



## ***Notice of a Meeting***

### **Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday, 10 January 2019 at 10.00 am**

**Rooms 1&2 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

#### **Membership**

Chairman Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE

Deputy Chairman - Councillor Jenny Hannaby

#### *Councillors:*

Nick Carter  
Mike Fox-Davies  
Tony Ilott

Liz Leffman  
Charles Mathew  
Glynis Phillips

Emily Smith  
Michael Waine  
Liam Walker

**Notes:** *A pre-meeting briefing will take place in the Members' Board Room at 9.30am on the day of the meeting.*

**Date of next meeting:** 14 March 2019

#### **What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**

- The performance of the Council and to provide a focused review of:
  - Corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting
  - Budget scrutiny
- the performance of the Council by means of effective key performance indicators, review of key action plans and obligations and through direct access to service managers, Cabinet Members and partners;
- through call-in, the reconsideration of decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet;
- queries or issues of concern that may occur over decisions being taken in relation to adult social care;
- the Council's scrutiny responsibilities under the Crime and Justice Act 2006.

#### **How can I have my say?**

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

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

Chairman	-	Councillor Liz Brighthouse E.Mail: <a href="mailto:liz.brighthouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk">liz.brighthouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Policy & Performance Officer	-	Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer 07584 909530 <a href="mailto:katie.read@oxfordshire.gov.uk">katie.read@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Committee Officer	-	Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Tel 07393 001096 <a href="mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk">colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

Yvonne Rees  
Chief Executive

January 2019

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

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

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
2. **Declarations of Interest - Guidance note on back page of the agenda**
3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held 13 December 2018 and to receive information arising from them.

4. **Petitions and Public Address**

5. **Corporate Plan (To Follow)**

10.05

A report to provide context for a discussion about resources and budget pressures.

6. **Service and Resource Planning 2019/20 - 2028/29 (To Follow)**

10.35

To consider draft capital proposals and draft Treasury Management Strategy and provide comment to the Cabinet before proposals are reviewed on 22 January. Council will meet to agree the budget and MTFP on 12 February 2019.

7. **Highways Deep Dive Report (Pages 7 - 22)**

11.15

The condition of roads has a significant impact on levels public satisfaction with the Council and their local area. As a result, the Performance Scrutiny Committee commissioned a deep dive into the factors affecting public perception and experience of highways and the Council's approach to improving this. From July to November a small group of councillors worked with officers to identify opportunities for improving the condition of the road network, tackling congestion, better managing the impact of street works and adapting our approach to maintenance contracts and partnership working on highways. This report presents the findings and recommendations from the deep dive for the Performance Scrutiny Committee to consider.

**The Performance Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **Ensure there is councillor input into the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan, and that this includes consideration of flexibility for local prioritisation.**
- b) **Ask Cabinet to ensure there is a smarter process for developing a programme of work to utilise the additional capital investment in highways and that a robust capital governance process is in place to help shape this and improve risk management.**
- c) **Ensure officers consider the impact on public perception when developing a programme of work and improve opportunities for councillors to**

influence this based on local priorities.

- d) **Ask officers to work with SKANSKA to explore a business case for greater levels of supervision that will ensure the quality of work remains high, including a consideration of how in-house resources could be utilised differently.**
- e) **Ensure that opportunities to utilise staff in flexible ways are explored further with SKANSKA, so that the maximum benefit of having staff on site can be realised.**
- f) **Encourage officers to explore more innovative maintenance methods and tools.**
- g) **Ask Cabinet to ensure an effective approach to publicly publishing and communicating the highways programme of work is in place.**
- h) **Ask officers to develop a more robust process for informing councillors of local road improvements in their division, so that they can advise on works that need to be prioritised and support early communication with residents.**
- i) **Ask officers to ensure all responses to highways enquiries / reports through Fix My Street include a named officer contact.**
- j) **Ensure direct points of contact are communicated and established for key stakeholders (e.g. town and parish councils) to ensure that local highway priorities can be followed up and dealt with more efficiently.**
- k) **Support the Council's ambition to become a Permitting Authority and request a report on the expected impact of this in mid-2019.**
- l) **Support the development of a comprehensive out of hours traffic management provision to ensure effective management of the impact of major incidents and network failures at these times.**
- m) **Support the principle of a having greater focus on enforcement.**
- n) **Ask the Cabinet to instruct officers to explore a case for employing dedicated resource for enforcement across all Highways services/functions.**
- o) **Ask the Director of Infrastructure Operations to ensure that a structured and robust approach to managing community engagement is in place.**
- p) **Ask officers to report back to Performance Scrutiny in 6-9 months on the impact of a refreshed approach to community engagement, including evidence of the effectiveness of the Fix My Street Superusers pilot project.**

## **8. Scrutiny of Partnerships (Pages 23 - 26)**

11.35

This report sets out the way in which work with key partnerships in Oxfordshire has been presented to Councillors. It proposes that in future, scrutiny of each partnership will be undertaken throughout the year via specific, targeted discussions at appropriate meetings and reported on as part of the scrutiny annual report to Council in July.

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **note the revised approach to scrutiny of partnership arrangements moving forward; and**
- b) **agree which Partnerships they may wish to scrutinise in more detail as part of their forward plan.**

**9. Committee Work Programme (Pages 27 - 30)**

11.45

To agree the Committee's work programme for future meetings based on key priorities and discussion in the meeting.

## Declarations of Interest

### The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

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

### Whose Interests must be included?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

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

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or [glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for a hard copy of the document.

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Thursday, 13 December 2018 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.20 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair  
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Nick Carter  
Councillor Tony Ilott  
Councillor Liz Leffman  
Councillor Charles Mathew  
Councillor Glynis Phillips  
Councillor Emily Smith  
Councillor Liam Walker  
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor (In place of Councillor Mike Fox-Davies)  
Councillor Les Sibley (In place of Councillor Michael Waine)

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Secretary

Part of meeting

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
5	Ben Threadgold, Policy and Performance Service Manager
6	Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services; Lara Patel, Deputy Director for Safeguarding; David Clarke, Deputy Director for Education; Kate Terroni, Director for Adult Services; Benedict Leigh, Deputy Director; Bev Hindle, Strategic Director for Communities; Simon Furlong, Director for Community Safety; Philip Dart; Interim Transformation Programme Director.

*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 and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and schedule are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**69/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Mike Fox-Davies (Councillor Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor substituting), Councillor Michael Waine (Councillor Les Sibley substituting) and Yvonne Rees, Chief Executive.

**70/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA**

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

**71/18 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting on 8 November 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.

**72/18 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda No. 4)

A request to speak on Item 6 was received from Councillor Laura Price. It was agreed to take this at the start of the item.

**73/18 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 2 2018-19**

(Agenda No. 5)

Ben Threadgold introduced the report and highlighted the indicators that had changed from the last quarter as indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5.

