclusive way will be measured through a range of metrics.

37. The council will review the consultation and engagement strategy annually and publish an update against its key priorities and actions on the consultations – have your say pages of the county council website oxfordshire.gov.uk/consultation.

38. The council will report on key performance measures in the communications, marketing and engagement team's quarterly monitoring reports and will provide opportunities for residents, communities, councillors, consultees, and engagement participants to give their feedback to improve the council's performance.

39. A summary of actions for 2022 to 2023 is set out below. This has been extracted from a detailed action plan that has been developed, which focuses

on building the right foundations, enabling two-way conversations, expanding the council's reach and being inclusive.

Building the right foundations

Priorities	Actions
Embed and develop the use of a new digital consultation and engagement platform 'Let's talk Oxfordshire' across the council	Develop protocols and best practice standards for Let's Talk Oxfordshire by the end of March 2022.
Refresh the council's best practice consultation and engagement guidance	Establish new protocols and workflows for best practice consultation and engagement, upholding the council's commitment to the Gunning Principles, by the end of March 2022. Deliver a refreshed online consultation and engagement guidance document and toolkit and update any webpages by end of March 2022, including best practice advice on effectively including young people, the seldom heard and digitally excluded people.
Maximise the value of council professionals to support effective consultation and engagement.	Create a network of staff who have key responsibilities for consultation and engagement by the end of March 2022. Work collaboratively across communications, strategy and insight to support key service area led strategic consultations and engagement activities by providing specialist advice, data and behavioural insights, quality co-ordination and oversight, timely and effective campaign or publicity activity and effective data analysis and reporting, supporting a minimum of six exercises during 2022/23.
Offer new training and support opportunities	Develop and roll out new in-house training on best practice consultation and engagement, targeting the staff network initially and offering a minimum of four training sessions in 2022/23 and a lightning talk for all staff by the end of March 2022. Develop new in-house training for Let's Talk Oxfordshire, running a minimum of four sessions in 2022/23.

Enabling two-way conversations

Priorities	Actions
Introduce new public engagement opportunities for people to hear from and ask questions of the council's Cabinet.	Launch a trial of Oxfordshire Conversations events with a view to running an annual series of conversations both face to face (COVID permitting), online or hybrid – a mixture of both. Specific focus will be given to offering choice and supporting equality of access and inclusion.
Introduce a wider set of tools that will facilitate a shift away from a 'transmit' approach to consultation to having a two-way dialogue	Trial at least one of the new methodologies listed in the strategy in 2022/23 (eg appreciative enquiry, peer research etc), according to business need. Ensure at least 10 per cent of projects on Let's Talk Oxfordshire use at least one of the new engagement tools the platform offers by the end of 2022/23.
Widen the reach and overall diversity of young people engaged	Build even stronger relationships with the council's Children in Care Council, youth offer, service areas, school councils, partners and the voluntary sector to reach more children and young people from January 2022. Deliver three sounding board events during 2022/23 to provide deep dive opportunities for children and young people on themed issues identified by the council.
Support open and transparent decision-making	Introduce a new 'you said, we did' section to Let's Talk Oxfordshire by the end of March 2022.

Expanding the council's reach and being inclusive

Priorities	Actions
Build the council's online audiences	Work across the communications, marketing, and engagement team to sign-up 15,000 new users to Let's Talk Oxfordshire in 2022/23. Provide individuals with monthly GDPR-compliant targeted and tailored e-newsletter content – news, information and consultation or engagement activities of interest.
Focus on including everyone, by supporting equal access and inclusion in consultation and engagement practice	Starting with key service area led strategic consultations, have clear communications and engagement plans for exercises, which take account of insight and understanding about audience groups, including how communities self-define, those with protected characteristics and those who may be digitally excluded. Work with libraries and other public facing buildings to provide and promote engagement and consultation opportunities to digitally excluded from January 2022. Work with customer services to support customer requests for the provision of materials in alternative formats eg Braille, Easy Read, interpretation or translation services from January 2022. Use partnership networks even more effectively to make consultation engagement more accessible for target audiences, including seldom heard groups and digitally excluded, from January 2022.

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Divisions Affected – All

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 APRIL 2023

LGA peer review on communications: update on action plan

Report by Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Performance Scrutiny is RECOMMENDED to —**

    Note the council's actions taken in response to the recommendations in the report from the July 2022 LGA communications peer review.

Executive summary

2. An LGA peer review of the council's communications, marketing and engagement function was undertaken from 6 to 8 July 2022.

3. A preliminary report by the LGA peer review panel was considered by the Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 30 September 2022. The committee was subsequently provided with the full LGA report once available. A copy of the full report is available at Annex A.

4. The LGA peer review team made seven key recommendations in their report:
    (a) Involve the communications team at an earlier stage when projects are initiated and around significant decisions.
    (b) Establish a close working relationship between the leader and the director and head of communications to ensure understanding, delivery and communication of key priorities.
    (c) Clarify and streamline the approvals process for communications and the media.
    (d) Explore support and training around political awareness for the communications team and use this as a pilot for the wider organisation.
    (e) Cabinet, the senior leadership team (SLT) and the director and head of communications to agree a shared vision for video content.
    (f) Make use of relevant metrics and insight to evaluate and inform future comms plans.

(g)   Continue to build on work with SLT and Cabinet to develop the overarching narrative for Oxfordshire so that it can be understood and owned by all staff and members.

5.   At its meeting of 30 September 2022, Performance Scrutiny made three observations for Cabinet, which were considered at the Cabinet meeting of 18 October 2022:

a)   That recent experience demonstrates that upstream integration of communications is crucial to successful policy development and implementation and should be pursued as a priority.

b)   Notwithstanding the clear professionalism of the communications team, they are subject to pressures and there remains a risk that communications may tend towards excessive risk-aversion or to politicisation.

c)   Communications resources for Scrutiny remain unresolved.

6.   The communications team developed an action plan based around the seven recommendations and has been implementing this since July 2022. A summary of actions taken or underway is outlined below.

Action plan

Recommendation 1: Involve the communications team at an earlier stage when projects are initiated and around significant decisions.

7.   A communications grid, which details planned activity, is circulated on a regular basis to members of Cabinet, SLT, the extended leadership team (ELT), and Scrutiny Chairs. This not only provides a forward look at what activity is planned over a two-month period, but also an opportunity for new projects and communication requirements to be flagged to the communications team.

8.   A review of forward plan templates has been undertaken and questions have been included in agenda request forms about whether a communications plan is needed for the project in question and whether the communications team have been informed. This includes papers for SLT and Informal Cabinet.

9.   The director of communications, strategy and insight attends Informal Cabinet meetings, and meets with individual members of SLT on a regular basis to ensure the communications team has sight of proposed projects and decisions.

Recommendation 2: Establish a close working relationship between the leader and the director and head of communications to ensure understanding, delivery and communication of key priorities.

10.   A regular timetable of fortnightly communications planning and review meetings between the leader and the director of communications is in place.

Recommendation 3: Clarify and streamline the approvals process for communications and the media.

11.   A media protocol is in place, which has been shared with members of Cabinet and SLT to ensure all parties are aware of the support available to them and processes to be followed.

12.   Media training took place for Cabinet members in summer 2021; this was supplemented in September 2022 with a refresher session for Cabinet and SLT, with a focus on answering public questions prior to the Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events. More indepth media training for Cabinet members and SLT is planned for May and June 2023, which will be carried out by an external media training company.

13.   Work is underway to build closer relationships with the local media, particularly with a view to profiling the leader and chief executive. Regular meetings with the editors of Oxford Mail and BBC have been set up with the head of communications and the media and communications manager for reciprocal information sharing and to explore editorial and broadcast opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Explore support and training around political awareness for the communications team and use this as a pilot for the wider organisation.

14.   Members of the communications, marketing and engagement team have attended the LGiU political awareness training course, where it is deemed beneficial to help support them in their roles. The communications management team is also providing support and mentoring for new members of the team or those less experienced.

