

**Action and Recommendation Tracker
Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

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

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Recommendations:

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
28/04/23	Consultation and Engagement Strategy	That at its next annual refresh of the Communications and Engagement action plan the Council strengthens its roadmap for how it will leverage its partnerships to increase the breadth of engagement by including (but not limited to) a) Creating SMART targets for partnership working b) Committing to undertake engagement processes which are representative by design	Susannah Wintersgill	11/04/24	Y	<p>Partially Accepted <i>The council already undertakes some representative engagement activity, such as the annual residents' survey. Further representative exercises will be commissioned where appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>For budget consultation and engagement exercises, the council has for a number of years used a range of participatory and representative methods to increase the breadth of engagement, from deliberative discussion days and representative surveys to market stall events, large scale public debates and open online feedback forms. Deliberative techniques are also used to engage</i></p>

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						<p><i>children and young people, such as our full-day sounding board events.</i></p> <p><i>The consultation and engagement team work closely with partners on a range of activity. However, as part of the next annual refresh of the action plan, we will look to strengthen targets around partnership working</i></p> <p>Update: Over the course of the year we have extended the range of partners we work including the university, voluntary and community sector capitalising on relationships formed elsewhere in the organisation. The following are just a selection of: multiple examples SEND local area partnership Oxfordshire Conversations events for parents and carers, the Health and Wellbeing two phase consultation and engagement, budget consultation outreach discussions, upcoming EDI focus groups . The creation of SMART targets around consultation and engagement difficult, owing to their subject-dependent nature.</p>
21/07/23	Workforce Strategy	That the Council develops specific workstreams within its Workforce Strategy, backed by targets, around attracting and supporting spouses and partners of military personnel to work for the Council, including steps taken to reinvigorate its existing commitments.	Cherie Cuthbertson	11/04/24	Y	<p>Accepted</p> <p><i>Oxfordshire County Council is committed to supporting our Armed Forces and the Armed Forces Covenant. Together, we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.</i></p> <p><i>As part of our workforce strategy action plan, we have identified initiatives which support the Armed Forces.</i></p>

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						<p><i>Plans are being produced which will involve project teams with appropriate stakeholders with robust timelines for delivery and where appropriate, agreed targets. We have also committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of our current initiatives to ensure we understand what is working well and what we could do differently. This includes a review of our 'buddying' system and training on the Armed Forces Covenant as well as how we advertise and engage partners of military personnel for short- and long-term contracts of employment within OCC.</i></p> <p>Update: This review is ongoing and seeks to ensure that whatever is implemented adds the most value to services personnel.</p>
29/09/23	Social Value	That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.	Melissa Sage	11/04/24	Y	<p>Partially Accepted</p> <p><i>To establish the current set of TOMs, workshops were held across two days (one session focused on Economic and Social themes, the other session focused on the Environmental theme) to select relevant TOMs with the service areas from all across the Council, which delivered both the Master and Light set of TOMs.</i></p> <p><i>Once these were established, certain TOMs were prioritised to support the Council's stated aims and objectives. Some of these TOMs are weighted medium (x2) or high (x3), meaning the financial proxy values are doubled or tripled in the background calculators that affect a bidder's final quantitative score. This incentivises bidders to choose some of the prioritised measures to</i></p>

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						<p><i>make up their overall social value bid response. Measures have been selected for prioritisation because they are aligned with the Council's key priorities, aims and strategic frameworks such as Climate Action and Including Everyone. This means that we are already supporting the Council's stated objectives in an appropriate, fair and proportionate way.</i></p> <p><i>Specification remains the key element for ensuring that contracts place social value at the heart of their delivery.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to the procurement social value policy, a wider organisational policy will be designed that will establish an agreed definition of social value to inform agreed measures in all decision making.</i></p> <p>Update: As can be seen above, the majority of this has been covered off through actions taken. In relation to the wider social value policy, a report from work undertaken with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies is expected in September and will outline next steps.</p>
		That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.		11/04/24	Y	<p>Accepted <i>There will be a regular review of the procurement social value policy to ensure still appropriate and applicable. This includes a regular review of the TOMs as they are updated and refreshed nationally.</i></p> <p><i>Further work is to be completed with an organisational wide approach to social value that goes beyond procurement and aims to support decision making at all levels. The policy will seek to provide an agreed</i></p>

