

Agenda

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Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 28 November 2012**

Time: **6.00 pm**

Place: **Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford**

For any further information please contact:

Lois Stock, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01865 252275

Email: lstock@oxford.gov.uk

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chair	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan	Headington Hill and Northway;
Vice-Chair	Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan	Lye Valley;
	Councillor Jim Campbell	St. Margaret's;
	Councillor Bev Clack	St. Clement's;
	Councillor Roy Darke	Headington Hill and Northway;
	Councillor Mick Haines	Marston;
	Councillor Rae Humberstone	Blackbird Leys;
	Councillor Graham Jones	St. Clement's;
	Councillor Pat Kennedy	Lye Valley;
	Councillor Helen O'Hara	Cowley;
	Councillor Gill Sanders	Littlemore;
	Councillor Ruth Wilkinson	Headington;
	Councillor Dick Wolff	St. Mary's;

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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any of the following agenda items. Guidance on this is set out at the end of these agenda pages.

3 STANDING ITEM: WORK PROGRAMME

1 - 26

Contact Officer: Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Tel 01865 252191, phjones@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The work programme needs to reflect the wishes and interests of the Committee and so will be presented at every meeting to allow members to lead and shape their work.
Why is it on the agenda?
<p>To allow the Committee to be updated on progress since the last meeting and to agree any lines of enquiry needed for future meetings.</p> <p>The following additions have been made:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Chair of the Committee has asked for 2 items from the Forward Plan to be included for pre-scrutiny. These are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic Development and Growth Strategy refresh (formerly the Regeneration Strategy).• Community Infrastructure levy – draft charging schedule.These have been included for January 2013.2. The Housing Panel has agreed its work programme and appointed a Tenant Representative as a co-optee. <p>The latest Forward Plan is included for information.</p>
Who has been invited to comment?
Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, will present the work programme and answer questions from the Committee.

What will happen after the meeting?

The programme will be update. The Chair and Vice Chair will continue to monitor the Committee's work programme and report to future meetings.

4 **STANDING ITEM:REPORT BACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

27 - 32

Contact Officer: Lois Stock (Democratic Services Officer), Tel 01865 252275, lstock@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The Committee and its Panels make recommendations and comments to officers, Board Members and the City Executive Board. This item reports on the outcomes from these.

Why is it on the agenda?

To present to the committee the full text of reports approved by the Chair and other Lead Members of the committee and the results of the recommendations made. Reports have been or will be presented on:

- The Homelessness Strategy Review (Housing Panel)

Who has been invited to comment?

Lois Stock, Democratic Services Officer, will go through outcomes and answer questions.

What will happen after the meeting?

Any further follow up will be pursued within the work programme.

5 **SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THE HIGH STREET**

33 - 48

Contact Officer: Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Tel 01865 252191, phjones@oxford.gov.uk; Lois Stock (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer); Tel 01865 252275, lstock@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The health of local High Streets and shopping areas is important to

<p>the economic wellbeing and diversity of the City.</p> <p>National economic difficulties will have an effect on the survival of local businesses that make up local shopping areas, but does the City Council and its partners have a role to play in supporting and encouraging them?</p>
<p>Why is it on the agenda?</p> <p>The Committee agreed to debate what the City Council could do to support local High Streets /shopping areas within Oxford.</p> <p>Councillors Clack, Wilkinson and Wolff formed a Panel to scope the information required to support this initial debate.</p> <p>The main focus of the Panel has been the District centres of :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headington; • Summertown; • Blackbird Leys; • Cowley Road. <p>The Panel report attached outlines supporting information and raises a number of issues for debate. The Committee is asked to decide the next steps.</p>
<p>Who has been invited to comment?</p> <p>The Panel of Councillors will present their report to the Committee for discussion.</p>
<p>What will happen after the meeting?</p> <p>The next steps decided by the Committee will be reflected in the work programme.</p>

6 COMMUNITY CENTRES AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Contact Officer: Angela Cristofoli (Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager); 01865 252688, acristofoli@oxford.gov.uk

<p>Background Information</p> <p>Work is already underway in the Council to support and improve outcomes from community associations.</p> <p>The Committee decided that, as part of its work programme, it would consider how effectively community centres are run, in particular how they strive to engage and empower communities.</p>
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Why is it on the agenda?
<p>The Committee has asked to see information on actions being taken to improve:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management arrangements; • Governance; • Training • Contributions to community cohesion.
Who has been invited to comment?
<p>Angela Cristofoli (Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager) will attend the meeting.</p>
What will happen after the meeting?
<p>The committees programme will be updated to reflect any further inquiries the committee wish to make.</p> <p>Any recommendations will be presented to officers, the Board Member or the City Executive Board.</p>

7 AREA FORUMS - REVIEW OF THE FIRST YEAR.

57 - 70

Contact Officer: Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Tel 01865 252191, phjones@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
<p>In June 2011 the Committee set a Review Group to look at the development and operation of Area Forums in their first year of operation. Councillors Sanders and Wilkinson and the Scrutiny Officer spent a year observing their operation and development.</p> <p>The initial findings of the Review Group were reported to a Panel of this committee in April 2012 and it was suggested that further opinion should be taken before reporting.</p> <p>The then Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Councillors Campbell and Sinclair, were asked to join the Review Group.</p>
Why is it on the agenda?
<p>The Review Group has taken additional opinions and views from the Chief Executive and the operational staff responsible for development.</p> <p>The Review Group's conclusions and recommendations are presented for the Committee to consider and decide how it wishes to</p>

progress.

It is highlighted that the findings section of this report is based on observations during 2011/2012

Who has been invited to comment?

The Review Group will present the findings to the Committee.

What will happen after the meeting?

If recommendations are agreed these will be presented to the City Executive Board.

8 MINUTES

71 - 76

Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2012 attached.

9 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

These are the dates of future meetings, starting at 6pm:-

30th January 2012
4th April 2012.

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

¹ Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

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Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Work programme debate outcomes for 2012/2013

General Principles

After consultation with councillors the committee has decided this year to run its programme through a series of themes. Each theme will be led by a small group of councillors.

The focus will be on more detailed Panel work rather than formal committee meetings. The "Select Committee" principles will continue to be developed by councillors for at least one of the available committee meetings. Co-option around themes and issues for debate will be considered to enhance the expertise and views of the committee.

A Housing Standing Panel has been set to bring together all housing issues and therefore mirror the organisation of the Council. Tenants will be asked to express their interest in joining this Panel and the most suitable candidate will be appointed for the year.

The programme remains flexible and open to reorganisation by committee. A complete review will be undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair in January 2013

The information that follows shows the programme divided between:

- Standing Panels
- Short Term Panels
- Detailed Review Topics
- Inquiries to be conducted at committee meetings including "select committee" style topics.

Each item is supported by interested members of the committee with one of this number taking a lead role.