15.   Members of the wider Customers, Organisational Development & Resources directorate have also attended the LGiU course, where recommended for their roles.

Recommendation 5: Cabinet, SLT and the director and head of communications to agree a shared vision for video content.

16.   A video strategy was shared and agreed with Cabinet members in summer 2022 and is being implemented. This included adopting a more fleet of foot approach to video production, particularly around cabinet decisions. A review of the engagement we have received on a variety of video content has been carried out and this is being used to update the strategy.

Recommendation 6: Make use of relevant metrics and insight to evaluate and inform future communications plans.

17.   This was a recommendation accepted as already grounded in the communications, marketing and engagement team's day-to-day work. The team compiles detailed metrics for each marketing and communications campaign to assess its performance. A quarterly report is circulated to members of Cabinet, SLT and ELT, which provides metrics and insight for

marketing campaigns, social media engagement, media coverage, newsletters, consultations and internal communication.

18. Further opportunities have been explored, and will continue to be explored, as part of maintaining best practice outputs. These include implementing social listening as part of our social media management suite of tools to inform and help shape communications campaigns; and moving email communications to staff and members to an online platform so that audience and engagement levels can be accurately measured.

Recommendation 7: Continue to build on work with SLT and Cabinet to develop the overarching narrative for Oxfordshire so that it can be understood and owned by all staff and members.

19. A number of workshops took place over summer and autumn 2022 with Cabinet and SLT to explore the council's vision and the accompanying narrative to communicate that vision. The narrative was included in the updated strategic plan 2023-2025.

20. Further work on an overarching narrative for Oxfordshire is planned following the arrival of the council's new chief executive.

Observations from Scrutiny

Observation 1: Recent experience demonstrates that upstream integration of communications is crucial to successful policy development and implementation and should be pursued as a priority.

21. As set out in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, steps have been put in place to help ensure that communications is considered, and the team involved at, an early stage of project and policy development. This is a key focus for the director and head of communications.

Observation 2: Notwithstanding the clear professionalism of the communications team, they are subject to pressures and there remains a risk that communications may tend towards excessive risk-aversion or to politicisation.

22. As set out in paragraph 14, members of the communications, marketing and engagement team have attended the LGiU political awareness training course to increase their political awareness. The head of communications is working to embed a more proactive and front-foot approach to communications relating to major policy decisions across the team.

Observation 3: Communications resources for Scrutiny remain unresolved.

23. The director and head of communications are working with the Principal Scrutiny Officer to identify upcoming opportunities for communicating the role and work of Scrutiny throughout the year.

Financial implications

24.   There are no budgetary implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

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

Staff implications

26.   There are no staff implications arising from this report.

Equality and inclusion implications

27.   Equality and inclusion implications have been and continue to be considered as part of the development and implementation of the action plan.

Sustainability implications

28.   There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk management

29.   There are no direct risks to manage arising from this report. Communications risks are identified and mitigated against, where possible, in the development of any activity led by the team. This includes in the implementation of the action plan.

Susannah Wintersgill
Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight

Annex A: LGA peer review of communications – full report

Contact officers: Kerry Middleton
                             Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement
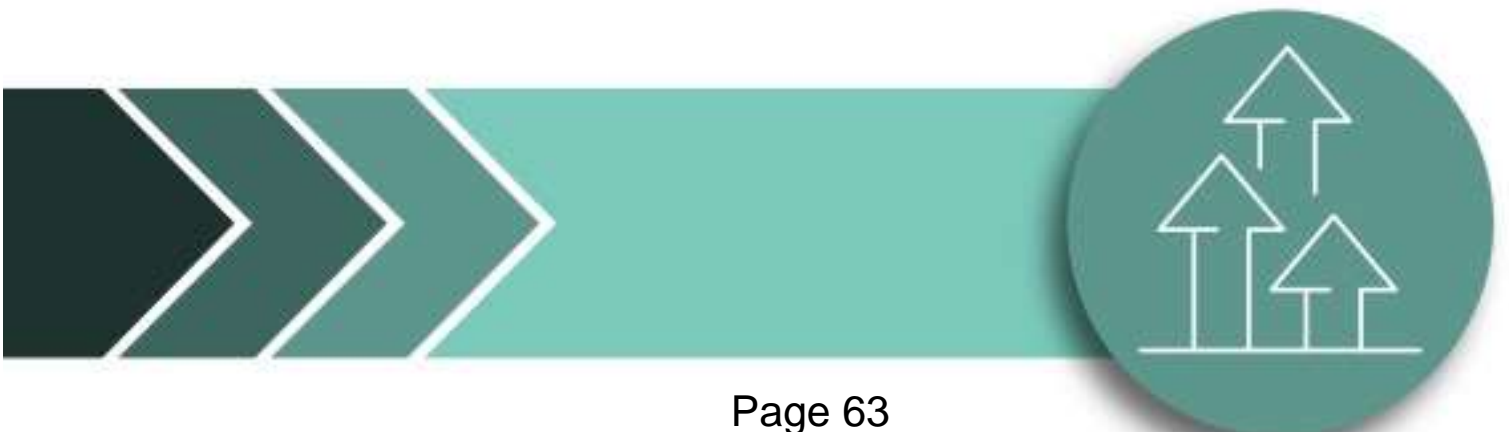   Kerry.Middleton@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

April 2023

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LGA communications peer review

Oxfordshire County Council

July 2022

Feedback report

1. Executive summary

The past two years have been a period of significant change for Oxfordshire County Council. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, there has been a new administration bringing a new political direction for the authority following the May 2021 elections; the partnership with Cherwell District Council has ended; and the joint Chief Executive (which was a shared role with Cherwell) has departed, returning to their substantive post at Cherwell. There is an interim Chief Executive now in place at the County Council.

It has also been a time of change and challenge for the Communications, Marketing and Engagement service. The service underwent a full restructure in March 2020 just before the first lockdown, and COVID-19 dominated the priorities, outputs and resourcing levels of the team for the next 18 months. The ending of the partnership with Cherwell in summer 2022 resulted in further change, with the joint service ceasing and staff returning to their employer organisation.

The service is a real asset for the council - it is a professional and passionate team which is delivering engaging and creative work for the benefit of the people of Oxfordshire. Through the leadership of the Director of Communications, Strategy & Insight it has established good relationships and is well regarded among partners across the county. There is scope to build further on these partnerships and take more advantage of partners' links to particular communities, such as the more rural district council areas and the universities.

The political leadership is still relatively new. The Fair Deal Alliance (comprising the Liberal Democrat and Green partnership and the Labour Group) is engaged, ambitious and hungry to make its mark. It wants a high profile, which creates a great opportunity for the communications service to maximise successful delivery.

There is a clear need for the communications team to reset its relationship with the political leadership so that this potential can be realised. There is willingness among all concerned for this to happen. There has been a disproportionate focus on specific areas of controversy which do not represent the broader work of the team. Specifically, the ongoing furore around low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) has threatened to overshadow and engulf the team's work. It is inevitable that an issue such as LTNs would prove controversial and give rise to strongly held and polarised views among the communities affected. The entire organisation needs to gain some perspective on this issue. Better engagement between the LTN project team and the communications service to co-produce a communications and engagement strategy and plan will be crucial as future schemes develop. The organisation needs to accept that these schemes are controversial and will always generate some negative views, and the best response is to clearly explain the rationale for their introduction and their benefits and promote agreed council policy.

The peer team is concerned that the dominance of the LTN issue has given a skewed view of the team and its abilities to the political leadership and the wider organisation, as well as reducing the team's confidence in adopting a proactive approach. The whole organisation needs to move on. The ambitious new administration means there is permission to be bold and the communications team needs to be confident in promoting the agreed policies and priorities of the council.