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						<p><i>definition of social value so that there is consistency in our expectations of social value with agreed measures for monitoring and evaluation purposes.</i></p> <p>Update: As referenced in the recommendation above, the work on wider social value is expected to reach its next step in September with the production of a report arising from the Council's work with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.</p>
19/01/24	Draft Customer Experience Strategy	That the Council reviews within the Customer Experience Strategy - and more widely - its use of the word 'customers' as the preferred term to refer to those in receipt of collectively paid-for public services.	Cllr Neil Fawcett; Tom Parsons	15/10/24	G	<p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>When carrying out the internal engagement for this strategy (November 2023 to January 2024) we engaged over 250 employees to review the term 'customer' and have reflected responses in a word cloud infographic in the strategy (page 8) exploring all the terms we use to describe the people we serve.</p> <p>The final definition shared in the strategy (page 9) defines customer as "any individual, group or organisation that interacts with or receives assistance, support or guidance from the council". This broad definition covers everyone, including those in receipt of services paid for by the public.</p> <p>A recent intranet article, posted on the 14th of August, covering the customer experience strategy outlined the range of customers that the council has from residents to road users and business's which showcased the broad scope of the definition.</p>

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						We plan to discuss this further internally to finalise a definition for the council.
		That the Council takes further measures to increase public understanding of its financial limitations.				<p>Accepted</p> <p>Within the strategy (page 7) we have reflected on the increased demand for services with the limited budget available. This requires a shift in approach towards customers self-serving where appropriate which will direct the council to focus on more complex cases that require further support. This reduction in overall demand through a greater use of self-service will ensure we can deliver consistent customer service within finance limitations.</p> <p>We have included a graphic, also on page 7, which outlines how the council will reduce overall demand such as better early intervention, signposting and greater use of partners. This will help those who read the strategy understand the measures the council are taking to meet the challenges currently faced.</p> <p>Separate to the strategy the consultation and engagement team have created budget simulator exercises which have enabled customers to try and set their own council budgets. They have also used this tool to engage young people in conversations around public finance.</p> <p>A budget for 24/25 was simulated by 1300 people including 88 secondary school children. There were also 140 online feedback forms submitted. For the 25/26</p>

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						budget, there have been over 1000 submissions using the budget simulator tool.
		That the Council works more closely with district/city and town/parish councils to reduce for residents the impact of the complexity of multiple layers of local authority.			G	<p>Accepted</p> <p>We have identified this internally as an issue and have recently launched our Oxfordshire Councils Charter with the districts, towns and parishes. This framework will support further conversations on improving customer experience across Oxfordshire.</p> <p>As part of the customer experience action plan, we are working with OCC communications team and partners to improve understanding around the services that the council and our partners offer through social media/resident engagement.</p> <p>Finally, an upgrade to our telephony system to an omni-channel approach (phone, email, WhatsApp etc) in November has the possibility to improve auto-redirection of customers to the appropriate service. A further update on this functionality can be provided when the new system is live.</p>
		That the Council identifies the steps it can reasonably take to extend improvements in service standards to subcontractors.			G	<p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>Since going live with the strategy, we have met with individual directorates including Environment and Place which use a large number of subcontractors to promote the principles.</p> <p>We have a communications plan for the strategy internally which includes all service areas and this</p>

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						<p>will allow us to embed the principles to all colleagues and subcontractors.</p> <p>We may explore adding information on the customer experience strategy to our subcontractor's induction period but this will be a wider piece of work.</p>
		That the Council monitors the effectiveness of its complaints-handling as part of its Customer Experience Strategy.			G	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Following feedback from this scrutiny committee we added a fifth principle to our strategy around learning from feedback. We have a dedicated improving the customer experience project to review and unify the complaints process and system which is currently live. An update on the new process/system will be shared once available.</p> <p>Regular updates around corporate complaints are currently shared through the business management and monitoring report.</p>
		That the Council includes within its profiles of user groups those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and those for whom English is a second or other language.			G	<p>Accepted</p> <p>When engaging for the strategy respondents were from a range of places across the county. The 3 postcode areas we received most feedback from, were: OX16 - Banbury area (22%), OX4 - East Oxford area, including Cowley, Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill (19%), and OX28 – Witney area (9%), which coincide with where we carried out in person</p>

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						<p>engagement. (The engagement report for the strategy has a postcode map.) These areas include some of our most deprived wards in the county.</p> <p>We have committed to doing more in our action plan including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in comprehensive research that encompasses a wide range of demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and abilities when designing our services • Partner with local organisations, community leaders, and advocacy groups to leverage their insights which will provide context and help bridge gaps • Invest in multilingual support and translation software, clear signage, and accessible technology <p>We are working with the co production lead in the council to engage with seldom heard groups including English not as a first language and socio-economically disadvantaged groups when designing future customer-experience processes.</p> <p>In the action plan we committed to creating user profiles for training and designing process around our customers. A further update on progress will be provided at the end of year 1 of the strategy.</p>

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Actions:

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29/09/23	Social Value	Members to be provided the data on the number/value of contracts run by the Council which are subject to social value weightings vis a vis those which are not. Similar data around the number and value of contracts above and below £100k also to provided.	Melissa Sage	11/04/24	Y	Update: Owing to the nature of the data collected this is proving more challenging than anticipated. However, it is still being worked on, though it is likely to require greater use of assumptions than previously envisaged.