The following points were raised by Members to consider for future reports:

- Separate out figures for paper and plastic recycling;
- Find better indicators for “Air Quality”, “Level of Connectivity” and “People play an active part in their communities”;
- Provide more information on the data that backs up the indicators;
- Include the date of the latest agreed budget as well as a comparison to the original budget.
- Highlight how effective the extra expenditure on highways has been.

**74/18 SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING 2019/20 - 2022/23**

(Agenda No. 6)

Councillor Laura Price asked the Committee to consider three issues in particular:

- The reduction in the Mental Health budget for working-age adults and the possible knock-on effects on adult and children’s social care and homelessness. The



sector is already under huge pressure and this £1m saving could be a tipping point.

- There is concern that the proposed reassessments of care packages will not deliver the predicted savings and could be very disruptive creating costs elsewhere.
- There is not enough information for Members on the new model for children's services.

Lorna Baxter gave a presentation introducing the report. At the time of the meeting the Provision Local Government Finance Settlement had not been received but it was not expected to contain any major surprises.

Directors and other officers responded to points raised by Members as follows:

- A consultation paper on a proposed new formula for local government finance is expected soon but the outcome will not be known until December 2019 and it will come into effect from April 2020. It is difficult to predict the outcome at this stage or to predict the effect on services.
- The Council's reserves are currently £69m. The current net pressure of £8.1m in 2019/20 is anticipated to be met in part by the use of reserves and/or balances, but the outcome of the settlement and the final information from district councils as well as the review of charges are still required.

### **Children's Services**

- When the Council opened new residential assessment centres demand was relatively low but it has increased exponentially. However, the edge of care service has an 83% success rate at avoiding children becoming Looked After Children.
- It will take time to address the shortage of placements in the South East region.
- Officers are working with the market to provide increased capacity and a good price.
- The Council's fostering offer is under review with a view to develop an improved support package. The numbers placed in foster care are steady but demand is increasing.
- Five of the savings under Children's Social Care are red rated under deliverability because of the stage we are at – still working on a new model which needs to be evidence-based.
- A 9% increase in demand is factored into the MTFP – this is a mid point prediction as demand has risen by 20% this year.
- Any children placed in Oxfordshire by other Local Authorities are placed with external providers.
- A Cabinet Advisory Group is looking at SEN Home to School Transport to try to identify savings through different ways of working. Officers from Highways are involved in exploring options.

### **Adult Services**

- Reassessments of the need for care and the right provision to meet this are worked out with the people and their families. There are examples where changes were made that suited the user better, saved the Council money and freed up resources to assist others.

- Healthwatch are conducting a review of the changes in daytime support which will include talking to people who have stopped using services. The independent review will go to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February.
- There are benefits from the pooled budgets with Health in which the money is joined around the individual but it needs to be monitored closely.
- More block purchasing of beds provides more certainty for providers, which can be financially beneficial for them, and this means buying groups of beds can cost less than buying individual beds for the Council. Current users will not be moved as a result of this change.
- Mental health services for adults of working-age were not affected by savings made in previous years because of the council's commitment to mental health. The same savings need to be made now as were made in other sectors. There will be an impact on individuals but this is proportionate to the impact on other vulnerable people.
- Officers will work with providers and users to design savings. The most vulnerable will continue to be protected.
- There is some concern that roles can become blurred in integrated teams and there is a need to make sure that staff are engaged in social care tasks.

### **Communities**

- With regard to the Housing and Growth Deal, some revenue costs can be charged to capital programmes as long as they relate to the creation of an asset.
- Councils also negotiated with Government that there would be money for revenue costs of infrastructure schemes especially in the early stage.
- With regard to affordable homes, it is in the agreement that Councils will be repaid costs relating to sites started by the end of December.
- The Council benefits in various ways from the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership. For example, the Council had been spending £1m a year on its development budget but that is now £0.25m because the LEP carries most of that responsibility.
- The financial impact of the Carillion recovery plan is still not known but will emerge in 2019/20.

### **Corporate measures**

- The possibility of developing joint services between the County Council and Cherwell District Council in the Law and Governance area is being examined and may become a prototype for other areas of work.
- The original savings target for the transformation programme still applies but they have been taken out of the position set out in this report (reference 20CM4). A report to Cabinet in January will detail how the first two years of the programme will be funded and proposed savings targets and this will be based on better information.
- The expected overspend on high needs SEND in 2018/19 is currently forecast as £8m. Whilst the Department for Education recognise this cost should not fall on the Council and a plan to recover the position must be produced, the overspend being carried forward needs to be managed. As there is a significant risk that the overspend cannot be managed, an element has been included as a pressure in the contingency budget (reference 20CM2).

- The Schools Forum and schools have been asked to support transferring 0.5% of the School Block funding to the High Needs block but have refused.
- Regarding income generation, there will be a review of charges in January and further proposals are being worked up. It is intended that services should recover whole costs and inflation.

The Chairman thanked all the officers for their contributions to the budget process and stated that she will report the concerns raised to the Cabinet.

**75/18 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Agenda No. 7)

The following changes to the work programme were agreed:

Recycling Rates moved from March to May  
Growth Board added to May

..... in the Chair

Date of signing ..... 20

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Division(s): N/A

## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10 JANUARY 2019

### HIGHWAYS DEEP DIVE REPORT

Report by Councillor Jenny Hannaby, Deep Dive lead member

#### Executive Summary

*The condition of roads has a significant impact on levels public satisfaction with the Council and their local area. As a result, the Performance Scrutiny Committee commissioned a deep dive into the factors affecting public perception and experience of highways and the Council's approach to improving this. From July to November a small group of councillors worked with officers to identify opportunities for improving the condition of the road network, tackling congestion, better managing the impact of street works and adapting our approach to maintenance contracts and partnership working on highways. This report presents the findings and recommendations from the deep dive for the Performance Scrutiny Committee to consider.*

#### Recommendations

1. **Based on the deep dive findings outlined in this report the Performance Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) **Ensure there is councillor input into the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan, and that this includes consideration of flexibility for local prioritisation.**
  - b) **Ask Cabinet to ensure there is a smarter process for developing a programme of work to utilise the additional capital investment in highways and that a robust capital governance process is in place to help shape this and improve risk management.**
  - c) **Ensure officers consider the impact on public perception when developing a programme of work and improve opportunities for councillors to influence this based on local priorities.**
  - d) **Ask officers to work with SKANSKA to explore a business case for greater levels of supervision that will ensure the quality of work remains high, including a consideration of how in-house resources could be utilised differently.**
  - e) **Ensure that opportunities to utilise staff in flexible ways are explored further with SKANSKA, so that the maximum benefit of having staff on site can be realised.**
  - f) **Encourage officers to explore more innovative maintenance methods and tools.**
  - g) **Ask Cabinet to ensure an effective approach to publicly publishing and communicating the highways programme of work is in place.**