The biggest challenge for the communications team is that there is a tendency within the organisation to involve the team at a late stage towards the end of a project. Where the team is involved from the start, they deliver great work. The peer team heard some brilliant examples of the fantastic work the communications team has delivered as a result of early engagement and co-design such as the Homes for Ukraine scheme, Climate Action Oxfordshire, the Delivering the Future Together organisational development programme, work with libraries, and museum rebranding. Where they are brought in at the end, they will be firefighting and dealing with problems which could have been avoided. This is unsatisfactory for both the communications team and the services and councillors they are supporting, and detrimental to the confidence there should be in the team.

The relationship with the local media is key. There is a focus from the political leadership on raising the profile of Oxfordshire County Council on a national stage, and it is therefore appropriate that the communications team is supporting Cabinet members in securing coverage for the council in national publications. However, this must not be at the cost of diluting the service to the local media which will influence the reputation of the council among many Oxfordshire residents. The peer team heard that Oxfordshire still enjoys a vibrant local media, both in print and broadcast.

We heard that some people view the relationship with the media to be defensive and at times unresponsive. This is not the intention of the communications team, but it is clear that more work needs to be done to proactively tell the council's story. The communications team, the political leadership and the Chief Executive want this. The communications team needs to support, facilitate and advise on building and developing direct relationships between the media and the council's senior managerial and political leadership.

Everyone we spoke to recognised that, despite the challenges, the communications service has made great strides in recent years. With more trust from the organisation, supported by its political and managerial leadership, challenging blockages where these occur, the service can achieve even more. But this trust will need to be earned and sustained by a proactive, constructive and problem-solving approach from the communications team.

2. Key recommendations

There are several observations and suggestions within the feedback section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council, related to the themes and areas of focus for the peer review:

Ways of working

2.1 Involve the communications team when projects are initiated, and around significant decisions. This will be key to ensure effective communications support, anticipating potential communications challenges and developing plans to mitigate these. In turn this will build confidence in the support available from the communications team.

2.2 Clarify and streamline approvals process – for both communications and media relationships. This should enable a quicker response whilst ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place and foster good relationships with internal stakeholders and the external media.

Strategy and priorities

2.3 The Council Leader needs to establish a regular working relationship with communications leaders to ensure understanding, delivery and communication of key priorities. This will help to ensure that communications activity is well aligned to the agreed policies and priorities of the council and further strengthen relationships between communications professionals and the political leadership. A good relationship between them is a feature of effective local government communications, when based on a clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.

2.4 Explore support/training to develop the communications team's political awareness, as a pilot for the wider organisation. There appears to be a lack of confidence in promoting the council's agreed policies and priorities, and sometimes insufficient political awareness among officers. The communications service may well be reflecting the wider organisation in this. Developing greater political awareness should enable more effective delivery of the council's agreed priorities and objectives.

Digital communications and innovation

2.5 Communications leadership, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the political leadership of the administration to sit down and agree a shared vision on video content. There needs to be a common understanding of where video is an effective medium for conveying the council's messages (and where it is not) based on evidence to ensure best use of resources, and how such content is to be prepared and presented.

2.6 Make greater use of relevant metrics and insight to evaluate and inform future communications plans. This will enable decisions on the methods, channels and audiences to be informed by evidence to enable the most effective use of resources.

Narrative and place branding

2.**7 Continue to build on work with SLT and the political administration to develop the Oxfordshire story so it can be owned and understood by all staff and members**. SLT and the council's political leadership are currently engaged in a series of away days which include consideration of the council's vision and future direction. This should enable the development of a coherent narrative of the council's ambitions for Oxfordshire. Whilst communications should become the custodian of that agreed narrative, it needs to be shared and owned across the organisation.

3. Background and scope of the review

3.1 The peer team

It was a pleasure to be invited by Oxfordshire County Council to carry out this communications peer review. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time to share their views with us. Communications peer reviews are part of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer and are delivered by local government peers. The peers who delivered the peer review were:

- Lead Peer: **Smyth Harper**, Head of Communications, Lancashire County Council

- Member Peer: **Councillor Steve Morphew**, Norfolk County Council

- Member peer: **Councillor Rory Love OBE**, Kent County Council

- Officer Peer: **Kamran Hussain**, Communications Manager, Milton Keynes Council

- Officer Peer: **Emily Taylor**, Digital Communications & Campaigns Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council

- Review Manager: **David Armin**, LGA associate consultant

3.2 Scope and focus

Oxfordshire County Council established a new structure for its Communications Strategy and Insight Directorate in March 2020. Following this, a new Director and a Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement have been appointed and communications staff from service departments integrated into the central team. The council and its communications service has subsequently experienced the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Following the elections in May 2021 a new administration – the Fair Deal Alliance - took over control of the council with a changed political direction and fresh priorities for the authority. A shared service arrangement for communications with Cherwell District Council came to an end on 1st July 2022. A review of the council's approach to communications and the role of the Communications, Marketing and Engagement teams within that is therefore timely.

The following scope was agreed for the review:

- **Ways of working.** How effective is the current model for delivering communications, marketing and engagement? Also, how is insight being used to inform communications activity?
- **Strategy and priorities.** How strategically and politically aware is the Communications, Marketing and Engagement team? Is communications activity aligned and integrated with the overall strategic direction of the organisation and able to deliver the leadership priorities of members and officers within the bounds of political neutrality?
- **Digital communications and innovation.** How does the team compare to other similar councils in operating a modern communications service that uses innovation to deliver effective, value for money creative campaigns and engagement?
- **Narrative and place branding.** Are officers and members clear about the council's story and what they are working towards?

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer reviews are improvement-focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government communications to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information, including the position statement prepared by Oxfordshire for the review.

The team then spent three days onsite in Oxfordshire from 6 to 8 July 2022, during which they:

- spoke to more than 50 people, including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders
- gathered information and views from around 30 interviews, focus groups and meetings
- collectively spent around 150 hours to determine our findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than four weeks in Oxfordshire.

4. Principles of good communications

Communications plays a key role in ensuring councils can continue to lead their communities in challenging and uncertain times. LGA communications peer reviews are based on our understanding of the following general principles of good communications.

Good communications support the delivery of everyday services that people need and value and can play an increasingly crucial role in transforming and saving lives. A healthy local democracy is built upon councillors campaigning for and representing their communities; they need to be kept informed in order to fulfil that role. To be strong and ambitious leaders of places, councils need to ensure residents, staff, businesses and partners are communicated with effectively.

Effective communications relies on a mix of communications channels, including **media relations** (producing media releases and statements for distribution to local, regional, national and specialist media and responding to queries from the media), **direct communications** to residents (leaflets, publications, social media) and **internal and partner communications** (working with employees, members and stakeholders to ensure everyone gets consistent, timely information about the council to help them do their jobs effectively and advocate on behalf of the council).

Successful communications campaigns use a mix of all these communications channels, delivered to identified target audiences and robustly evaluated.

Building trust and confidence, and through that, strengthening relationships with citizens, stakeholders and staff, should be the starting point for any successful organisation. To succeed it requires recognition of the importance of strong strategic communications to act as a trusted advisor, navigator and leader.

Local councils that do not adequately recognise the importance of strategic communications in terms of resources, skills and its place in the structure, are likely to be the ones that struggle the most to connect with their residents, staff and stakeholders.

In summary, good communications should:

- Articulate the ambition for your area
- Improve corporate and personal reputation
- Support good political leadership
- Help engagement with residents, partners and staff
- Build trust
- Rally advocates
- Drive change and deliver savings
- Attract investment (and good people)
- Be used to manage performance
- Strengthen public support and understanding

It is delivered through:

- **Leadership** – clarity of purpose and commitment
- **A distinctive brand** – what you stand for, values and trust
- **A clear vision**
- Being **authentic** to your local area
- Adopting a **strategic approach to communications** - communication without strategy does not work
- Developing a corporately agreed, fully evaluated **annual communications plan** - not just sending out ad hoc stuff
- Making sure all communications activity is based on **research and insight** and that campaigns are linked to corporate priorities and resourced accordingly
- Investing in **evaluation**
- Ensuring communications are **owned by everyone.**

5. Feedback

5.1 Ways of working

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement teams are well resourced with wide-ranging experience and capability. The team's talent and experience is recognised across members and officers. Team members feel trusted and empowered by communications management. From 1 July 2022, when the shared service arrangement with Cherwell ended, there are 28.7 FTE posts across the Communications, Marketing & Engagement service[1]. According to the LGA's [Annual Heads of Communications Survey (2021)](#) the average number of staff undertaking communications work for county councils in England was 21.3 FTE in September 2021. Such benchmarking data needs to be interpreted with caution, as the scope of communications responsibilities will differ across councils. However, this does underpin the peer team's view that Oxfordshire's Communications team has the capacity to deliver a comprehensive and proactive communications service.