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2012/2013

Standing Panels

Topic	Area(s) for focus	Progress	Nominated councillors
Housing	<p>All strategic and landlord issues previously contained within the remit of Communities and Partnership and Value and Performance Scrutiny Committees. A separate programme will be agreed for these debates. Current suggestions from Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Strategy. • Homelessness Strategy. • Rent arrears and debt advice. Support and outreach. • Operation of Governance arrangements in the HRA Business Plan. • Housing Strategy – Delivery of year 1 action plan • Monitoring of the effects of housing and benefit policy changes in the City • Support for the independent Tenant Scrutiny Panel 	<p>Panel to meet in July to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect a lead member • Set programme of debate • Take advice on a tenant representative <p>Panel has now met twice and agreed their outline programme which is at the end of this document.</p> <p>The Panel has also appointed Linda Hill to be a tenant representative on the Panel. Linda will serve until 2014.</p>	<p>No substitutions allowed.</p> <p>Cllrs. Sanders, McCready, Humberstone and Campbell. Linda Hill (Tenant representative)</p>
Education	To work with and scrutinise the focus and outcomes	Panel to meet in July to:	No substitutions

	<p>from the City Council's investment in primary education.</p> <p>A separate programme will be agreed for these debates after discussions with the Councils Education Advisor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect a lead member • Take Advice from the Council's Education Advisor <p>A launch conference is planned for this initiative. Provisional date 19th. July 2013 places have been requested for scrutiny members at this conference.</p> <p>Panel has met the education advisor and is clear on the starting point and aims of investment.</p> <p>Some Panel members attended the launch conference on the 19th. September.</p> <p>Deadline for schools to be part of the 2 programmes on offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership • teaching <p>was the 14th. November. The Panel will now meet again to decide how they wish to scrutinise going forward. The suggestion is that the Panel form a relationship with a participating school.</p>	<p>allowed.</p> <p>Cllrs. Campbell, Clack, Kennedy, Khan and Jones</p>
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Short Term Panels

Topic	Area(s) for focus	Progress	Nominated councillors
Customer Contact	To be involved in the development and next steps of the Customer Contact Strategy towards the Customer Excellence Award	<p>Panel to meet with Head of Service and Board Member as soon as possible to be briefed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current position • Ambitions for the future (customer excellence) • Challenges and change <p>To agree how best to engage with process to achieve understanding and influence.</p> <p>Information requested on the current performance position.</p>	<p>No substitutions allowed.</p> <p>Cllrs. Wilkinson and Haines</p>
Public Health Select Committee.	To work with the Board Member and Head of Service to produce an implementation plan for the agreed recommendations from the committee Public Health Select Committee	<p>Meeting to be arranged with the Board Member as soon as possible.</p> <p>Panel Members have met with the Board Member and recommendation on the Tweenager project and activity taster sessions are planned for implementation</p> <p>We are still looking for a community</p>	<p>No substitutions allowed.</p> <p>Cllrs. Jones and Sinclair</p>

		group to engage in a community health project.	
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Detailed Review Topic

Topic	Area(s) for focus	Progress	Nominated councillors
Supporting young people into education, training and work.	Select Committee run during the 2012 programme which suggested a review engaging young people to decide if initiatives and services offered in support of this theme are focused and directed towards best outcomes. Within this to be particularly mindful of any practical and cultural differences that may affect take up and success by young people.	Outline of consultation with young people agreed by members. This needs to be progressed and agreed with the aim of beginning the consultation in September. No progress	No substitutions allowed. Cllrs. Lloyd-Shogbesan, Khan and Kennedy.

57

Committee Inquires

Topic	Area(s) for focus	Progress	Nominated councillors
Community Cohesion	To consider how effectively community centres are run to engage and empower communities. In particular to look at processes underway to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management arrangements. • Governance. • Training. 	Work is already underway in the organisation to support and improve outcomes from community associations. To ask officers working in this area to	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to community co-hesion 	<p>outline to the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements made • Focus for on going work • How they see and encourage a link between community centres and community cohesion. <p>This item is on the agenda for the November meeting.</p>	
<p>What the City Council and its partners do to support local business and the local high street.</p>	<p>The health of local high streets and shopping centres is important to the diversity of the City.</p> <p>National economic difficulties have their part to play in the survival of local businesses that make up local centres but what is or can the City and its partners do to support and encourage diversity.</p>	<p>Councillors to meet to scope the information required.</p> <p>Information available for debate on the agenda of the November meeting.</p>	<p>Cllrs. Clack, Wilkinson and Wolff .</p>
<p>Enfranchisement and Empowerment</p>	<p>The first report on the census is due shortly this will show the proportion of people who did not complete the form without at least 1 reminder. Alongside this there are a number of households with no one registered to vote.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have a good understanding of the varied and complex reasons for this? • Do we understand the extent of the demographic deficit created by this? • What does it mean for services, funding and the understanding of our communities. • What effects does this have on community co- 	<p>Select committee debate on this item.</p> <p>Councillors to meet to scope and decide on witnesses.</p> <p>Data from the census and electoral register is being bought together to give a starting point for discussion. Delayed slightly until after the PCC election.</p>	<p>Cllrs. Jones, Darke and O'Hara.</p>

	<p>hesion and engagement?</p> <p>What can we reasonably do to understand and improve the situation?</p>		
<p>What is the role of the Council in local celebratory events?</p>	<p>A number of local celebratory events are held in the City each year. These play an important role in community cohesion and add to the vibrancy and diversity of the City.</p> <p>The City Council uses a number of these events in its literature and promotional work as examples of the community and the Council working together to produce valued events that support and promote cohesion.</p> <p>The role of the Council in the staging and funding of these events has changed over the last few years.</p> <p>How does the Council see its role now? Are the events better or worse because of this change?</p>	<p>Select committee debate on this item.</p> <p>Councillors to meet to scope and decide on witnesses.</p> <p>No progress</p>	<p>Cllrs. Wolff and Lloyd-Shogbesen.</p>
<p>Economic Development and Growth Strategy refresh (former regeneration strategy)</p>	<p>Pre-scrutiny. Consultation period ends at February CEB.</p> <p>Called from the Forward Plan by the committee Chair.</p>	<p>Listed for the January committee meeting</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Community Infrastructure levy – draft</p>	<p>Pre-scrutiny. Consultation period ends at February Council.</p>	<p>Listed for the January committee meeting.</p>	<p>All</p>

charging schedule	Called from the Forward Plan by the committee Chair.		
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Ongoing Work

The committee decide to:

- Complete the on-going work on Area Forums. – **Report agreed and available on the agenda of the November meeting.**

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee Agenda Schedules

In addition to the items listed below each committee will have 3 standing items:

1. The work programme.
2. Report back on recommendations made.
3. Update by lead members on the work of their panels and reviews.

Dates	Slots and Items
28 th . November 2012	1. Report on the review of Area Forums in the first year. 2. Community Centres/Community Co-hesion. 3. Support for local business and the local high street. Meeting full
30 th . January 2012	1. Select committee – Franchisement and Empowerment. 2. Economic Development and Growth Strategy refresh (former regeneration strategy) – pre-scrutiny. 3. Community Infrastructure levy – draft charging schedule – pre-scrutiny. Meeting full
4 th . April 2012	1. Select committee – local celebratory events. 2. Report of the review on supporting young people into education, training and employment. 3. Educational Attainment Panel update. 4. Customer Contact Panel report Meeting full

N.B.

One meeting in December dropped from the original programme.

Housing Standing Panel

Agenda Schedules 2012/13

Housing Panel Agenda Schedules

Date	Item
23 rd November – 3.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Housing Strategy Action Plan.2. Performance against the Local Housing Offer.
February?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HRA Business Plan<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance• Finance• Operational arrangements2. Fundamental Service Review – Repairs and Maintenance.3. Empty Homes Strategy.4. Supporting People spending and the effects on homelessness provision.
March?	2 items to be suggested by the co-opted tenant.
April?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Debt Advice and managements arrangements. Rent arrears levels and trends2. Effects of Government Housing Policies in Oxford

FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2012 – MARCH 2013

The Forward Plan gives information about all executive decisions (including "key decisions") the City Executive Board and Single Board Members are expected to take over the forthcoming four-month period. It also contains information about all key decisions Council officers are expected to take over the forthcoming four-month period. A "key decision", except in special or urgent circumstances, cannot be taken unless it has appeared in the Forward Plan for 28 days before the key decision is made. The Forward Plan also contains information about matters that are likely to be taken in private.

Key decisions

A key decision as defined in Regulations means an executive decision which is likely:-

“(a) To result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the council’s area.