- h) Ask officers to develop a more robust process for informing councillors of local road improvements in their division, so that they can advise on works that need to be prioritised and support early communication with residents.**
- i) Ask officers to ensure all responses to highways enquiries / reports through Fix My Street include a named officer contact.**
- j) Ensure direct points of contact are communicated and established for key stakeholders (e.g. town and parish councils) to ensure that local highway priorities can be followed up and dealt with more efficiently.**
- k) Support the Council's ambition to become a Permitting Authority and request a report on the expected impact of this in mid-2019.**
- l) Support the development of a comprehensive out of hours traffic management provision to ensure effective management of the impact of major incidents and network failures at these times.**
- m) Support the principle of a having greater focus on enforcement.**
- n) Ask the Cabinet to instruct officers to explore a case for employing dedicated resource for enforcement across all Highways services/functions.**
- o) Ask the Director of Infrastructure Operations to ensure that a structured and robust approach to managing community engagement is in place.**
- p) Ask officers to report back to Performance Scrutiny in 6-9 months on the impact of a refreshed approach to community engagement, including evidence of the effectiveness of the Fix My Street Superusers pilot project.**

## **Introduction**

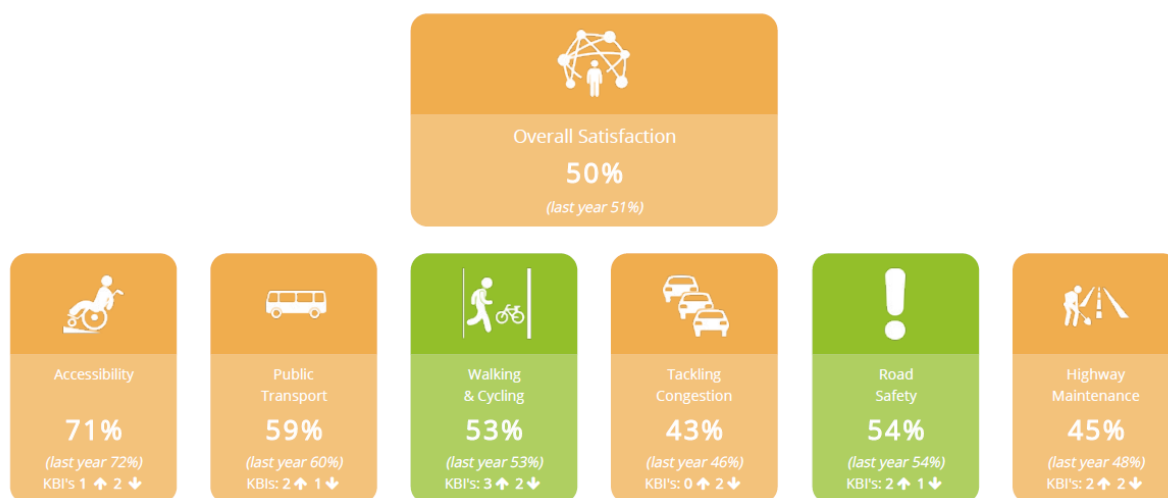
2. The condition of Oxfordshire's roads (just under 3,000 miles) has a significant impact on the quality of people's lives and affects the local economy. Roads provide access to jobs, services, schools, the delivery of goods and enable people to make the most of their free time and leisure activities – the road network is key to supporting thriving communities and a thriving economy and affects most people every day.
3. With a growing population, expanding economy, increased pressure on housing and infrastructure, and shrinking local government budgets Oxfordshire's roads are inevitably becoming more congested and deteriorating more quickly, requiring more of a focus on repair and maintenance. The challenge for the County Council is to maintain the county's high-demand road network and ensure that Oxfordshire delivers the services residents need, within reduced public funds.
4. Recent national customer satisfaction surveys and correspondence from residents have shown a high level of dissatisfaction with the condition of the county's roads. This is in part also affecting how the public perceive the Local Authority as a whole.
5. In response, the Performance Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a deep dive to explore what could be done to address this, with a focus on what the County Council is doing to maintain, repair and invest in Oxfordshire's road network.

6. The objectives of the working group were to:
  - Develop a greater understanding of smart traffic management approaches and the prevention of road deterioration.
  - Understand the impact of heavy goods vehicles and other large vehicles on the condition of roads.
  - Explore how the Council works with third parties, e.g. utility companies, to ensure roads are properly reinstated after works.
  - Scrutinise the ways in which councillors and residents can stay informed about work on the county's highways.
  - Explore the Council's relationship with Highways England, particularly the impact of diversions from main arterial routes on secondary roads that are the responsibility of the Council.
  
7. I have led this deep dive with the support of Councillors Liam Walker and John Sanders. Officer support has been provided by senior staff in the Community Operations team, and a Senior Policy Officer. I thank them for their input, ideas and guidance throughout this process.
  
8. This report presents our findings and recommendations for review by the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

## Residents' perception and experience of highways

9. Local intelligence and feedback from residents to councillors indicates there was a particularly high level of dissatisfaction with the condition of Oxfordshire's roads and levels of maintenance over the winter 2017 / spring 2018 period.
  
10. The outcomes of the 2018 National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey for Oxfordshire show that overall satisfaction with the road network has decreased since 2017<sup>1</sup>.

*Figure 1: 2018 NHT survey results – Year on Year comparison (Oxfordshire 2017/2018)*



Key: Dark Green = an improvement of 4% or more, Light Green = an improvement of up to 3%, Amber = a decline of 1% to 3%, Red = a decline of 4% or more. Blue = no data for last year

<sup>1</sup> NHT survey based on a survey size of 3,300 and a response rate of 33%

11. The factors most affecting this downward trend are the condition of highways, ease of access and management of roadworks.

12. When compared nationally, the NHT satisfaction rates for Oxfordshire are above average for accessibility, but 4% below the national average for tackling congestion and highway maintenance<sup>2</sup>.

13. The focus of this deep dive has been on highway maintenance and how traffic is managed on the network, but not how congestion is being dealt with in the longer term. We focused on four key lines of inquiry:

A. The condition of Oxfordshire's roads, including:

- The prevention, identification and repair of pot holes and other road defects,
- How the 'Dragon Patcher' is used and whether it delivers good value for money,
- How the Council communicates with residents and councillors about its road infrastructure,
- How the Council works with district councils and the city to maintain its road network,
- Benchmarking local customer satisfaction rates nationally.

B. Congestion, including:

- The county's strategic road networks,
- How road diversions are managed on main arterial routes,
- The Council's relationship with Highways England.

C. Street works, including:

- How works on highways are prioritised and programmed,
- The impact of third-party work and significant events on the road network, and the Council's legal rights and duties.

D. Highway maintenance contracts / agreements, including:

- The extent of maintenance work delegated to town and parish councils,
- How successfully highways contracts are monitored and the specific responsibilities of contractors.