Improvements to how communications are delivered have been noted by many people over the past two years, particularly around the Covid-19 response and Homes for Ukraine campaign. This includes major improvements in internal communications, such as the support to the Delivering the Future Together organisational change programme. The new structures in the communications service have helped to deliver these improvements.

There are positive relationships and good joint working with external partners - across the wider public sector, key institutions such as the local universities and also those involved with the business community such as the Oxfordshire LEP. These have been fostered by the Director of Communications, Strategy & Insight and underpinned by regular meetings. The communications team have weekly meetings with their colleagues from the district councils across Oxfordshire. The districts have been closely involved in joint campaigns, such as those around climate action, Homes for Ukraine and Covid-19. Recently there has been a focus on work with Oxford City Council around transport in the city. Going forward, similar focus could be given to enhanced working with the rural districts, tapping into their expertise and contacts to deliver effective communications activity across the whole county. There

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[1] In this report unless otherwise stated references to the communications team should be read as encompassing the Communications, Marketing & Engagement service

are opportunities to co-design future campaigns, utilising the communications resource from the districts, subject to their capacity to contribute to or lead such joint campaigns. The council should continue to ensure that it engages with the full range of stakeholders across the county in key consultation exercises.

Notwithstanding the sense of trust and empowerment reported by communications team members, the peer team found a lack of clarity around which issues are escalated to senior management and that on occasion there could be more senior oversight of potentially sensitive issues – which may help to generate confidence in the service across the political leadership and senior managers of the council.

Management oversight needs to be balanced against the calls for additional pace in the communications response on occasion from some people the peer team spoke with. The Communications team has developed a number of plans, processes and strategies. The peer team questions if these have become stifling rather than enabling, and that aiming for shorter policies and better guidance would be more helpful. The social media 'Playbook' developed by the communications team was held up by several people as a positive example of an enabling tool. There should be clarity around who can do what, effort made to avoid any sign-off delays and to ensure that meetings add value.

The communications team needs to both meet and manage the high expectations of some members and senior officers, which it has the capacity and capability to do with a more confident approach. The new administration's bold communications ambitions are not always being met owing to occasional hesitancy and being overly risk-adverse, particularly around media relations. Earlier involvement is required in major projects to deliver effective and meaningful campaigns, which will enable the communications team to inform, influence and help deliver communications strategies and campaigns and enable more proactive risk management. Earlier engagement should lead to more effective communications support, building the credibility of the team with key stakeholders. The peer team's discussions with leading members suggest they are open to such earlier engagement, and to developing communications strategies as part of discussions originating at informal Cabinet, which is attended by the Director of Communications, Strategy & Insight. This more proactive approach could break what appears to be the current vicious circle of late engagement with communications leading to an unsatisfactory response and a loss of confidence in the service, and therefore a sense within the service that they are not valued and vulnerable to criticism. These concerns underpin the peer

team's suggestion of a reset of the relationship between the communications team and leading members and senior officers.

The peer team's discussions with a small sample of backbench members suggested some frustration with their relationship and support from the communications team, a team which is in any event not resourced to provide a comprehensive service for all councillors and needs to focus appropriately on promoting the agreed policies and strategies of the council as set by the Cabinet. The peer team understands there is a protocol in place that sets this out the strategic advice and guidance available to all councillors, and that communications is covered as part of member induction. However, the perception of some backbench members is that this protocol is applied inconsistently and that they are unclear of where they could get support, for example in the event of a challenging social media campaign in their area.

The peer team understand that there are currently vacancies in the council's Democratic Services team which may be exacerbating this sense of a lack of support. There is a need to embed guidance and ensure shared understanding of the support that backbench members can expect from the communications team and other parts of the organisation. A more proactive approach to communicating the work of scrutiny, where appropriate, would be an opportunity for the service to work more with backbench members at the same time as promoting these policy development and accountability elements of the council's work. However, this in turn will need clear work plans for scrutiny and support from Democratic Services.

5.2 Strategy and priorities

Following the establishment of the new Fair Deal Alliance administration, there is a real sense that the direction of the council has changed, both internally and among most partners. Three key themes - those of tackling inequality, being greener and healthier - are widely recognised and the environmental priority and desire to tackle climate change is very clear. However, the full list of nine agreed priorities are not widely recalled and neither the organisation nor the communications team are clear about the deliverables that sit beneath these priorities. This large number of priorities makes it more difficult to set out a clear statement of what the council wants to do. Greater clarity around deliverables is required, which the peer team understand is one the areas that the current series of 'away days' for the Cabinet and SLT is seeking to address.

The engagement and consultation around the new priorities and budget are well regarded across the organisation, including the efforts made to involve young people, and are an example of the positive impact that early involvement of the communications team can have.

There is a need for the communications team to be more confident in promoting the council's agreed priorities and strategies. In this apparent reticence it may simply be reflecting the wider organisation which the peer team heard can be cautious and risk-averse, a legacy of the Operation Bullfinch serious case review into child sexual exploitation in 2015, which attracted widescale national media coverage.

This may also derive from some misunderstandings around working in a political environment. This is leading to a situation where requests from Cabinet members are sometimes inappropriately viewed as being 'political'. Whilst the Local Authority Publicity Code does prevent council resources being used for party political purposes, it does not preclude communications activity around agreed council policies. This distinction appears to have become blurred and misunderstood across the council, not just within communications. Training in political awareness and working in a political environment could well be beneficial, for members of the Communications team and officers more generally. Political awareness training for the communications team can be facilitated by the LGA and tailored to meet the needs of the council.

The direct interaction between both the Leader and the Chief Executive with the communications team needs to be strengthened. Whilst the Leader is not the portfolio holder for communications, greater engagement between communications and the Leader will help ensure that messaging reflects the council's key priorities and further develop the political leadership's confidence in communications and help embed consideration of communications issues and advice early in policy development across the council's wider agenda. Similarly, greater engagement with the Chief Executive will promote consideration of communications challenges and opportunities across the organisation. The peer team understand that, until recently, interactions between Cabinet members and officers of the council have been limited, reflecting a hierarchical culture. Wider interaction between members and officers would be beneficial, provided this is based on a proper understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. A positive development recently is the series of awaydays which are helping the strengthen the working relationship between the Cabinet and SLT.

5.3 Digital communications and innovation

There is a will and desire from the communications team, SLT, and the political leadership for the council to embrace digital communications. There are examples of successful campaigns which utilise these new ways of communicating, such as the Care Homes Week video and the campaign to increase bus usage. The social media playbook developed by the communications team is welcomed by services as a brilliant way to liberate teams to make use of bespoke channels, but within an accepted framework.

The use of graphics and animations have improved and are being used well to enhance campaigns and internal communications.

Partners have noted the increased use of modern communications techniques and digital media by the council. This presents opportunities for increased use of partners' social media channels to share and disseminate messaging to a different audience, for example through the local universities to reach young people through their preferred media.

The use of video content is proving contentious within the organisation, with different expectations across the political and managerial leadership about what is appropriate. Communications leadership, SLT, and the political leadership need to reach a common understanding of where video is an effective medium for conveying the council's messages (and where it is not), based on evidence, to ensure best use of resources and how such content is to be prepared and presented. The main measure for this should be impact, not volume. Communications team members need to feel empowered and confident in producing video content by continuing to develop the investment that has been made in skills and equipment.