The guidance figures for significant items in financial terms as far as the City Council is concerned are £150,000 for General Fund or £200,000 for Housing Revenue Account.

Private meetings

Part or the whole or some or all of the items in this Forward Plan may be taken at a meeting not open in part or in whole to the press or public one of the grounds in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Making representations on matters or objections to taking matters in private

If you wish to make representations about any matter listed in the Forward Plan, or about taking any part of a matter in private then you must contact us at least 7 working days before the decision is due to be made. This can be done:-

- by email to forwardplan@oxford.gov.uk
- in writing to

William Reed
Democratic Services Manager
Town Hall
St Aldate’s Street
Oxford
OX1 1BX
Email: wreed@oxford.gov.uk
Tel.: 01865 252230

Inspection of documents

Reports to be submitted to the decision-maker together with background papers to those reports as listed in the reports are available for inspection at the offices of the Council and appear on our website www.oxford.gov.uk 5 working days prior to the date on which the decision is due to be made.

The Council's decision-making process

Further information about the Council's decision making process (including key decisions) can be found in the Council's Constitution, which can be inspected at the Council's offices or online at www.oxford.gov.uk

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<i>Bob Price (Leader)</i>	<i>Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships</i>
<i>Ed Turner (Deputy Leader)</i>	<i>Finance and Efficiency</i>
<i>Colin Cook</i>	<i>City Development</i>
<i>Van Coulter</i>	<i>Leisure Services</i>
<i>Steve Curran</i>	<i>Young People, Education and Community Development</i>
<i>Mark Lygo</i>	<i>Parks and Sports</i>
<i>Scott Seamons</i>	<i>Housing</i>
<i>Dee Sinclair</i>	<i>Crime and Community Safety</i>
<i>Val Smith</i>	<i>Customer Services and Regeneration</i>
<i>John Tanner</i>	<i>Cleaner Greener Oxford</i>

DECEMBER

ITEM 1:	TOWER BLOCKS - APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT MANAGER
This report will contain details of tenders received for works to the Council's tower block properties and will make a recommendation for acceptance. The report may contain a not for publication annex.	
Target Date:	December 2012
Decision Taker	Executive Board Member for Housing
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor Scott Seamons
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Corporate Property
Contact:	Chris Pyle Tel: 01865 252330 cpyle@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 2:	DOMESTIC WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION - POLICY CHANGE
This report will contain proposals to improve and increase recycling from domestic households, including flats, maisonettes, and houses of multiple occupancy.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor John Tanner
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Direct Services
Contact:	Graham Bourton gbourton@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 3:	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
<p>The Organisational Development Strategy sets out a vision and summary action plan designed to reshape the Council's approach to people management. It reflects on the increasing requirement for the Council to advance further still from traditional service delivery to finding new income streams and a more commercial approach - and the skills that are required to do that.</p> <p>A key element is the drafting and embedding of a new set of values and behaviours which will be basic requirements of all staff and will be a consistent theme in recruitment, development, performance management and reward.</p>	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Bob Price
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Human Resources and Facilities
Contact:	Simon Howick Tel: 01865 252547 showick@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 4:	OXFORD HERITAGE ASSETS REGISTER - CRITERIA AND PROCESS
This report will outline the methodology and processes involved in the preparation of a Citywide register of local heritage assets and will ask the Board to adopt the proposed criteria and selection process.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Nick Worlledge Tel: 01865 252147 nworlledge@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Local community groups.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 5:	PROCUREMENT STRATEGY
To provide an update on the Council's approach to procurement best practice. Will take into	

account the Council's priorities to achieving value for money for our 3 rd party spend	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Ed Turner
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Business Improvement
Contact:	Jane Lubbock Tel: 01865 252708 jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Local business sector, current key suppliers
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 6:	FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS 2012/13
This report will advise on the position in relation to the Council's financial and non-financial performance and the position in relation to the Council's corporate risks.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Jane Lubbock, Nigel Kennedy
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk, Jane Lubbock Tel: 01865 252708 jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk, Anna Winship awinship@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 7:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT - HALF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT
This report will be about performance of the treasury management function up until the end of September.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 8:	INSURANCE TENDER CONTRACT AWARD APPROVAL
This report will recommend the award of a contract for the provision of insurance services from 2013 onwards.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes

Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Anna Winship awinship@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 9:	TENANCY STRATEGY AND POLICY - REVIEW OUTCOME
This report will contain the outcome of consultation commenced by the City Executive Board in September and will contain a Tenancy Strategy and Policy for adoption.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012 17 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Scott Seamons Councillor Scott Seamons
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Sheila Farley Tel: 01865 252449 sfarley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 10:	HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2012-16 - PERIODIC REVIEW
This periodic report will advise on progress against the targets in the Action Plan and any changes necessary.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor Scott Seamons
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Sheila Farley Tel: 01865 252449 sfarley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 11:	ARISTOTLE LANE FOOTPATH OVER RAILWAY - CLOSURE
This report concerns a closure of the Aristotle Lane footpath over the railway.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Michael Crofton-Briggs mcrofton-briggs@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 12:	SUPER CONNECTED CITIES
This report will be about a bid the City Council has made for money from the Government's Urban Broadband Fund.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Executive Director City Regeneration
Contact:	Sebastian Johnson srjohnson@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 13:	PLANNING ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2011/12
This report will seek approval to publish the Planning Annual Monitoring Report which assesses the effectiveness of planning policies in the Local Development Framework.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Adrian Roche Tel: 01865 252165 aroch@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 14:	TRADING STRATEGY - REVIEW
This report will review action taken following the adoption of a trading strategy in September 2011.	
Target Date:	5 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Executive Director Community Services
Contact:	Jeff Ridgley jridgley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 15:	ROSE HILL COMMUNITY FACILITY
This report will seek to determine the preferred option for the future delivery of community, recreation and associated facilities at Rose Hill. The report may contain a not for publication annex.	
Target Date:	19 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Young People, Education and Community Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes

Report of:	Head of Corporate Property
Contact:	Angela Cristofoli acristofoli@oxford.gov.uk, Steve Sprason ssprason@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Extensive public engagement has taken place as part of this project and is included in the report – no further consultation is needed.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 16:	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND CONSULTATION BUDGET
This report will present the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2013- 14 to 2017 -18 and the 2013-14 Budget for consultation.	
Target Date:	19 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	This report will represent the start of the consultation process.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 17:	CORPORATE PLAN
This report will present a refreshed Corporate Plan for consultation approval	
Target Date:	19 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Policy Culture and Communications
Contact:	Peter McQuitty Tel: 01865 252780 pmcquitty@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	The report recommends consultation on a refreshed Plan.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 18:	COUNCIL TAX BASE
This report will propose a Council Tax Base for 2013/14.	
Target Date:	17 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Adrian Wood Tel: 01865 252619 awood@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 19:	CONSTITUTION - 2011/12 REVIEW
This report will review the operation of the Council's Constitution during 2011/12 and propose changes to it.	
Target Date:	17 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Bob Price
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Law and Governance
Contact:	William Reed Tel: 01865 252230 wreed@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Internal only
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 20:	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE
This report will ask Council to agree for consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State a draft Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule.	
Target Date:	17 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor Colin Cook
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Michael Crofton-Briggs mcrofton-briggs@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 21:	BARTON AREA ACTION PLAN
This report will present the findings of the Inspector and recommend the adoption by Council of the Barton Area Action Plan.	
Target Date:	17 Dec 2012
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Rachel Williams rwilliams@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Consultation on this matter was carried out at an earlier stage.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

ITEM 22:	FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS 2012/13
This report will advise on the position in relation to the Council's financial and non-financial performance and the position in relation to the Council's corporate risks.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board

Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Nigel Kennedy, Jane Lubbock
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk, Jane Lubbock Tel: 01865 252708 jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk, Anna Winship awinship@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 23:	LEISURE PROVISION IN THE SOUTH OF THE CITY
This report will look at future leisure provision in the south of the City depending on forthcoming occurrences.	
Target Date:	Not before 13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor Van Coulter
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure and Parks
Contact:	Ian Brooke Tel: 01865 252705 ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 24:	HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME - CONSULTATION DRAFT
This report will invite approval for the issue for consultation of a draft Housing Allocations Scheme.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Housing
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Tom Porter Tel: 01865 252713 tporter@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Approval of this report commences consultation with stakeholders.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 25:	LONG TERM AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION
This report will seek approval to enter into contractual arrangements for the purpose of procuring property to which the Council can nominate for homelessness prevention.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Housing
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Dave Scholes Tel: 01865 252636 dscholes@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable

Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance
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ITEM 26:	COMPLAINTS MONITORING - PERIODIC REPORT
This will be the periodic report that analyses and comments on complaints received.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Bob Price
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Customer Services
Contact:	Helen Bishop Tel: 01865 252233 hbishop@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 27:	BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY
This report will present a Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for recommendation to Council.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013 18 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	This report will include the outcome of consultation on the December consultation Budget.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 28:	CORPORATE PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME
This report will consider the outcome of consultation on the refreshed Corporate Plan and recommend its adoption into the Policy Framework.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Policy Culture and Communications
Contact:	Peter McQuitty Tel: 01865 252780 pmcquitty@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	This report will contain the outcome of consultation.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 29:	EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY
The Council's current Empty Homes Strategy is due to expire and a revised Strategy has to be prepared. The report will present outcomes of a review of progress to date in Oxford, potential future priorities and seek permission to consult on issues arising within a Draft Empty Homes Consultation Document.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Housing
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Melanie Mutch mmutch@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	This report starts a consultation process.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 30:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH STRATEGY REFRESH - CONSULTATION
This report will present, for consultation, a revised and refreshed Regeneration Framework for Oxford (now styled the Economic Development and Growth Strategy).	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Ed Turner
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Michael Crofton-Briggs mcrofton-briggs@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Consultation will follow
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 31:	DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY
This report will propose the adoption of a debt management policy.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 32:	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - REVIEW OUTCOME
This report will review the outcome of the consultation commenced in September when the City Executive Board approved a consultation draft and will contain a Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan 2013-18 for adoption.	
Subject to the timely release of Government guidance the report may recommend changes	

to enable the Council to discharge its homeless duties into the private rented sector.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013 18 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Scott Seamons Councillor Scott Seamons
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Sheila Farley Tel: 01865 252449 sfarley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	This report will contain the outcome of consultation commenced in July.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 33:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/14
This report will recommend a Treasury Management Strategy for 2013/14.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Anna Winship awinship@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 34:	GREEN SPACES STRATEGY - CONSULTATION OUTCOME
This report will consider the outcome of consultation on a Green Spaces Strategy and recommend the Strategy to Council.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Councillor Mark Lygo
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure and Parks
Contact:	Ian Brooke Tel: 01865 252705 ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Report deals with the consultation outcome
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 35:	GRANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2013/14
This report will set out the recommendations from the officer grants panel for the allocation of grant funding to the community and voluntary sector from for 2013/14.	
Target Date:	13 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board

Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Young People, Education and Community Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Executive Director Community Services
Contact:	Julia Tomkins jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 36:	COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2013/14
This report will contain information on the County Council and Police precepts and recommend the level of Council Tax for 2013/14.	
Target Date:	18 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Finance and Efficiency
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Finance
Contact:	Adrian Wood Tel: 01865 252619 awood@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 37:	SITES AND HOUSING PLAN
This report will present the findings of the Planning Inspector and recommend the adoption of the Sites and Housing Plan by the Council.	
Target Date:	18 Feb 2013
Decision Taker	Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of City Development
Contact:	Laura Goddard lgoddard@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Consultation was carried out at an earlier stage.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

ITEM 38:	GAMBLING POLICY - UPDATE
This report will propose adjustments to the Council's Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy	
Target Date:	19 Feb 2013 22 Apr 2013
Decision Taker	Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for City Development Executive Board Member for City Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Environmental Development
Contact:	Julian Alison jalison@oxford.gov.uk

Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

MARCH

BEYOND THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN

ITEM 39:	CUSTOMER CONTACT STRATEGY
<p>Oxford City Council has an aspiration to be a world-class city for everyone, delivering world-class customer service. The Council's Customer Contact Strategy was originally agreed in October 2009. It has been revised following the successful implementation of the Customer Service Centre, Shared Contact Centre and the simultaneous development of the web. The strategy is focused on putting customers' needs at the forefront, improving customer service and joining up its work across all service areas, offering a consistent quality service across the most relevant access channels for our customers. The Customer Contact Strategy sets out where we are now, where we want to be in 2015 and what the key milestones are in our journey.</p> <p>To ensure we deliver a relevant strategy for Oxford City Council, we have pulled together a strong picture of who our communities are, and used proven customer insight to inform how our customers can most easily access the services they need.</p>	
Target Date:	June 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Councillor Val Smith
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Customer Services
Contact:	Helen Bishop Tel: 01865 252233 hbishop@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	To be undertaken as part of the drafting strategy.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 40:	HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2012-16 - PERIODIC REVIEW
<p>This report will advise on progress against the targets in the Action Plan and any changes necessary.</p>	
Target Date:	3 Jul 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Housing
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Sheila Farley Tel: 01865 252449 sfarley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	Not applicable.
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Communities and Partnerships

ITEM 41:	HOUSING STRATEGY REFRESH
<p></p>	
Target Date:	4 Sep 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Housing

Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Housing
Contact:	Sheila Farley Tel: 01865 252449 sfarley@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	Value and Performance

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Agenda Item 4

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Results of recommendations made between June and November 2012

Homelessness Strategy Review			
Recommendations from Standing Panel meeting: 8th. October 2012			
Full report at Appendix 1			
Scrutiny Recommendation	Response	Considered by	Date
That the Board Member provide a brief to the HSP on the planning arrangements currently underway to deliver the cuts in the Supporting People Funding showing current options and the consequences of these along with planning for the future.	Not available. To City Executive Board 5 th . December.		
To extend campaigns set at increasing the supply of private rented sector accommodation to include encouragement to those who don't currently see themselves as landlords but may be prepared to let accommodation.	Not available. To City Executive Board 5 th . December.		
The Board Member should ensure that the outcomes from the review of our approach to mediation provides for this services to be delivered by people trained and skilled in this area. The HSP would like to see the outcomes from this review.	Not available. To City Executive Board 5 th . December.		
That the Board Member brings the Action Plan to the HSP for review and monitoring.	Not available. To City Executive Board 5 th . December.		

To: City Executive Board

Date: 5th. December 2012

Report of: Housing Scrutiny Panel

Title of Report: Comments on the Homelessness Strategy Review

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present comments from the Housing Panel on the proposed Homelessness Strategy

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Cllr. Stuart McCready

Executive lead member: Cllr. Scott Seamons

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan, Housing Strategy

Recommendation(s):

That the City executive board say if it agrees or disagrees with the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the Board Member provide a brief to the HSP on the planning arrangements currently underway to deliver the cuts in the Supporting People Funding showing current options and the consequences of these along with planning for the future.

Recommendation 2

To extend campaigns set at increasing the supply of private rented sector accommodation to include encouragement to those who don't currently see themselves as landlords but may be prepared to let accommodation.

Recommendation 3

The Board Member should ensure that the outcomes from the review of our approach to mediation provides for this services to be delivered by people trained and skilled in this area. The HSP would like to see the outcomes from this review.