### **The Council's highway infrastructure responsibilities**

14. Under the heading of 'Community Operations' the Council manages the maintenance and operation of Oxfordshire's highways and transport system. This includes network management; highway maintenance and minor schemes of work; management of trees and public rights of way; traffic and road safety; and supported transport (see Annex A for a brief overview). Whilst these teams do not lead on major infrastructure projects or the planning process, they are a key contributor to these as and when required.

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<sup>2</sup> 2018 NHT survey results – Benchmark comparison with NHT average



15. Although extensive guidance on highway maintenance is set out in a Code of Practice<sup>3</sup>, there is no statutory minimum for standards of repair and maintenance set out in legislation, just a 'duty to maintain'<sup>4</sup>. Whilst there is also no statutory definition of a 'pothole', the Council follows a system of categorisation for defects and risks, as laid out in the Code, which informs the nature and speed of the Council's response.
16. The Code of Practice was refreshed in 2016 and now promotes an integrated asset management approach to highway infrastructure based on local levels of risk-based assessment. The new Code includes a series of recommendations that Authorities must adhere to and as such, the Council's Highway Policy Statements and priorities have recently been revised, in conjunction with members of a Transport Cabinet Advisory Group and the Council's main highway maintenance provider.

## **The Council's current approach and future opportunities**

### Highways policy and plans

17. At present 10% of Oxfordshire's roads are categorised as having less than 5 years residual life remaining, with a further 45% considered to have between 5 and 15 years remaining. Current rates of deterioration indicate that the number of potholes in the county will increase by 32% over the next 5 years, although severe weather, as seen during the winter of 2017, is likely to accelerate this.
18. To ensure a strategic response to the deterioration of the county's road network, the Council has a Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)<sup>5</sup> that was developed in 2014 through a councillor working group. This Plan outlines overarching principles in relation to levels of service, highway life cycle plans, asset valuation and an asset register. It is seen as fundamental for demonstrating the value of highway maintenance, as well as delivering on wider corporate objectives and transport policy.
19. We recognise the value of having a HAMP for ensuring minimum standards and a consistent approach to road maintenance, but also see the importance of local discretion and prioritisation by managers and councillors. Officers provided assurance that this already happens to a degree through officer liaison with the main highway maintenance provider, but we believe there is greater scope for councillors to be involved in helping to prioritise local works. With the current HAMP expiring in 2019, there is an opportunity for councillors to be involved in reshaping the next iteration, so that a greater level of local flexibility and influence can be incorporated into planned maintenance work.

**Recommendation: Ensure there is councillor input into the review of the Highways Asset Management Plan, and that this includes consideration of flexibility for local prioritisation.**

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<sup>3</sup> 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A code of practice', October 2016, UK Roads Liaison Group

<sup>4</sup> S.41 Highways Act 1980

<sup>5</sup> Oxfordshire HAMP 2014-2019 is available online at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/transport-policies-and-plans/highway-maintenance/highway-asset-maintenance>

### Funding and investment

20. Officers reported that budgets for maintaining the county's highways have reduced by 50% in real terms over the last 10 years, whilst at the same time construction and technical costs have significantly increased. Reductions in central government funding have led to a deterioration in the condition of Oxfordshire's carriageways and footways as local spending has been prioritised elsewhere. In addition, major growth in the county is leading to a greater need for the asset base to be maintained and adding potential liabilities if the condition of roads does not improve.
21. Comparatively Oxfordshire spends less than other Authorities on maintaining its road network, with a total annual spend on highways of c. £21m in recent years, linked to levels of central government funding. We are concerned that the current Department for Transport (DfT) funding formula is having a detrimental effect on the level of funding Oxfordshire receives, as it is based on route length and not road use or condition. It is widely accepted that current spending levels are insufficient to maintain road conditions. Officers assured us that as a Local Authority we are challenging the DfT on how fit for purpose their funding formula is.
22. We were also informed that funding can be increased through bids to various DfT grant funds, but we fear this is not a sustainable solution. Despite this, officers confirmed that the County Council has been the most successful Authority in bidding for the DfT challenge fund, securing £12.5m of additional funding in 2016, which has significantly increased spending on maintenance per kilometre of road over the last 3 years.
23. Following the initiation of this deep dive, the Cabinet approved a business case for significant levels of additional capital investment in highway assets that will come forward as part of the capital budget proposals for 2019/20. We are supportive of this decision, but recognise there will be a balance to strike between investing in the best maintenance approaches and doing what the public and councillors believe to be an effective use of public funds. There will be opportunities to consider investment in a range of areas that will affect the public's perception of Oxfordshire's roads to differing degrees. Whilst we appreciate that the additional investment will be considerable, it will still not bring the county's road network up to an optimal condition.

**Recommendation: Ask Cabinet to ensure there is a smarter process for developing a programme of work to utilise the additional capital investment in highways and that a robust capital governance process is in place to help shape this and improve risk management.**

**Recommendation: Ensure officers consider the impact on public perception when developing a programme of work and improve opportunities for councillors to influence this based on local priorities.**

### Contract management

24. We explored in some detail the contract arrangements the Council has with its main highway maintenance provider, to understand how value for money is being achieved and to seek assurance that there is robust monitoring in place. Our contracted

provider, SKANSKA, is undertaking work on the highway on our behalf and the quality and timeliness of their work directly impacts on public perception and customer satisfaction.

25. Through discussion with officers we learnt about the collaborative approach taken to our contract with SKANSKA. The approach reflects a relationship based on mutual cooperation, where contract extensions are linked to how well the partnership is working and both parties share an element of risk and reward (e.g. where a target cost for work is agreed, the Council shares the gains if the work costs less, but shares a portion of the additional costs if the work costs more). A number of the strategic performance indicators are designed to be delivered jointly to justify extensions to the contract and only if the provider is meeting their overall operational performance indicators will the Council pay a dividend.
26. We were also reassured that the Council takes a robust approach to contract management and the monitoring of SKANSKA's work. When there have been unresolved issues or performance targets have not been met, the Council has been strict on withholding contract extensions or reducing the level of dividend paid. The Council also adopts a policy of not paying for work unless the contractor can evidence that it has been undertaken and there are conditions built into the arrangement which mean SKANSKA is liable for the cost of repair works if a road begins to fail following maintenance or construction work.
27. Officers shared that it can be difficult for SKANSKA to attract good quality workers in Oxfordshire because of the many alternative opportunities in the construction industry. The approach taken by SKANSKA is to employ sub-contractors from local supply chains; they directly employ less than 50 frontline staff and the value of sub-contracted work is approximately four times as much as what is delivered by directly employed crews. We recognise this is an area of risk, particularly with the unknown effects of Brexit on the horizon.
28. The Council pays SKANSKA to supervise their sub-contractors, but officers report that this is currently very stretched because of the volume of work being commissioned. With the additional planned investment in highway maintenance the volume of work will continue to increase, so officers are considering options for utilising and growing the Council's in-house workforce to help supplement this direct supervision. A greater level of involvement is one that officers think could be sustained and will ensure value for money in the longer term.