The website is a key digital communications channel. The council's website is very transactional. Whilst a transactional website is vital for the effective delivery of a modern council's services, this should not be to the detriment of promoting the council's services and campaigns in innovative and engaging ways or influencing Oxfordshire residents to make positive choices. The website should be transactional, promotional, and a driver for behaviour change.

Currently, responsibility for the website sits with ICT. However, if the ambition is to fully harness its value as a communications tool, including to help influence

behavioural change, responsibility should sit with the communications team. If it were to hold responsibility for the website, communications would need to have access to the necessary technical expertise to ensure the maintenance and development of the website. Irrespective of where such responsibility sits, there needs to be increased pace in the development of the website.

Digital communication has the benefit of offering clear data and insight for use in evaluation beyond basic metrics (e.g. Google Analytics for exploring the customer journey etc.) This gives opportunities to better evidence and share the impact of campaigns and to demonstrate which communication techniques are more effective in different contexts. Oxfordshire should make greater use of these insights, including website analytics, but the criteria for evaluation need to be built in in advance, based on the agreed objectives for the campaign.

5.4 Narrative and place branding

Officers understand the change of political direction following the formation of the Fair Deal Alliance administration. Moreover, there is a general understanding of the priorities and shift towards achieving a greener, fairer and healthier place. Importantly, services can see how their work is connected to the new vision. Partner organisations too sense the new direction, in particular the district councils and the Oxfordshire LEP.

This gives a starting point for developing a compelling narrative of place. There is a clear vision that people understand, but the peer team questions if this has moved to the next stage which applies that vision in a way that is unique to Oxfordshire? This will require greater clarity around what the priorities and the deliverables that underpin these mean in practice.

The council should continue to build on work by SLT and the political leadership to develop the Oxfordshire story, so it can be owned and understood by all staff and members. SLT and the Cabinet are currently engaged in a series of away days which include consideration of the council's vision and future direction. This should enable the development of a coherent narrative of the council's ambitions for Oxfordshire. Whilst the communications team should become the custodian of that agreed narrative, it needs to be developed with inputs from a range of stakeholders, and then shared and owned across the organisation. To take forward its work on such a narrative, the council may wish to consider a facilitated workshop, which can be

arranged and supported by the LGA. The LGA also has a [toolkit](#) that the council may find helpful when considering each stage of developing a narrative.

6. Next steps

Through this review we have sought to highlight the positive aspects of Oxfordshire County Council's approach to communications, as well as outlining the challenges. We have drawn on our experience of working with councils across the country to review Oxfordshire's communications in the context of best practice in the sector.

Will Brooks is the LGA's Principal Adviser for the region. Will is the main contact between the council and the Local Government Association, particularly in relation to improvement and access to the LGA's resources and packages of support. William's email address is: william.brooks@local.gov.uk or he can be contacted on 07949 054421.

Further communication support from the LGA can also be accessed through Matt Nicholls, Head of Communications Support and Improvement who can be contacted on matt.nicholls@local.gov.uk or tel. 07786 111078. There is an opportunity for councils who have undertaken a communications peer review to arrange a follow-up visit to assess the impact of the peer review and progress made in responding to the findings of the original peer review.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested[1] and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so. **NB Owing to interactions with other constitutional and meeting timeframes, these recommendations must be responded to on the day received.**

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Strategic Plan

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Cllr Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Date response requested: 24 January 2023

Response to report:
Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council demonstrates due regard to capacity building within the organisation to tackle social problems and resultant inequalities.	Agreed	The council uses workforce planning, organisational development and learning and development activities to ensure it has the skills and capabilities it needs to deliver and design service functions and create new policies and initiatives in line with strategic priorities.

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[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested[1] and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so. **<u>NB Owing to interactions with other constitutional and meeting timeframes, these recommendations must be responded to on the day received.</u>**

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Post-Consultation Budget Proposals 23/24 – 25/26

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Callum Miller, Cabinet Member for Finance

Date response requested: 24 January 2023

Response to report:

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council reports back to Performance and Corporate Services Scrutiny as large capital projects develop in addition to oversight by Audit & Governance.	Agreed	*Cabinet adopted a revised approach to capital governance in July 2022. The purpose is to exercise closer internal scrutiny of the capital portfolio and of high value programmes and projects within it. Cabinet undertook a capital prioritisation exercise in October*

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[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		2022 which is reflected in the proposed changes to the capital programme (including two additional schemes into the firm programme for 23/24 and a number of high priority schemes in the pipeline) document submitted to Cabinet for decision on 24 January. The revised Capital and Investment Strategy now includes a prioritisation framework – this will be used to assess all future proposed schemes, and any proposed changes in costs/scope/time to existing schemes, before they can be considered in the firm capital programme. The Cabinet Member for Finance and officers would be glad to take part in a workshop with members of the PCSOSC to present these approaches and answer questions. *The Capital Monitoring report is published quarterly and submitted to Cabinet. It is suggested that the PCSOSC considers whether it would like to review this document as a means to scrutinise in-year developments within the capital programme.* *To note: it was highlighted at the Committee that there was an omission in the capital prioritisation framework on page 4, the word 'target' should be added to the end of bullet point 'f. This has been amended.'*
That Cabinet members for Finance and Corporate Services maintain a close ongoing dialogue to ensure effective ongoing monitoring of both the revenue and capital sides of the budget, with said Cabinet members reporting proactively to the committee on any in-year areas of concern as soon as reasonably practicable.	Agreed	*The Cabinet members for Finance and Corporate Services will continue to collaborate closely over the monitoring of the Council's performance and budgetary outturn. The key document for this activity is the Business Management and Monitoring report, which is reported to Cabinet on a regular basis. PCSOSC is invited to review this document as a means to scrutinise any areas of concern.*

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

That Council ensures a) that directorates' reported service pressures from inflation reflect specific service-level inflation where relevant rather than nation-wide OBR inflation b) that directorates' estimates follow a best practice procedure and are checked at a central level, and c) that in the next budget the Council provides a table showing the inflation outturn versus budgeted estimates.	Agreed	*(a) Many contracts contain clauses that uprate prices annually in line with inflation; the Council will always seek to negotiate the best value from its contracts through procurement and active contract management. (b) Directorates build their future budget estimates using sector-specific estimates of inflation and their local knowledge of cost and demographic pressures. The Council believe this reflects best practice and will continue to seek any ways to improve estimates through peer review and dialogue with other authorities. (c) The next budget will include a table showing the relevant inflation rate used in budget setting and the latest in-year rate (the outturn will not be available until the end of the financial year in April 2024; the budget will be consulted upon in November 2023).*
That the Council develops a revenue pipeline of projects whose order of priority is justified by agreed principles, including their contribution towards the Council's strategic aims.	Agreed	*The Council will develop a set of potential revenue priorities as part of the budget process for 2024/25.*
That the Cabinet provides within the Budget Council meeting pack a table showing how savings proposals which were reversed after the consultation budget correspond to the feedback and level of support expressed by the consultation.	Agreed	
That the Council gives closer consideration in forthcoming financial years to mainstreaming tackling the climate crisis as a principle of budget design with proposals evaluated at the earliest opportunity according to their impact on the Council's climate targets. This decision making should be able to be evidenced in the	Agreed	*The Council is committed to tackling the climate crisis and is constantly seeking ways to mainstream this within its policies and procedures. The Council will seek to learn from best practice in other authorities to ensure that its budget decisions are informed by an understanding of their impact on climate targets and that this is evidenced in the next budget.*

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

presentation of the budget and accompanying narrative.		
That the Council works with parish, town, city and district councils to develop a clearer understanding over the financial and legal issues involved in joint working with regards to tree-planting.	Agreed	
That the Council tracks and reports on a) the number of trees it is responsible for planting over the next year, and b) the net impact once trees which have been cut down are also considered.	Agreed	