Recommendation 4

That the Board Member brings the Action Plan to the HSP for review and monitoring.

Introduction

1. The Housing Scrutiny Panel (HSP) considered the Homelessness Strategy Refresh at its meeting on the 8th. October 2012 and would like to present the following comments and recommendations as part of the consultation process.
2. The Panel would like to thank Sheila Farley for her attendance and advice and support.

General comments

3. The work done in the Council to prevent homelessness is impressive and the HSP would like to extend its congratulations to the Board and officers for their achievements. In particular the HSP highlighted:
 - The partnership work that has produced the Old Fire Station facilities; and
 - The work done by the Options Team in preventing homelessness.
4. The outlook is however worrying with the statistics painting a daunting picture of increased demands on services set against reducing resources. The cuts in the Supporting People Funding and the uncertainty around the Homeless Prevention Payment will present particular challenges when responding to the many and complex needs of those who are homeless or potentially homeless. It is clear that the Council and its partners will need a sharp and collaborative focus to be able to provide the best response it can for these very vulnerable people.
5. The HSP would like to continue to scrutinise developments in this area and early in 2013 will ask to see performance and statistics that show trends. In particular the HSP want to see the planning arrangements that are on-going to deliver the £500,000 cut in the Supporting People Budget and ask the Board Member for an up to date briefing on this issue which gives the current options and consequences of these along with planning for the future.

Recommendation 1

That the Board Member provide a brief to the HSP on the planning arrangements currently underway to deliver the cuts in the Supporting

People Funding showing current options and the consequences of these along with planning for the future.

Private Landlord Survey

6. The HSP discussed the increasing difficulties in finding accommodation in the private rented sector for those people who are at risk of being homeless. In the past officers have had considerable success in supporting clients to find accommodation in the private rented sector but current housing supply and demand pressures coupled with the changes in welfare benefits are making this a particularly challenging area. The HSP discussed what could be done to encourage landlords to come forward and possibly increase the supply of properties at affordable rents. Officers outlined a "Private Landlord Survey" which is to happen at the end of the year and talked in outline of the possibilities of creating a social lettings agency.
7. The HSP saw these as positive initiatives but would like to see campaigns extended to identify landlords that don't currently see themselves as such and may be prepared to let accommodation they own with our support or rooms in their home.

Recommendation 2

To extend campaigns set at increasing the supply of private rented sector accommodation to include encouragement to those who don't currently see themselves as landlords but may be prepared to let accommodation.

8. Mediation services are important for preventing homelessness and sustaining accommodation to avoid repeat homelessness. The strategy recognises that many people find themselves homeless or potentially so because of a break down in family or other relationships. Mediation is a specialist and skilled field and the HSP wanted to be sure we had the best quality inputs here. Officers said this will be reviewed.

Recommendation 3

The Board Member should ensure that the outcomes from the review of our approach to mediation provides for this services to be delivered by people trained and skilled in this area. The HSP would like to see the outcomes from this review.

9. The "Potential Priorities for Action 2012-18" are very comprehensive and the HSP is keen to see the views of officers and our partners, skilled in this area, who are part of this consultation. It is clear that times are challenging and what we decide to priorities and focus on in

the Action Plan will need to be well co-ordinated with our partners and be flexible enough to respond to changing needs.

Recommendation 4

That the Board Member brings the Action Plan to the HSP for review and monitoring.

Director and Board Member Comments

10. Note available at the time of printing.

Name and contact details of author:-

Pat Jones on behalf of the Housing Scrutiny Panel
Principal Scrutiny Officer
Law and Governance
Tel: 01865 252191 e-mail: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers:

Version number: 1

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To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28th November 2012

Item No:

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: “Helping the High Street” – what can Oxford City Council do to help and support the retail environment?

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To update the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee on the work carried out to date by the Scrutiny Panel that is investigating this topic.

Scrutiny Lead Members: Councillors Clack, Wilkinson and Wolff.

Executive Lead Member: Colin Cook - Board Member for City Development

Introduction

- 1 The Scrutiny Committee decided that, as part of its work programme for 2012/13, it would investigate the health of the High Street, and in particular, district shopping centres within Oxford.
- 2 The question which was the starting point for the investigation, as laid out in the Work Programme, was:-

“National economic difficulties have their part to play in the survival of local businesses that make up local centres; but what is (or can) the City and its partners doing to support the retail environment and encourage diversity?”
3. Councillors Bev Clack, Ruth Wilkinson and Dick Wolff (“the Panel”) were charged with scoping the investigation and deciding on the information required. The Panel was asked to gather information that could facilitate a debate at a meeting of the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee. **This paper is therefore not a full review document, more an issues paper for further discussion.**

Starting Point

4 The scope given to the Panel was broad and so to focus inquiries the Panel used the Core Strategy as a starting point to help it to understand the current designation of our shopping centres.

5 Policy CS31 of the Oxford Core Strategy states that:-

“Oxford’s Retail hierarchy is defined as follows:-

- *First – city centre (as defined by the primary shopping areas);*
- *Second – primary district centres (Cowley centre);*
- *Third – secondary district centres (Blackbird Leys, Cowley Road, Headington, Summertown)*
- *Fourth – edge of city centre (primary shopping area);*
- *Fifth – edge of district centres;*
- *Sixth – neighbourhood centres.*

Planning permission will be granted for development that is appropriate in relation to the role and function of each centre New retails development must demonstrate need (if outside city or district centres), compliance with the sequential test, good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, and that there will be no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of other existing centres”

6 The Core Strategy also states that:-

“All Oxford’s District centres perform well. Cowley centre (Templar’s Square and the John Allen Centre) is the best performing centrethis centre is well served by public transport but also has three multi storey car parks and a large open surface car park.”

It notes that “It [Cowley centre] draws shoppers from a larger catchment area, serving Oxford as a whole, whereas the other district centres principally serve the local residential population.”

Focus

7 The Panel therefore decided to focus its attention on secondary district centres, on the grounds that:-

- (a) The City centre had its own Manager and a developing Town Team to look after its interests;
- (b) The original concern had sprung from a councillor call for action concerning development on the St Clements Car Park which is a secondary district centre. The debate here centred around the effects of reduced car parking on economic activity, and developed into the general health of this centre.

- (c) The Cowley Centre is highlighted as the City's "best performing centre" for which the Core Strategy proposed an extension to its boundary to enhance its status as a district centre.

The centres for focus are therefore:

- a. Headington;
- b. Summertown;
- c. Blackbird Leys
- d. Cowley Road.

8 It was noted that the Core Strategy defines these centres as having:-

- Distinctive characteristics and mix of uses;
- Provide an important focus for local facilities and services;
- Primarily serve the local resident population.

What do we know about these centres?

9 Headington – has a large number of coffee shops and charity shops, about which the traders have expressed concerns in the past. There is also a branch of Waitrose supermarket and some restaurants. There is a car park with 128 spaces which charges £1.20 for up to 2 hours' parking. An additional 48 spaces are available at St Leonard's Road, where one to two hours parking costs £1.20.

The Council does not own any retail property in this area.

10 Cowley Road – between The Plain and Magdalen Road, is home to a wide variety of largely locally-owned independent shops and businesses, but in recent years the big-name chains have been attempting to get a foothold which is causing a concern to traders and local residents alike. Many of the small independents are vulnerable in the present economic climate. The area hosts a lively night-time economy and there is a preponderance of drinking and eating establishments. There is quite a high turnover rate of the latter. It is also home for many independent-sector projects, and has two primary schools, two community centres, several entertainment venues and six significant religious establishments. The local neighbourhood is extremely diverse economically, socially and ethnically, and a significant number of people work from home.