**Recommendation: Ask officers to work with SKANSKA to explore a business case for greater levels of supervision that will ensure the quality of work remains high, including a consideration of how in-house resources could be utilised differently.**

29. To a lesser extent, we also discussed the Council's contract for the provision of street lighting, given that another source of residents' complaints is the repair of street lights. We were informed that in many cases the issue is often related to the power supply, which is the responsibility of Scottish and Southern Electricity, and the Council is only able to issue a fine for non-repairs after 58 days. We are therefore, pleased that the Council has committed to upgrading all street lights to LED lighting,

involving considerably less upkeep, and will be reviewing the maintenance contract as a result.

### Repairing defects

30. To see first-hand how maintenance work is undertaken and to understand the costs and benefits of different approaches, we were given a demonstration of the 'Dragon-Patcher' and visited Drayton depot where Council staff and SKANSKA employees are co-located. Officers shared that there are now more than 50 distinct defect categories based on more than just safety-related concerns. Repairs will only be made when defects have reached certain depths and widths, but area managers have the flexibility to authorise and prioritise work in higher risk areas, e.g. near schools, care homes, or on zebra crossings. This also reflects the new risk-based approach to inspection that has been incorporated into the recent review of Highway policies.
31. The number of reported defects has remained below 25,000 during the last four years, but they are predicted to increase significantly by the end of 2018 because of repeat episodes of freezing and thawing during the winter. The repair methods used in some cases have exacerbated the challenges the Council faces over the winter period. Working with SKANSKA the Council has now changed some of its working practices to improve the longevity and quality of repairs, including more saw cut repairs, rather than sweep and fills<sup>6</sup>, and using hotboxes to keep materials warm. This has also enabled SKANSKA to adopt a 'find and fix' approach, not always waiting to be instructed by the Council to fill a pothole. Safety defects continue to be repaired within 2 hours, 24 hours or 28 days depending on an assessment of their severity, whereas other defect works are planned and considered as part of an annual programme.
32. Officers highlighted the benefits of using the Dragon-Patcher over traditional crews, namely that it costs c. £15 per square metre to repair stretches of road using the Patcher, as opposed to c. £60-80 per square metre for a crew to fill potholes. The Patcher is often used where there are a series of defects that need attention, as it can patch up to a kilometre of road defects in a day, whereas crews can usually fill eight to ten potholes per day and are used in more targeted areas. As such, the Patcher is normally utilised on rural roads because of ease of access and the likelihood of the road having more defects due to heavy use. It is not used in more urban areas because of the level of disruption it would cause and the risk of damaging nearby parked cars.
33. During the demonstration of the Dragon-Patcher we were impressed by the speed at which repair work is completed, the quality of the finish, and that only two members of staff are required to operate it. However, we noted there were other issues which could have been resolved at the same time, but were out of the scope of the work order, e.g. gulley clearing and grip repair.

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<sup>6</sup> The sweep and fill method involves placing compacted material with the pothole, whereas saw cut repairs involve removing a section of the road around the pothole.

**Recommendation: Ensure that opportunities to utilise staff in flexible ways are explored further with SKANSKA, so that the maximum benefit of having staff on site can be realised.**

**Recommendation: Encourage officers to explore more innovative maintenance methods and tools.**

Communications and customer focus

34. Whilst the proposed additional investment in highway maintenance will help to build and repair more roads, we acknowledge that this alone will not address levels of public dissatisfaction – we also need to ensure residents are well informed about planned works, as well as how they can report faults. We are pleased to learn that the directorate is already considering how best to provide residents with timely information about works in their area and how to share new approaches being trialled.

35. As part of this it will be important to ensure the public understands the way that highway works are undertaken and how much it costs the public purse. We also see that a key step will be regular and wide publication of planned work, coupled with the Council delivering against the commitments it makes.

**Recommendation: Ask Cabinet to ensure an effective approach to publicly publishing and communicating the highways programme of work is in place.**

36. In respect of communicating more widely, we believe more could be done to utilise the contacts and networks that councillors possess. Officers confirmed that councillors can receive regular updates on issues in their area through automated reports from 'Fix My Street', as well as highways work planned via the regular operations reports for their locality. Despite this, councillors often reflect that they do not have timely information about local road improvements in their division, in order to share positive messages about the work or support early engagement with residents.

**Recommendation: Ask officers to develop a more robust process for informing councillors of local road improvements in their division, so that they can advise on works that need to be prioritised and support early communication with residents.**

37. On a day-to-day basis the online tool Fix My Street is used prolifically by residents, staff and partners to report, update and manage a multitude of highway defects and issues. This provides vital intelligence which informs the programme of work for Community Operations teams; however, discussion with officers about the effectiveness of this tool, identified some key areas for improvement. Whilst it was considered helpful to include a feature that would enable people to 'track' the Dragon-Patcher, we believe a useful development would be the addition of a named contact on responses to members of the public, so that further contact on reported issues can be dealt with more efficiently.

**Recommendation: Ask officers to ensure all responses to highways enquiries / reports through Fix My Street include a named officer contact.**

38. To this end, we are concerned that the Council's level of anonymity through Fix My Street and by directing enquiries to a single customer contact centre is not helpful for councillors and key stakeholders, such as town and parish councils, who want to discuss and report local concerns. An overview of 'who does what' for councillors and town and parish councils could be a helpful starting point. Longer term, we acknowledge that any changes to the way that people can contact the Authority, will have to fit with the Council's new operating model.

**Recommendation: Ensure direct points of contact are communicated and established for key stakeholders (e.g. town and parish councils) to ensure that local highway priorities can be followed up and dealt with more efficiently.**

#### Traffic management

39. The level of congestion on Oxfordshire's roads, caused by road works, accidents and heavy traffic flows, is a factor that significantly affects residents' experience of the road network. As such, we visited the Council's Traffic Control Centre to see first-hand how the county's strategic road network is managed, understand the Council's relationship with Highways England, and scrutinise our approach to managing the impact of third party works and significant events on Oxfordshire's roads.

40. As part of the Council's role in network coordination our officers coordinate all requests for work on the highway, including utility works; council-commissioned road works; temporary traffic signals; and developer works. Currently the Council manages this through a Noticing process (25,000 notices were issued in 2017/18), which represents a passive approach to handling requests. Officers shared their ambition for the Council to become a Permitting Authority, which would mean that we have greater control over when and where work is undertaken, as third parties and our own highway contractors would need to seek permission to undertake work. Officers shared that a feasibility study is underway and the Council will be submitting a proposal to the DfT by March 2019 that supports the implementation of this approach. As yet, the resource implications of moving to a Permitting approach are unknown.