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Work Programme
Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Lead Presenters
14 July 2023				
Human Resources		Committee reviews implementation and impacts of Delivering the Future Together, draft workforce strategy, workforce productivity measures and data and makes recommendations as appropriate.	Scrutiny	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Claire Taylor, Corporate Director – Customer, Organisational Development & Resources
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire	Committee reviews the implementation and impact of the 22/23 EDI action plan and the draft 24/25 action plan.	Overview and Scrutiny	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Claire Taylor, Corporate Director – Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

HR Systems	All	Committee to be briefed and comment on the case for change, options under consideration, work undertaken to date and the current suggested direction of travel.		Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services TBC
29 September 2023				
Transformation Activity	All	Committee to consider the Council's current transformation activity and approaches to managing and overseeing transformation.	Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services TBC
Cost of Living Support	Tackle Inequalities in Oxfordshire	Committee to consider the Council's spending of the £2.3m available for cost of living support.	Overview & Scrutiny	TBC
Digital Inclusion Strategy Update	Tackle Inequalities in Oxfordshire	Committee to receive and comment on the progress made by the Council against its Digital Inclusion Strategy.	Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor Glynis Phillips, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services TBC

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Sub-groups				
Name	**Relevant strategic priorities**	**Description**	**Outcomes**	**Members**
Democratic Process Working Group

(On hold until clarification over whether to merge with Governance Review) | Local Democracy | To review the key elements of support for democratic processes at Oxfordshire County Council. | Reviews the support for the council's democratic processes and makes recommendations. | Determined by whether to merge with the Governance Review. |

Briefings					
Date	**Topic**	**Relevant strategic priorities**	**Description**	**Outcomes**	**Presenters**
TBC	**Growth Deals**	Local Business and Partners; Transport; Health and Wellbeing; Inequalities; the Climate Emergency; Carers and Social Care; and Nature	Briefing on the council's proposed use of its remaining allocation of Growth Deal funding.	Members understand how the council is prioritising initiatives and which are being prioritised.	Bill Cotton, Corporate Director – Environment and Place

		and Green Spaces.			

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Forward Plan
May - August 2023

Liz Leffman
Leader of the Council
County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND

Date Issued: 4 April 2023

The Cabinet's Forward Plan: Introduction

This Forward Plan outlines the decisions which are expected to be made over the coming four-month period by or on behalf of the County Council's Cabinet. **NB Also included, for ease of reference, are items for the current month.**

The Plan is arranged in Committee date order, Cabinet or Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member. (The members and their portfolios are listed in the table on the next page.) Each entry briefly describes the subject and scope of the decision; indicates the "target date" on which the decision is expected to be taken and by whom (eg whether the full Cabinet or an individual Cabinet Member); what documents (normally a report by an officer) are expected to be considered; and contact details for the officer(s) dealing with the matter.

Where consultation is being carried out prior to the decision being taken, the principal consultees are specified. The method of consultation will normally be by letter or – where the views of the wider public are to be sought – by press coverage, supplemented by local notices if the decision affects a particular area. Other methods, such as exhibitions, opinion surveys, community forums etc, may be used to supplement these.

The lists include any "key decisions" - those which are "significant" under the terms of government regulations. In general, a key decision may not be taken unless notice of it has been included in the Forward Plan. More detailed information on what is a key decision can be found in the Council's Constitution on the Council's website.[1] This can also be inspected at County Hall.

However, the Council has decided that Oxfordshire's Forward Plan should include all those matters which are expected to come before the Cabinet in the period of the Plan, whether or not they may give rise to key decisions.

If any key decisions are expected to be taken by officers within the Plan period under powers delegated by the Cabinet, these are included in the Plan.

Unless of a confidential nature, reports and other documents for any meeting can be inspected, from approximately a week before the meeting, at County Hall and online[2]. Copies can be supplied on request, at a charge to cover copying costs.

Making Representations about Forward Plan Items

Anyone who wishes to make representations about a particular matter listed in the Plan should send their comments so as to reach the County Council at least a week before it is due to be considered. Comments should be either:

Posted to "Forward Plan", Law & Governance (Democratic Services), Corporate Services, County Hall, Oxford OX1 1ND, delivered in person to the same address or e-mailed to forward.plan@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

There is also a facility for making a short address to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member in person. The deadline for any request to do this is 9.00 am on the working day before the matter is due to be considered. A form is available from Democratic Support Team, Law & Governance (Democratic Services), (contact as above, or telephone Oxford 810806) or online[3].

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1 Decision Making including Key Decisions – Main Menu > About your Council > Meetings > The Constitution > Part 2, Article 14 – Decision Making
2 Agendas, Minutes & Reports – Main Menu > About your Council > Meetings > Browse Committee Papers
3 Get Involved in Meetings – Main Menu > About your Council > Meetings > Get involved in meetings

Members of the Cabinet

Cabinet Member	Main Areas of Responsibility
Leader of the Council *Councillor Liz Leffman*	Strategy; corporate and community leadership; strategic communications; major external partnerships; regional and strategic infrastructure and planning; economic growth and development; Districts Liaison; asylum and immigration
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services *Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE*	Children Social Care; Education; 0-5 Offer; Youth Offer
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services *Councillor Glynis Phillips*	Governance and Legal; HR and industrial relations; Cherwell partnership agreement; Broadband/ICT; Customer services; Communications
Cabinet Member for Community Services & Safety *Councillor Jenny Hannaby*	Cultural Services, Registration service, Library service, Coroner's service, Music service, Museum service, History service; Fire & Rescue Service; Trading Standards; Emergency Planning; Community Safety; Gypsies & Travellers
Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment *Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury*	Climate Change; Waste Disposal and recycling centre; Countryside Operations & Volunteers; Ecology/Archaeology/Heritage; Water Strategy – TW Reservoir; Energy Strategy; Minerals & Waste Planning; Lead Flood Authority – Oxford Flood Alleviation Plan; Tree Strategy; Highways Verge Management Strategy; HGV Weight Routes
Cabinet Member for Highway Management *Councillor Andrew Gant*	Highways Delivery Operations – structures and maintenance; Network management; Public Rights of Way; Supported Transport; Fix My Street; Walking and Cycling – Maintenance; LCWIPs/LTNs; Street lighting; Travel Hubs; Public transport – Bus Strategy/Universal Payment/Maps; Cycle Parking; School Streets; 20 Is Plenty – implementation; Enforcement; Car Parking Strategy
Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy *Councillor Duncan Enright*	Government Bids for Funding Initiatives; Infrastructure strategy (OXIS); Digital Connectivity Broadband; Regional and Strategic Infrastructure - Capital Delivery of Major projects; Rail – Cowley/Grove/Worcester Line/Witney; Connecting Oxford; ZEZs/AQMAs/Live Digital Air Quality Display; Travel Hubs; Working Place Levy/Congestion Charge; Waterways; Tourism / economic development
Cabinet Member for Finance *Councillor Calum Miller*	Finance; Property/Investments; Procurement
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care *Councillor Tim Bearder*	Adult Social Care; Carers services; Support to: People with learning disabilities, Physical disability services, People living with impact of a brain injury, People living with a long-term condition, Older people services, Safeguarding adult services, Homelessness, Hospital discharge; Mental health; Health Partnerships
Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality *Councillor Mark Lygo*	Public Health; Covid Renewal; Voluntary Sector; Equalities

The Forward Plan

Cabinet Meetings

18 April 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Capital Programme Approvals - April 2023 *(Ref: 2023/004)* Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required).	Cabinet *(18 April 2023)*	Yes - Affects more than one division and Capital Expenditure >£1m	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Capital Programme Manager Tel: 07868 714303	Director of Finance
ERP Programme Outline Business Case *(Ref: 2023/029)* • To seek approval for the outline business case to deliver a transformation of the back-office finance, procurement and HR & payroll services, which are currently provided by Hampshire	Cabinet *(18 April 2023)*	Yes - Revenue Expenditure > £500,000	Commercial sensitivity	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	Tim Spiers, Director of Digital & IT Tel: 07753 243223	Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
County Council via the shared services partnership. • To seek approval to progress the procurement stage. • To seek approval for the required funding to prepare for and deliver the procurement stage.								
Delegated Powers Report for January to March 2023 *(Ref: 2022/188)* To report on a quarterly basis any executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.1 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's	Cabinet *(18 April 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Leader	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096	Director of Law & Governance