The nearby St Clement's Car Park (soon to be built upon and a cause of strongly felt local opposition) currently has 120 spaces and charges £1.20 for up to an hour's parking, £2.00 for between 1 and 2 hours. However, this car park is to be redeveloped, and the developer aims to retain 30-50 parking bays during the construction period. There will be a free 1 hour parking, but customers will need to take and display a "free" ticket from the machine. No overnight parking will be allowed. All parking rules will be enforced during the construction phase.

There is also parking available at Union Street – 79 spaces where one to two hours costs £1.50.

The Council owns 6 retail properties along Cowley Road.

- 11 Summertown – has some smaller independent shops; however Sainsbury’s has now opened in a former newsagent’s shop, making it the fourth big name supermarket along the Banbury Road shopping area. There are 121 parking spaces available in Summertown, plus 75 at the Ferry Pool. Up to 1 hour costs £1.

There is a night-time economy as well, with several restaurants and eating places.

- 12 Blackbird Leys – the Council owns the following retail units in Blackbird Leys:-

- Balfour Road – 4 units;
- Blackbird Leys Road – 9 units
- Knights Road – 3 units

There is a lay-by outside Blackbird Leys Parade where on street parking is available, plus on street parking in the general area. There are some parking restrictions that operate when there is an event at the Kassam Stadium

Car parking tariffs are attached as **Appendix 1**

Local Plan provisions

- 13 The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 adopted in November 2005 , is still in force, and has the following to say about District Shopping areas:-

“The District Shopping Frontage relates to the four District Centres as these have a different character from the City centre. Changes from A1 (shop) use to other Class A uses will only be considered in District centres where the proportion of units in A1 use is above 65% of all units. Post offices are protected as Class A1 uses and would be subject to Policy RC4. Subject to the criteria of Policy RC4, other uses that may be acceptable in District Shopping frontages are primary health facilities, child care facilities and other community type uses. Residential use is not acceptable at ground floor level”

14. Policy RC4 is as follows:-

“Within the District Shopping Frontage, planning permission will only be granted for:-

- Class A1 (shop) uses;
- Other Class A uses only where the proportion of units at ground level in A1 use does not fall below 65% of the total ground level units in the centres, and;
- Other uses only where the proportion of units at ground level in Class A use does not fall below 95% of the total ground level units at the centres.”

- 15 The Use Classes are:-

- Class A1 – retail/shops;
- Class A2 – financial and professional use (bank, estate agent)
- Class A3 - café, restaurant;
- Class A4 – public house
- Class A5 - hot food take away.

- 16 Policy RC4 covers the District Shopping Centres. Only use at ground floor level is measured, because other uses (for example residential) could exist at first floor level; (and the majority of commercial concerns are, after all, on the ground floor).. To help monitor this, a survey, attached at **Appendix 2** is, taken twice a year and measures the current proportion of shops frontages in A1 use against the target of 65%. This provides a valuable snapshot of retail use as it stands at a specific moment in time – in this case in August 2012.
- 17 A further policy, RC5, covers Secondary Shopping Frontages and is related to the City Centre and parts of Cowley Road and St Clements. This aims to allow more flexibility and diversification of uses than would be allowed in a Primary of District Shopping Centre. It ensures a predominance of Class A1 use, but allows for other Class A uses too. Residential use is not acceptable at ground floor level however. Like Policy RC4, Class A1 use is the desired use, and other use will only be allowed where the proportion of units at ground floor level in A1 use does not fall below 50% of total uses, and where Class A use does not fall below 95% of the total uses for that frontage. **Appendix 3** shows the outcome of the annual survey of this taken in June 2012.
- 18 **Appendix 4** shows a further survey taken in August 2012 showing the percentage of vacant units in each retail area. This can be seen as another measure of retail health in Oxford.. The percentage of vacant property in for the following areas was:-
- Cowley Road (core area) – 3.77%
 - Cowley Road (part) and St Clement's – 7.38%
 - Headington – 3.57%
 - Summertown – 2.97%

What property does the Council hold?

- 19 The Council owns the following retail property:-
- Freehold interest in Templar's Square Shopping Centre, which is let on a 125 year lease (began 1984);
 - 92 retail units let on a variety of terms primarily in Broad Street, George Street, Queen Street, Ship Street and St Michael's Street;
 - Major retail holding at Westgate Centre, let on a 150 year lease from 1986;
 - Gloucester Green – let on 128 year lease from 1987;
 - Covered Market – mostly short term leases;
 - A total of 77 retail units (including those at Blackbird Leys) at Council owned housing estates across Oxford, all let on short term rack rented leases.
- 20 Asset Management reports that the retail situation in Oxford is robust with continuing demand for retail property to let. At the present time, the Council has only 2 vacant properties out of the 169 lettable units that it owns; one in the City centre and one estate shop.

What are the challenges identified?

- 21 Considering the evidence that it gathered, the Panel identified **the following potential issues for consideration:-**
- (a) The retail scene in Oxford is described as robust, and snapshot figures for vacant properties would seem to bear this out. But how do local retailers currently view the situation? What issues do they currently face? Would knowing this cast a different light on the situation? (It is obvious that any further consideration would need to include discussion with traders in order for it to be meaningful.)
 - (b) Despite the seemingly favourable figures, some district shopping frontages are not meeting their targets on 65% to be Class A1 (retail) use. It is noted that in many cases they are only just missing their targets, but what can the City Council do to actively help support this policy and make sure targets are met, even exceeded? What measures might be considered?
 - (c) The Panel notes the contents of Core Strategy CS31 and feels it would be valuable to know how “appropriate” is defined and who decides what is and what is not appropriate. How do we define “vitality” and how can we enhance it? How do we measure it? What powers does the Council have to deal with this?
 - (d) The retail outlook has been reported as favourable for Oxford at present, in that the City Council has very few of its properties empty, but in a time of economic difficulty, we cannot afford to be complacent. We need to think more deeply about our District centres in particular. Footfall, for example, is measured in the City centre but not in District centres. Should this be extended to our district centres? How best can we promote and support our District centres, encourage more community enterprise use, and deal with the issue of empty shops?
 - (e) It has just been drawn to our attention that Oxford has become a Town Team Partner, having failed in its initial bid to get Portas Pilot status. It has also been successful in bidding for £10k from Central Govt. A City Centre Town Team has now been created (with Gordon Reid as interim Chair) to develop a business plan and to identify initiatives to support the independent retail sector *in the city centre*. It would be good to know what, if any, initiatives have been planned for the District Centres, as we feel these are equally important to the economic wellbeing of the City.

Next Steps

- 22 A useful follow up would be to consider what the Council currently does, and potentially *might* do, to promote the distinctive character of each district shopping centre as an asset to Oxford in general

- 23 However, the Panel feels that there is a continued job of work to do on this subject. There is a value in giving additional consideration to the contents of the *Portas Report* into the future of British High Streets. This report raises a number of issues that are worth exploring in more detail, and in greater depth than is allowed by our initial study. The Panel commends this topic to the Committee, and asks that it agrees to the furtherance of its work.

Name and contact details of author:

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(On behalf of the Scrutiny Panel.)