**Recommendation: Support the Council's ambition to become a Permitting Authority and request a report on the expected impact of this in mid-2019.**

41. In conjunction with network coordination, the Council also processes requests for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs), including requests for road closures. In 2017/18 more than 700 orders were processed, generating approximately £1m of income for the Authority. With an expected increase in the number of planned highway improvements, officers anticipate this number will be much higher in future and without appropriate levels of resource there is likely to be a greater risk of emergency road closures. We are assured that a business case for more resource to is being developed, alongside a benchmarking exercise with Cambridgeshire County

Council, to review processes and service standards against available resources. This project will be complete in January 2019.

42. Similarly, when works are being carried out on major roads, Highways England put forward their preferred diversion routes, which often have a considerable impact on the deterioration rates of minor roads and levels of congestion. Going forward we are keen for councillors and the Highways team to have a greater influence over these diversion routes, particularly to minimise the impact on rural areas and historic towns, as well as to manage the costs of maintenance.
43. The Traffic Control Centre plays a vital role in providing advance warning to stakeholders and the public when there are issues on the highway, helping to manage levels of congestion. This is done through monitoring a network of 63 fixed cameras at key junctions (linked with the Highways England major road network), publishing online alerts, adjusting traffic signals and providing data to broadcasters for transmission.
44. Our tour of the Centre gave us a useful insight into how the team works to ensure messages are communicated in a timely way, but we were surprised to learn that 10-15% of the cameras do not currently work because of poor connections or faulty hardware. There is also no link between the existing network and traffic signals to help control traffic flow. We are reassured to learn that significant investment has already been secured to upgrade the camera network, but understand there are further opportunities that could be pursued, e.g. asking developers to install new cameras when they connect to existing infrastructure.
45. Officers also shared their ambition to provide traffic control services out of hours, to better manage the impact of major road incidents and network failures, and to mirror the service provided by Area Operations and SKANSKA teams. Currently, staff providing out of hours cover have good working relationships with Emergency Planning, but this is an arrangement based on goodwill, which is therefore not a resilient approach.

**Recommendation: Support the development of a comprehensive out of hours traffic management provision to ensure effective management of the impact of major incidents and network failures at these times.**

#### Enforcement

46. Throughout discussion with officers, enforcement was raised as a key focus for improvement across a number of areas. Currently enforcement activity is only part of the role of network coordinators and they predominantly focus on ensuring utility companies working on the highway have the correct notices in place and are not working on the roads for longer than intended. Unless a notice extension is negotiated or the additional time required is reasonable, the Council has the power to issue a fine.
47. The Council also has a licencing team that processes thousands of applications for skip, scaffolding, vehicle access, temporary storage and private road opening licences every year. Although we generate an income from these applications, there is limited resource to enforce the licencing scheme and a risk that the Authority is

missing out on further income. Officers reported that they also have limited capacity to work with landowners to ensure responsibility is taken for drainage, gully clearing and grips on their land to reduce the amount of standing water on the road and the risk of potholes developing.

48. With a proposed move towards becoming a Permitting Authority we believe the Council has an opportunity to tighten up its approach to enforcement and take a stricter stance on fines, penalties and charges. This would encourage third parties to take greater responsibility for the quality of their work and acknowledge their duties in relation to the highway.
49. As such, we are particularly supportive of the motion recently passed at Council asking for mechanisms to be developed that require developers to mitigate the damage caused by their construction works to Oxfordshire's highways by returning them to their former condition.
50. We are also encouraged to learn that officers are updating the licence charging schedule to ensure sufficient penalty charges are in place for enforcement. However, we recognise the main barrier to effective enforcement is a lack of resource to staff this. We believe there is a case to be made for specifically resourcing enforcement, as this would be offset by the increased level of income generated through fines and charges.

**Recommendation: Support the principle of a having greater focus on enforcement.**

**Recommendation: Ask the Cabinet to instruct officers to explore a case for employing dedicated resource for enforcement across all highways services/functions.**

#### Partnership working and community engagement

51. Through the 'Oxfordshire Together' (OXTOG)<sup>7</sup> initiative the Council is already working with parish and town councils individually or in clusters to support them in managing and delivering a variety of local highway services. As part of a service agreement each town or parish is offered an annual budget based on the community-led service they are running. Whilst this approach has been successful in some areas, e.g. grass-cutting, there are many more areas that local councils express an interest in having control over, whether to attract further funding or help better utilise their directly employed staff.
52. With continuing pressures on resource and the Council's drive to work more locally, officers are looking at ways to refresh and broaden the initiatives under OXTOG. Work is being done with practitioners from Cranfield University and officers are visiting other Local Authorities to map and learn from alternative approaches. Instead of publishing a list of services that town and parish councils can deliver on our behalf, we are encouraged to learn that officers are listening to what local councils tell us

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<sup>7</sup> Further information on Oxfordshire Together can be found online at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/our-work-communities/oxfordshire-together>



they want to be involved in, and what they would like to see done. We are supportive of this approach, but as part of this we would also encourage officers to explore options for further integration and joint work on highways with district and city council partners, not least through the Cherwell Partnership arrangements.

53. A particular initiative being piloted as part of a new OXTOG is 'Fix My Street Superusers'. Officers described this as a scheme which aims to empower local communities and support the Council to deliver its services: a competent and trusted local volunteer is trained to order low-category defect correction works directly from SKANSKA, in line with the Council's intervention criteria. Twelve volunteers have already been trained and are now able to commission works. Timescales for the pilot project are still being defined and officers plan to assess whether real efficiencies can be realised from this kind of approach.
54. Whilst we are supportive of the Council exploring innovative approaches to community engagement and considering ways to manage demand on our resources, we have some concerns about this approach. We have reservations about the use of unpaid volunteers to commission work that is funded by the Council and fear that there is not yet a robust monitoring process in place to provide assurance that public money is being spent in the right areas. Similarly, we have concerns about the parity of such an approach across the county, particularly where some communities are more willing to engage than others. Following the pilot, we believe a business case to evidence the potential efficiencies from this approach is required, before such an initiative can be scaled-up and rolled out.

**Recommendation: Ask the Director of Infrastructure Operations to ensure that a structured and robust approach to managing community engagement is in place.**

**Recommendation: Ask officers to report back to Performance Scrutiny in 6-9 months on the impact of a refreshed approach to community engagement, including evidence of the effectiveness of the Fix My Street Superusers pilot project.**

## Conclusions

55. We recognise there are a wide range of factors affecting the public's perception and experience of highways and not all of these are within the scope of the Council's control or influence. However, where the Council has specific responsibilities, our deep dive has shown that officers are continually seeking ways to improve what they do and searching for innovative approaches.
56. There are many promising changes planned or being piloted that we are confident will have a positive impact. We are particularly supportive of the significant capital investment proposed to improve highway infrastructure, the move towards becoming a Permitting Authority and the promising approaches being explored around community engagement.
57. However, our investigations also highlighted some key opportunities that we believe are being underutilised, namely the benefits of increased enforcement activity (which

would generate more income for the Authority) and a more effective and coordinated approach to communication. We also believe there is scope for greater levels of local prioritisation of planned works and for the Council to review its arrangements with SKANSKA to ensure the full utilisation of staff and development of innovative maintenance methods and tools.