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in.								
Proposal From OUFC to OCC As Landowner: Information Update *(Ref: 2023/080)* To report on progress.	Cabinet *(18 April 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Claire Taylor, Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources Tel: 07919 367072	Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

22 May 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
A40 Access to Witney - Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Road Orders *(Ref: 2022/012)* To seek approval of the Statement of Reasons and Orders Plans and approval to make the Compulsory Purchase and Side	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	Yes - Affects more than 1 division	Yes - Category 2 - Annex	N/A	Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 26/04/2022 to 24/05/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 24/05/2022 to 21/06/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date	Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy	Amro Hajhamdou, Project Manager	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Road Orders.					for Cabinet changed from 21/06/2022 to 19/07/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 19/07/2022 to 20/09/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 20/09/2022 to 18/10/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 18/10/2022 to 15/11/2022. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 15/11/2022 to 20/12/2022. Reason: Further delays by 3rd party suppliers have impacted the delivery of required output. It is			

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Page 99					anticipated a final reviews of documents will be required with the 3rd party suppliers with additional work potentially required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 20/12/2022 to 21/02/2023. Reason: Further work required by Oxfordshire County Council and Third Party supplier(s). Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 21/02/2023 to 21/03/2023. Reason: Further work required by third party suppliers in light of changes to CPO documentation. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 21/03/2023 to 18/04/2023. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from			

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
					18/04/2023 to 23/05/2023. Reason: further work required.			
Capital Programme Approvals - May 2023 *(Ref: 2023/005)* Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required).	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	Yes - Affects more than one division and Capital Expenditure >£1m	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Capital Programme Manager Tel: 07868 714303	Director of Finance
HIF2 A40 Programme Revised Strategy *(Ref: 2023/001)* Approve revised scheme for A40 Programme.	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	Yes - Capital Expenditure >£1m	None	N/A	Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 21/03/2023 to 18/04/2023. Reason: further work required. Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 18/04/2023 to 23/05/2023. Reason: further work required.	Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy	Olu Solola, Programme Lead	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Appointments 2023/24 *(Ref: 2022/221)* To consider Member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Leader	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096	Director of Law & Governance

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
discharge of the Council's Executive functions.								
Financial Management Report 2023/24 *(Ref: 2023/050)* To note and seek agreement of the report and any recommendations.	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy Tel: 07788 302163	Director of Finance
Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy *(Ref: 2023/051)* To seek approval of the OCC Air Quality Strategy.	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	No	None	Engagement conducted with key stakeholders but not proposed any public consultation is conducted.		Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment, Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Joseph Kay, Strategic Transport Lead Tel: 07827 979234, Katharine Eveleigh, Health Improvement Practioner	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy *(Ref: 2023/049)* To approve Oxfordshire County	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment	Beccy Micklem, Principal Biodiversity Officer	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Council's acceptance of its appointment as Responsible Authority for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, subject to the associated funding being considered by officers as sufficient and the Regulations and Guidance implementable and approve the Governance Structure for the Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy.								
Proposal From OUFC to OCC As Landowner: Arrangements for engagement *(Ref: 2023/081)* Paper setting out final arrangements for engagement.	Cabinet *(23 May 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy & Insight	Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

20 June 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Capital Programme Monitoring Report - April 2023 *(Ref: 2023/002)* Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals.	Cabinet *(20 June 2023)*	Yes - Affects more than one division and Capital Expenditure >£1m	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Capital Programme Manager Tel: 07868 714303	Director of Finance
Business Management & Monitoring Report - February / March 2023: Annual Report and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2022/23 *(Ref: 2022/220)* To note and seek agreement of the report.	Cabinet *(20 June 2023)*	No	None	N/A	Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 23/05/2023 to 20/06/2023. Reason: the finance year end position will not be ready in time for May.	Cabinet Member for Finance	Louise Tustian, Head of Insight & Corporate Programmes Tel: (01295) 221786, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy Tel: 07788 302163	Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources, Director of Finance
Lane Rental Scheme for Oxfordshire *(Ref: 2023/048)* Position update and steer for reporting	Cabinet *(20 June 2023)*	No	None	No immediate consultation but stakeholder consultation		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Keith Stenning, Head of Service - Network Management Tel: 07584 581214	Corporate Director Environment & Place

The Forward Plan

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
and decision making.				as the scheme develops.				
Provisional Capital Outturn 2022/23 *(Ref: 2022/251)* To note the performance against the capital programme for 2021/22 as set out in the report.	Cabinet *(20 June 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy Tel: 07788 302163	Director of Finance
Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 4 - January-March 2023 *(Ref: 2022/252)* Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.	Cabinet *(20 June 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	Joanne Pitt, Interim Director of HR	Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

18 July 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Capital Programme Approvals - July 2023 *(Ref: 2023/030)* Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required).	Cabinet *(18 July 2023)*	Yes - Capital Expenditure >£1m	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Capital Programme Manager Tel: 07868 714303	Director of Finance
Business Management & Monitoring Report - April/May 2023 *(Ref: 2023/031)* To note and seek agreement of the report.	Cabinet *(18 July 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Louise Tustian, Head of Insight & Corporate Programmes Tel: (01295) 221786, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy Tel: 07788 302163	Director of Finance
Delegated Powers Report for April to June 2023 *(Ref: 2023/032)* To report on a quarterly basis any executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.1 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the	Cabinet *(18 July 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Leader	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096	Director of Law & Governance

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in.								
Treasury Management Annual Performance Report 2022/23 *(Ref: 2023/033)* Cabinet is asked to note the report and recommend Council to note the Council's treasury management activity in 2021/22.	Cabinet *(18 July 2023)*	No	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Finance	Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager Tel: 07917 262935	Director of Finance

Cabinet Member Meetings

Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment

18 April 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Community Action Group Grant Funding *(Ref: 2023/077)*	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet	Yes - Affects more than one division	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Climate	Rachel Burns, Waste Strategy Manager Tel:	Corporate Director Environment &

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
To agree to fund the Community Action Group network for 3 years through a grant funding agreement.	Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment *(18 April 2023)*	and revenue expenditure > £500,000				Change Delivery & Environment	07789 877310	Place

Cabinet Member for Highway Management

27 April 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Abingdon - proposed 20mph speed limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2022/145)* To seek approval of a proposed 20mph speed limit.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	Yes - Affects more than 1 division	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 17/11/2022 to 26/01/2023. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 26/01/2023 to 23/02/2023.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Page 108					Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/02/2023 to 23/03/2023. Reason: to enable further consultation. Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/03/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: Further work required.			
Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Districts - various sites: Disabled Persons Parking Places - proposed new provision and removal *(Ref: 2023/043)* A decision is required on sites proposed for new DPPPs and also sites where a DPPP is judged to be no	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
longer required.								
Cumnor: proposed 20mph speed limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2022/233)* Decision required on proposed 20mph speed limit.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/02/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: further work required.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Didcot - Vicinity of rail station - proposed parking measures *(Ref: 2022/163)* To seek approval of proposed parking measures.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 08/12/2022 to 23/02/2023. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/03/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: Further work required.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	James Whiting, Principal Officer - Parking Tel: 07584 581187	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Faringdon - proposed 20mph speed limit and associated speed limit buffers	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for	No	None	Standard traffic scheme	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel:	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
(Ref: 2022/232) A decision is required on a proposed 20mph speed limit.	Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*			consultation.	Highway Management changed from 23/02/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: further work required.		07740 779859	
Forest Hill - Old Road / Shotover Kilns - proposed 20mph speed limit *(Ref: 2023/039)* A decision is required on a proposed 20mph speed limit on Old Road / Shotover Kilns within Forest Hill parish.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Milcombe - New Road - proposed 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit *(Ref: 2023/038)* A decision is required on a proposed 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit on New Road at Milcombe.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Mike Wasley, Principal Officer - Traffic Schemes Tel: 07393 001045	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Oxford - North Street Osney - proposed amendment to parking	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet	Yes	None	Standard traffic scheme		Cabinet Member for Highway	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal	Corporate Director Environment &