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Oxford Car Parking Charges (current from the 14th February 2011)

Car Park	Spaces	SUNDAY TO FRIDAY (NOT SATURDAYS) 08:00-20:00								All other times
		0 to 1 hour	1 to 2 hours	2 to 3 hours	3 to 4 hours	4 to 6 hours	6 to 8 hours	8-24 hours		
		Monday-Sunday 08:00-20:00								All other times
St. Clements'	120	£1.20	£2.00	£3.00	£6.50	£9.50	£14.00	£17.50	£1.00	
Union Street	79	£1.00	£1.50	£3.00	£4.00	£4.50	£12.50	£12.50	£0.80	
		Monday - Sunday 0800 - 2000								All other times
Ferry Pool	75	£1.00	£1.50	£3.00	£5.00	£12.50	£12.50	£12.50	£1.00	
Summertown	121	£1.00	£1.50	£3.00	£5.00	£12.50	£12.50	£12.50	£1.00	
		Monday - Sunday 0800 - 2000								All other times
Headington	128	n/a 0-2 hours	£1.20	£3.00	£5.00	£12.50	£12.50	£12.50	£1.20	
St. Leonard's Road	48	n/a 0-2 hours	£1.20	£3.00	£5.00	£12.50	£12.50	£12.50	£1.20	
Barns Road	196	n/a 0-2 hours	£0.70	£1.00	£1.20	4+ hours £2.50				

MIX OF USES IN SHOPPING CENTRES

Totals for shopping frontages. Expressed as number of units and as a percentage of units in authorised use, the minimum % shown below each table.

 below % caution on or above %

*green is not to be seen as a green light for change

PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC 3)

City Centre

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	167	20	22	0	209	2	211
Percentage	79.15	9.48	10.42	0.00	99.05	0.95	100

80% - A2 use
75% - A3-5 use

DISTRICT SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC 4)

Cowley Road

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	31	6	14	0	51	2	53
Percentage	58.49	11.11	25.93	0.00	95.53	3.70	99

65%

95%

DISTRICT SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC 4)

Headington

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	71	18	13	4	106	6	112
Percentage	63.40	16.07	11.61	3.57	94.65	5.35	100

65%

95%

DISTRICT SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC 4)

Summertown

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	65	20	12	2	99	2	101
Percentage	64.36	19.80	11.88	1.98	98.02	1.98	100

65%

95%

DISTRICT SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC 4)

Templar Square

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	65	10	8	0	83	4	87
Percentage	74.71	11.49	9.20	0.00	95.40	4.60	100

65%

95%

SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC5)
City Centre

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	71	12	34	1	118	12	130
Percentage	54.62	9.23	26.15	0.77	90.77	9.23	100

50%

95%

SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE (RC5)
Cowley Road

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	75	16	50	1	142	7	149
Percentage	50.34	10.74	33.55	0.67	95.30	4.70	100.00

50%

95%

STREET SPECIFIC CONTROLS RC 6
Little Clarendon Street Area

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	30	4	12	0	46	0	46
Percentage	65.22	8.69	26.09	0.00	100.00	0	100

65%

STREET SPECIFIC CONTROLS RC 6
High Street Area

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	34	1	6	1	42	1	43
Percentage	79.07	2.32	13.95	2.33	97.67	2.33	100

70%

STREET SPECIFIC CONTROLS RC 6
Walton Street Area

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	17	4	14	0	35	2	37
Percentage	48.65	8.11	37.84	0.00	94.60	5.40	100

50%

Park End Street & Hythe Bridge Street Area

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	9	2	18	0	29	6	35
Percentage	25.72	5.71	51.43	0.00	82.86	17.14	100

50%

Covered Market RC 7 (City Centre)

Use Class	A1	A2	A3 - A5	Mix of Class A uses	Class A Total	Other Uses	Totals
No. of units	54	0	1	0	55	0	55
Percentage	98.18	0.00	1.82	0.00	100.00	0.00	100

80%

ADOPTED OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001 TO 2016 SHOPPING POLICY RC4 SURVEY

DATE JUNE 2012

APPENDIX
3

The proportion of units at ground floor level in A1 use does not fall below 50% of the the total units in the neighbourhood shopping centres



KENDALL CRESCENT, CUTTESLOWE

1	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	3					3
	Percentage	100.00					100

NORTH PARADE AVENUE, WALTON MANOR

2	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	13	1	6	2		22
	Percentage	59.09	4.55	27.27	9.09		100

WESTLANDS DRIVE, NORTHWAY

3	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	6				2	8
	Percentage	75.00				25.00	100

CHERWELL DRIVE, MARSTON

4	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	7	2			3	12
	Percentage	58.33	16.67			25.00	100

OLD MARSTON ROAD, NEW MARSTON

5	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	5					5
	Percentage	100.00					100

UNDERHILL CIRCUS BARTON

6	Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
	No. of units	3				1	4
	Percentage	75.00				25.00	100

ADOPTED OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001 TO 2016 SHOPPING POLICY RC4 SURVEY
DATE JUNE 2012

7 THE ROUNDWAY AND LONDON ROAD, RISINGHURST

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	6	1			1	8
Percentage	75.00	12.50			12.50	100

8 GIRDLESTONE ROAD, NEW HEADINGTON

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	3				1	4
Percentage	75.00				25.00	100

9 ATKYNES ROAD, WOODFARM

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	7				1	8
Percentage	87.50				12.50	100

10 CINNAMINTA ROAD, THE SLADE

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	5	1			1	7
Percentage	71.43	14.29			14.29	100

11 WILKINS ROAD

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	9	1				10
Percentage	90.00	10.00				100

12 IFFLEY ROAD

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	9	4		3	2	18
Percentage	50.00	22.22		16.67	11.11	100

ADOPTED OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001 TO 2016 SHOPPING POLICY RC4 SURVEY
DATE JUNE 2012

13 OXFORD ROAD, TEMPLE COWLEY

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	11	4	1		1	17
Percentage	64.71	23.53	5.88		5.88	100

14 ROSE HILL

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	11	2	1		5	19
Percentage	57.89	10.53	5.26		26.32	100

15 BARNS ROAD, BLACKBIRD LEYS

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	6					6
Percentage	100.00					100

16 COWLEY ROAD, LITTLEMORE

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	6				2	8
Percentage	75.00				25.00	100

17 BALFOUR ROAD, BLACKBIRD LEYS

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	4					4
Percentage	100.00					100

18 BLACKBIRD LEYS ROAD, BLACKBIRD LEYS

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	5	2			3	10
Percentage	50.00	20.00			30.00	100

ADOPTED OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001 TO 2016 SHOPPING POLICY RC4 SURVEY
DATE JUNE 2012

19 **ABINGDON ROAD, GRANDPONT**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	8	2		3	1	14
Percentage	57.14	14.29		21.43	7.14	100

20 **ABINGDON ROAD, NEW HINKSEY**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	6			1		7
Percentage	85.71			14.29		100

20 **BOTLEY ROAD, NEW BOTLEY**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	13	1		2	2	18
Percentage	72.22	5.56		11.11	11.11	100

21 **BELSYRE COURT, WOODSTOCK ROAD**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	6					6
Percentage	100.00					100

22 **ST. NICHOLAS ROAD, LITTLEMORE**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	4	1			1	6
Percentage	66.67	16.67			16.67	100

23 **HOLLOW WAY**

Use Class	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	TOTAL
No. of units	9	2			3	14
Percentage	64.29	14.29			21.42	100

**ADOPTED OXFORD LOCAL PLAN 2001 - 2016 SHOPPING POLICES RC3
TO RC7 THE WEST END AREA SURVEY DATE AUGUST 2012**

RETAIL AREA	TOTAL UNITS	VACANT UNITS	% OF VACANT UNITS
RC3 CITY CENTRE (CORE AREA)	211	11	5.21
RC4 COWLEY ROAD (CORE AREA)	53	2	3.77
RC4 HEADINGTON	112	4	3.57
RC4 SUMMERTOWN	101	3	2.97
RC4 TEMPLAR SQUARE	87	7	8.05
RC5 CITY CENTRE (SECONDARY AREA)	130	12	9.23
RC5 COWLEY ROAD & ST CLEMENT'S STREET	147	11	7.38
RC6 CITY CENTRE STREETS SPECIFIC CONTROLS			
LITTLE CLARENDON STREET AREA	46	1	2.17
HIGH STREET	43	1	2.33
WALTON STREET AREA	37	2	5.41
PARK END STREET & HYTHE BRIDGE STREET	37	2	5.41
WEST END AREA ACTION PLAN RETAIL AREA	37	5	13.51
RC7 CITY CENTRE COVERED MARKET	55	1	1.82
TOTAL UNITS / VACANT UNITS / TOTAL %	1096	62	70.83