### **Monitoring progress**

58. If the recommendations in this report are endorsed by the Committee a report will be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting for a discussion about which recommendations they will accept and action.
59. As lead member for the deep dive I will work with the Chairman and scrutiny officer to ensure a review of progress against accepted recommendations is scheduled into the future work programme of the Committee.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

60. The financial and staffing implications arising from this deep dive are dependent on whether and how each recommendation is progressed, however, we recognise that a number of the areas identified as future opportunities are likely to have resource implications. The Performance Scrutiny Committee may wish to encourage the Director of Infrastructure Operations and Cabinet to consider this as part of the budget setting process going forward.

### **Equalities Implications**

61. No equalities implications have been identified through the course of this deep dive or in the recommendations made to the Committee.

### **Acknowledgements**

62. We would like to thank the officers who met with us for giving up their time and helping us to understand the factors that are affecting residents' perception and experience of highways. In particular, we would like to thank senior managers in the Community Operations team, members of the Service Improvement Team, and the staff at Drayton Depot and the Traffic Control Centre.

### **Councillor Jenny Hannaby**

Lead member – Performance Scrutiny Committee Highways Deep Dive

**Contact Officer:** Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer  
December 2018

## Appendix A – Overview of Community Operations

The responsibility for the operation and maintenance of Oxfordshire's highway and transport system sits within Community Operations, which is part of the county council's Communities directorate.

It has responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the Highway, Public Rights of Way, and Transport Network. Ensuring that people can move around safely and minimise any disruption experienced as much as possible.

The core services within Community Operations are; Highway Maintenance (including trees and Public Rights of Way), Network Management, Parking Enforcement & Operation, Community Engagement (incl. Road safety and Countryside), and Supported Transport.

**Highway Maintenance** is a significant function and consists of three main teams. Asset Renewals, Area Operations - South, and Area Operations - North. Collectively responding to public enquiries, delivering repairs or improvements to the highway network to ensure it is suitable maintained, and Winter preparation & management

**Asset Renewals** directly manages large maintenance schemes and oversees the whole highway maintenance programme. Is responsible for the Highway Asset Management Plan that sets out our policy and approach to maintenance. Supports the area operations team and has direct responsibility for streetlighting, structures and traffic signals.

**Area Operations (North & South)** Manages the reactive, cyclical and small scale planned maintenance for roads, pavements, drainage, trees and public rights of way. Is also responsible for coordination and approval of local roadworks, and delivery of minor new infrastructure schemes. There are three main teams:

- **Highway & Drainage** – managing cyclical and planned highway and drainage works as well as investigating problems.
- **Inspections** – routine and reactive inspections as a result of customer enquiries, ordering works as necessary to ensure the safe operation of the roads, pavements or public rights of way.
- **Traffic** – responsible for maintenance of signs and lines, investigate general traffic issues and enquires, and deliver minor improvements schemes.

**Network Management** manages our highway network to ensure it is operating effectively and key travel information messages get out to the public. The team have oversight of all roadworks on our network and works with the Area Operations teams to ensure suitable coordination of works and events. All Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders are processed through the team. There are three main teams:

- Streetworks approval and co-ordination
- Traffic Control Centre
- Filming and Events

**Parking** manages the operation and enforcement activity of the parking service which covers:

- Oxford bus lanes
- Oxford On-Street Parking

- Oxford Rising Bollards
- County Council-managed Park and Rides

**Community Engagement** is a multifunctional group covering a number of activities and functions:

- Road Safety Team – Provides road safety and accident data and analysis along with engineering expertise. Provides Traffic Order Regulation advice and manages the consultation.
- Countryside Access – responsibility for public rights of way and tree activity, providing advice and support to area teams. Direct responsibility for managing our in-house maintenance task team and providing support. Includes managing the Thames Path & Ridgeway National Trails on behalf of all partnership authorities.
- Community Engagement – managing and developing volunteering type activity. Has responsibility for management and supervision of the School Crossing Patrol service and enumerators who carry out traffic monitoring surveys, along with developing the offer under Oxfordshire Together (OXTOG) initiative.

**Supported Transport** provides and enhances the ability to access transport services, enabling people of all ages to play an active part in the community and live life to their full potential. This is done by supporting and/or arranging school, community, social care, public transport, whilst placing the resident at the heart of everything we do.

Supported Transport are responsible for the following:

- Home to School Transport – Primary, Secondary, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Post 16 SEN and Meadowbrook College
- Home to School Transport Spare Seat Scheme
- Social Care Transport
- Oxfordshire Comet Service
- Taxi and coach driver Safeguard Training and DBS checks
- Community Transport
- Payments of concessionary fares to commercial bus providers
- Quality Monitoring of all contracts and managing complaints and issues
- Managing the Council's fleet

Division(s): N/A
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## Performance Scrutiny Committee – 10 January 2019

### Scrutiny of Partnerships

#### Report by the Policy and Performance Service Manager

#### Executive Summary:

This report sets out the results of discussions between Scrutiny Chairmen about the preferred method of scrutinising key partnerships in Oxfordshire. In previous years, an annual partnership report has been presented at Full Council. At the meeting on 6 November 2018, Council agreed that scrutiny committees should consider the report. Scrutiny Chairmen have decided that each committee should have targeted discussions at appropriate meetings and reported on as part of the scrutiny annual report to Council in July each year.

#### Introduction

1. In previous years an update has been presented to Full Council on Oxfordshire-wide partnerships that the County Council is engaged with and their activities during the year. On a motion carried at Council on 6 November 2018, it was agreed that this report should be referred to the relevant scrutiny committees for their consideration.
2. The Chairmen of the scrutiny committees have considered the ways in which partnerships are already subject to scrutiny and have agreed a revised method of scrutinising partnerships moving forward.