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
places *(Ref: 2023/037)* A decision is required on proposed amendments to parking places at North Street Osney to accommodate approved development.	Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*			consultation.		Management	Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Place
Oxford - St Michaels Street and Beaumont Street - proposed amendments to disabled and doctors parking places and vehicle access in St Michaels Street *(Ref: 2023/036)* A decision is required on a proposed amendments to disabled and doctor parking places and vehicle access in St Michael Street to accommodate further proposed public realm improvements in St Michaels Street.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Oxford - The Plain roundabout area - proposed no loading at any time restrictions (excepting existing designated loading bays) *(Ref: 2023/035)* A decision is required on a proposed no loading at any time restriction (excepting existing designated loading bays) at The Plain roundabout including the approaches to the roundabout on St Clements, Cowley Road, Iffley Road and Cowley Place).	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Oxford - various sites: Disabled Persons Parking Places - proposed new provision and removal *(Ref: 2023/040)* A decision is required on sites proposed for new DPPPs and also sites where a DPPP	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
is judged to be no longer required.								
Shrivenham - proposed 20mph speed limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2022/245)* A decision is required on a proposed 20mph speed limit.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/02/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: further work required.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Sonning Common - village centre - proposed waiting restrictions *(Ref: 2023/041)* To decide on proposed waiting restrictions.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Mike Horton, Technical Officer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07912 474356	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Steventon - proposed 20mph speed limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2022/225)* Forms part of Oxfordshire 20mph speed limit project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/02/2023 to 27/04/2023. Reason: to allow for further discussions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Wendlebury - A41 and Little Chesterton Road - proposed 50mph and 40mph speed limits *(Ref: 2023/034)* A decision is required on proposed 50mph and 40mph speed limits at Wendlebury to accommodate approved development.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(27 April 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Adam Barrett, Senior Engineer (Road Agreement Team - Cherwell & West) Tel: 07919 175889	Corporate Director Environment & Place

25 May 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Adderbury - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/060)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place

The Forward Plan

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Binfield Heath - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/069)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Bodicote - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limit and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/061)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Chinnor (Henton): 20 mph Speed Limit Proposals *(Ref: 2023/047)*	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
To consider any objections arising from Formal Consultation.	*(25 May 2023)*							
Cumnor: Cumnor Hill - proposed Puffin crossing *(Ref: 2023/053)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Jankin Arsalan, Technical Officer	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Deddington - Proposed 20mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/062)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
East Hanney - School Road - proposed waiting restrictions *(Ref: 2023/042)*	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for	No	None	Standard traffic scheme	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Mike Horton, Technical Officer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07912	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
To decide on proposed waiting restrictions.	Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*			consultation.	Highway Management changed from 27/04/2023 to 25/05/2023. Reason: further work required.		474356	
Hanborough: Regent Drive - proposed new 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions amendment *(Ref: 2023/059)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Adam Barrett, Senior Engineer (Road Agreement Team - Cherwell & West) Tel: 07919 175889	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Ipsden - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/065)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Kidmore End - Proposed 20 Mph	Delegated Decisions by	No	None	Standard		Cabinet Member for	Geoff Barrell, Senior	Corporate Director

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/066)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*			traffic scheme consultation.		Highway Management	Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Environment & Place
Kingham: Church Street - proposed 'No Waiting at Any Time' restrictions *(Ref: 2023/052)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	James Wright, Traffic & Traffic Schemes Technical Officer Tel: 07789 926984	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Marcham: Howard Cornish Road - proposed Bus stop clearway *(Ref: 2023/057)* To consider any objections arising from the formal	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Jet Mulraney, Senior Engineer (Road Agreements Team S&V Engineering 2) Tel: 07767 648708	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Statutory consultation.								
Milcombe - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/068)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Milton (Banbury) - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/063)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Oxford: Barns Road & other locations -	Delegated Decisions by	No	None	Standard traffic		Cabinet Member for	James Whiting, Principal Officer -	Corporate Director

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
proposed parking permit eligibility amendments *(Ref: 2023/054)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*			scheme consultation.		Highway Management	Parking Tel: 07584 581187	Environment & Place
Oxford: North Street, Osney - proposed parking bay & permit eligibility amendments *(Ref: 2023/055)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Anthony Kirkwood, Principal Engineer - Traffic & Road Safety Tel: 07392 318871	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Oxfordshire: All Controlled Parking Zones - proposed amendment to Carers permit eligibility (OCC social workers) *(Ref: 2023/056)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	James Whiting, Principal Officer - Parking Tel: 07584 581187	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
consultation.								
St Helen Without - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/064)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
South Stoke - Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/067)* To determine what speed limit changes should be made following consideration of public consultation responses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Stanton St John: Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet	No	None	Standard traffic scheme	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for	Cabinet Member for Highway	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure	Corporate Director Environment &

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2022/197)* Decision required on proposed 20mph speed limit.	Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*			consultation.	Highway Management changed from 26/01/2023 to 23/03/2023. Reason: Further work required. Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 23/03/2023 to 25/05/2023. Reason: Further work required.	Management	Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Place
Wallingford: Land North of King Henry Avenue - proposed 20mph speed limit & Bus stop clearway *(Ref: 2023/058)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Ryan Moore, Senior Engineer (Road Agreement Team - S&V) Tel: 07557 082568	Corporate Director Environment & Place
Wantage: Proposed 20 mph Speed Limits and associated speed limit buffers *(Ref: 2023/025)*	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Geoff Barrell, Senior Infrastructure Planner Tel: 07740 779859	Corporate Director Environment & Place

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Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
To consider responses to speed limit consultation.	*(25 May 2023)*				23/03/2023 to 25/05/2023. Reason: Further work required.			
Witney Corn Street - proposed permanent 'No Waiting at Any Time' restriction *(Ref: 2023/113)* To consider any objections arising from the formal Statutory consultation to the existing experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(25 May 2023)*	No	None	Standard highways statutory consultation.		Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Odele Parsons, Senior Transport Planner Tel: 07974 002860	Corporate Director Environment & Place

22 June 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Cassington - Horsemere Lane - proposed prohibition of motor vehicles and revocation of one-way restriction *(Ref: 2023/070)*	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(22 June 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 25/05/2023 to 22/06/2023.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Yousuf Javed, Project Manager, A40 Corridor	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Access to / from Horsemere Lane at Cassington to be changed as part of A40 corridor improvement.					Reason: further work required.			

20 July 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Launton - Bicester Road - proposed cycle safety measures at rail bridge *(Ref: 2022/191)* A decision is sought on proposed cycle infrastructure.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management *(20 July 2023)*	No	None	Standard traffic scheme consultation.	Decision due date for Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Highway Management changed from 26/01/2023 to 20/07/2023. Reason: further work required.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	David Rawson, Rail Infrastructure Project Management Tel: 07769 261094	Corporate Director Environment & Place

Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality

25 April 2023

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by

Item to be considered	Decision Maker	Key Decision (yes/no)	Exempt Information	Consultation	Reason for Amendment (if any)	Cabinet Member	Contact Officer	Report by
Children & Young People Substance Misuse Service Budget Envelope Increase *(Ref: 2023/044)* To approve the proposed increase in the budget envelope for the full contract.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality *(25 April 2023)*	Yes	None	N/A		Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality	Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Health Improvement Practitioner Tel: 07554 103567	Corporate Director of Public Health & Wellbeing

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