#### Partnerships subject to scrutiny

3. The table below outlines the current ways in which partnerships are already subject to scrutiny and any gaps that currently exist:

<b>Name of partnership</b>	<b>Method of scrutiny</b>
Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board	Joint Health Scrutiny Committee already scrutinises performance against the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board	Performance Scrutiny Committee calls the Chairs of both board to a meeting in the autumn to scrutinise their annual reports
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Performance Scrutiny Committee invites the LEP's Chief Executive to attend a meeting annually
Safer Oxfordshire Partnership	Performance Scrutiny Committee scrutinises performance of community

	safety services and comments on areas for improvement for consideration as part of future priorities in the Community Safety Agreement.
Thames Valley Emergency Services Collaboration	There is no formal scrutiny of the Collaboration itself, but the Performance Scrutiny Committee annually reviews the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service and invites the Thames Valley Police Chief Constable to attend and discuss his Delivery Plan
Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	The effectiveness of the Alliance in achieving its stated aims is not currently scrutinised by any Council scrutiny committee, but could fall within the remit of the Performance Scrutiny Committee
Oxfordshire Environment Partnership	Although the Performance Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the County Council's performance in relation to waste and energy targets through regular business management reports, the impact or effectiveness of the OEP is not reviewed.
Oxfordshire Growth Board	A scrutiny advisory panel of members, drawn from across the councils, currently meets to oversee the delivery of the Oxfordshire housing and growth deal. The County Council's representatives on this panel are Cllrs John Sanders and Emily Smith. Each Council retains the authority to call-in decisions made by the Board in respect of their area – for the County Council this would be the within the remit of the Performance Scrutiny Committee.
Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership Board and Oxfordshire Early Years Board	Both Boards are in the process of being refreshed to ensure they truly reflect the complex educational structures in Oxfordshire and the right partners are involved to enable the effective strategies to be put in place. As such, no formal scrutiny of these partnerships is currently taking place, although this would fall within the remit of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

*Scrutiny of partnerships moving forward*

4. Scrutiny Chairmen have considered a number of options in relation to scrutinising partnerships moving forward. As outlined above, many of the partnerships are already scrutinised to varying degrees by the Council's three scrutiny committees at appropriate points throughout the year.
5. The Chairmen are of the view that scrutiny of each partnership is undertaken throughout the year via specific, targeted discussions at appropriate meetings and reported on as part of the scrutiny annual report to Council in July and that no annual partnership report is compiled. Political Group Leaders are also supportive of this proposal.
6. The Committee may wish to consider which partnerships to scrutinise in further detail as part of their work planning process.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

7. None arising from this report.

### **Equalities Implications**

8. None arising from this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

9. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a) **note the revised approach to scrutiny of partnership arrangements moving forward; and**
  - b) **agree which Partnerships they may wish to scrutinise in more detail as part of their forward plan.**

Ben Threadgold  
Policy and Performance Manager

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Katie Read, Senior Policy Officer  
January 2019

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## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	NOTES
<b>14 March 2019</b>	
Priority Delivery Plans	Directors will share their priorities within the overarching delivery plans and service plans.
Q3 Corporate Performance	An overview of the council's performance in Q3 and identification of areas that the committee may wish scrutinise in further detail.
Scrutiny Young Carers Deep Dive	A further report on the findings and recommendations from the Committee's deep dive into inequalities faced by young carers, particularly focusing on areas highlighted by the Cabinet in its response to the initial scrutiny report.
Co-production	Scrutiny of progress embedding co-production within Adult Social Care, but also as a key principle in how the Council operates across the board.
Adult Social Care Contributions Policy	Scrutiny of how changes to the way the council charges for adult social care services are being implemented and the impact this is having on residents and their carers
Daytime Support Services	Review of the impact of changes to Daytime Support Services and whether there are clients who did not get places in the new service – to include an Age UK representative and a review of the Healthwatch Oxfordshire report on these services.
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Scrutiny of the LEP's activity in supporting innovation and driving productivity.  Scrutiny members may wish to consider a deep dive in preparation for this item, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How the LEP is accountable to the public,</li> <li>- How the County Council operates as the accountable body,</li> <li>- Governance and transparency around decision-making.</li> </ul>
<b>9 May 2019</b>	
Recycling Rates	An update on progress made with implementing the recommendations from the recycling deep dive and how this may have affected performance.
New model for children's social care	Scrutiny of progress with the development of a new model for children's social care and the impact this will have on outcomes for children and families, as well as managing demand for services. To include an overview of the data / evidence collated across the South East region on complex placements and the potential for jointly commissioned services.
<b>4 July 2019</b>	

Contract performance	Scrutiny of how high value contracts with Adult Social Care providers, are managed. Linked to the impact of using block contracts for care / nursing homes.
<b>5 September 2019</b>	
Police and Crime Commissioner	Scrutiny of progress against the Police and Crime Plan 2017 – 2021 – The PCC will present his 2018/19 Annual Report.
Thames Valley Police Delivery Plan 2019-20	Discussion about performance of the Thames Valley Police Service in 2018/19 and areas of focus for 2019/20
Community Safety and Risk Management	Scrutiny of the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's performance in 2018-19 and the county's strategic approach to improving community safety outcomes.
<b>7 November 2019</b>	
Safeguarding Children	Scrutiny of Safeguarding Children Annual reports, including an overview of safeguarding work, serious case reviews and quality assurance
Safeguarding Missing Children	An update on the number of children reported as missing from home, care and school in Oxfordshire and the work undertaken by the Missing Children's Panel and partners.
Safeguarding Adults	Scrutiny of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report.
Mental Health Social Work services	Review the outcomes of transferring social work staff back into the council for the delivery of mental health assessments, including an overview of s.117 funding, team performance and numbers of clients supported.
Young Carers	Review of progress in relation to the recommendations from the Young Carers' scrutiny deep dive and the impact of moving the Young Carers Service into the Family Solutions Service.
<b>12 December 2019</b>	

<b>TO BE SCHEDULED</b>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Oxfordshire Growth Deal	Oversight and scrutiny of Oxfordshire Growth Board decisions, bearing in mind the work of the joint scrutiny panel.

Drug use in Oxfordshire	Links with health, domestic violence, housing – examine relationship with districts and Thames Valley Police, including work underway to tackle Child Drug Exploitation and County Lines.
Use of s.106 monies	Update on progress since the PSC deep dive into s.106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.
Plans to tackle roadside NO2 concentrations	Council's approach to dealing with the impact of national policy to tackle roadside NO2 concentrations on Oxfordshire's transport network/ road infrastructure (i.e. ending the sale of diesel/petrol cars by 2040)
Strategic drivers	How the council is meeting its identified strategic risks, including council transformation and culture change, its relationship with external partners, building communities, etc.
Income generation	Scrutiny of the council's principles in relation to income generation, the opportunities available to the Authority and plans for increased income generation.
Ofsted inspection response	Scrutiny of the actions the Council is planning to take in response to the findings of the inspection into local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers.
Council workforce	How the Council is meeting its Investors in People standard, ensuring its workforce is diverse and representative of local communities, and building workforce resilience, including its relationship with Unison.
Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan	Scrutiny of the Council's overall transport vision, goals and objectives to support population and economic growth.
Key worker housing	A report on progress with addressing housing and affordability issues in Oxfordshire as one of the biggest barriers to attracting key workers for the care workforce.

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