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To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28th November 2012

Item No:

**Report of: Angela Cristofoli, Communities and Neighbourhoods
Manager**

Title of Report: Community Centres Update

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide an overview of Oxford City Council Community Centres and work with Community Associations

Report Approved by:

Finance: David Watt

Legal: Jeremy Franklin

Policy Framework: Strong and Active Communities

Recommendation(s): To note and comment on the contents of the report

Background

1. Oxford City Council supports 17 Community Centres with 17 Community Associations running these Centres. There are currently 2 Community Centres under direct management of Oxford City Council. Support to all these Centres contributes directly to the Council's aims of strengthening local communities and addressing social inclusion. The Centres offer a range of community activities, which contribute to the health and well being of residents across the city.
2. The range of activities/events/services that Community Centres provide includes:
 - Meeting spaces
 - Health provision
 - Family support

- Youth facilities
- Recreation spaces
- Welfare and advice services
- Credit union
- Computer centres
- Music recording and arts studios
- Function rooms
- Community regeneration schemes
- Spaces for worship
- Work clubs
- Community offices
- Kitchens
- Sports & cultural activities
- Social Clubs
- Older people's groups spaces
- Training facilities

3. Generally voluntary management committees manage the Oxford City Council Community Centres; they are all registered charities or incorporated bodies benefiting from substantial voluntary input from local people. Oxford City Council supports the Community Associations by providing rent free facilities and generally, the Council is responsible for the maintenance of the fabric of the buildings, and Community Associations are responsible for the contents. The Council also funds the external grounds maintenance and refuse collection.

4. The Community Centres across the City are listed below together with the contact officer within the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team:

Community Association and Community Centre	Lead Officer contact in Communities and Neighbourhoods Team
Oxford Asian Cultural Association, Asian Cultural Centre	Martin Tudge
Barton Community Association, Barton Neighbourhood Centre	Phil Jones
Bullington Community Association, Bullington Community Centre	Phil Jones
Cotteslowe and District Community Association, Cotteslowe Community Centre	Helen Thompson
Donnington Community Association, Donnington Community Centre	Phil Jones
East Oxford Community Association, East Oxford Community Centre	Mark Spriggs
Florence Park Community Association, Florence Park Community Centre	Helen Thompson
Headington Community Association, Headington Community Centre	Phil Jones

Jericho St Barnabas Community Association, Jericho Community Centre (building not owned by OCC)	Helen Thompson
Littlemore Community Association, Littlemore Community Centre	Luke Nipen
North Oxford Community Association, North Oxford Community Centre	Helen Thompson
Northway Community Association, Northway Community Centre	Mark Spriggs
Regal Community Association, Regal Community Centre	Lois Muddiman
Risinghurst Community Association, Risinghurst Community Centre	Phil Jones
Rose Hill Community Association, Rose Hill Community Centre	Cheryl Snudden
South Oxford Community Association, South Oxford Community Centre	Helen Thompson
West Oxford Community Association, West Oxford Community Centre	Helen Thompson
Other	
Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre (OCC managed)	Luke Nipen
Cheney Community Hall (Cheney School)	Mark Spriggs
Jubilee 77 (OCC managed)	Luke Nipen
Wood Farm Community Association	Phil Jones

Support for Community Associations

Training for Trustees

5. A series of five training sessions, run in partnership with Community Matters, was delivered late in late 2011 for trustees of Community Associations. The training covered:
 - Roles and Responsibilities of Charity Trustees
 - Recruitment and employment of staff and volunteers
 - Health and Safety, risk assessments and safeguarding
 - Good financial procedures, licenses and permissions
 - Hiring policies and practices for community buildings
6. On average 12 trustees attended and came from around half of the Community Associations. This training was described as 'informative', 'enlightening' and 'transformational' by those who attended; the sessions were also described as 'friendly' and great opportunities to meet people from other centres.
7. From the feedback and evaluation of these sessions and also as a result of audits carried out this year, a series of further training is planned for early next year. The provisional programme is:

Roles & responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities of charity trustees – what does it mean to be a trustee, what is the latest legislation trustees have to know and adhere to, what’s in your constitution and what does it mean.
Business planning	How should charities plan for business – successful business plans, how to move towards financial sustainability.
Fundraising	How to construct a good bid, where to look for grants and practice at writing bids.
Health & Safety	Health and safety legislation that applies to running a community centre.
Employment – disciplinary and grievance procedures	Disciplinary and grievance procedures plus recruitment of employees and surrounding guidance and procedures.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	Update on safeguarding procedures

8. There has also been increased interest by Community Associations in learning more about incorporation and becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We have arranged training for those interested Community Associations this month, led by Blake Laphorn. 10 Community Associations are sending representatives to this training event. This will cover the options for incorporation and also the benefits and drawbacks of both their existing structures and the possible new incorporation options.

Audit of policies and procedures

9. Community Associations managing Oxford City Council Community Centres have specific responsibilities and obligations to fulfil in line with Charity Law and other legislation. We conducted audits earlier this year of their governance, health and safety and financial procedures in line with Community Matters’ national standards to ensure our Community Centres are managed by fit for purpose organisations.
10. The Communities and Neighbourhoods Locality Officers completed the audits over an eight week period, visiting each Community Centre in person and completing the checks onsite. Broad similarities were found across all centres, with the Community Associations’ greatest strengths generally found in AGM procedures, accounting and minute taking, and most significant weaknesses evident in health and safety practices and procedures, including fire bell checks and knowledge of safeguarding procedures.

11. The basic checklist contained the following:

Policy
Health and Safety policy
Safeguarding policy (include CRB procedure)
Employment Policy
Data Protection Policy
Governing document e.g. constitution/articles of association
Health and safety policy
Minutes evidencing annual review of above policies
Procedure
Governance
AGM – advertised, held and documented in line with Governing document
Minutes from Association meetings from previous 6 months
Latest accounts
Membership list
Trustee induction procedure
Health and Safety
Building risk assessment
Fire risk assessment
Fire checks record
Minimum fire extinguishing equipment
Food hygiene certificate
First aid procedure
First aid kit and accident book
Emergency contacts for the centre displayed by entrance
Employment
Employment process – advertising, interviewing and documentation for employment
Staff contracts - pay/pension, disciplinary & grievance policy
PAYE reference number
Licenses and Registrations
Premises licence (alcohol if applicable)
Music Licenses
TV – any live viewing or pictures from any device
Registration with the Information Commissioner (as appropriate e.g. CCTV)
Insurance
Contents
Employer liability
Public liability
Vehicle (MOT, Insurance, Tax) if appropriate

12. Based on the audit results we are following up with individual Community Associations to the support they require to reach the expected basic standard across all measures within the audit.

We have set a programme to ensure each Association achieves the minimum standards within our audit. This is also supported by the Trustee Training programme in addition to officer support.

Satisfaction surveys

13. In 2011 we conducted satisfaction surveys with four community centres in Oxford. We aimed to measure overall user satisfaction at each centre, and to identify priority areas of work for each centre to focus on going into the future. This was successful, and we found overall user satisfaction in the centres we surveyed was above 75% satisfied. We plan to repeat this survey work at these centres over the next two years.

Recycling

14. At Oxford City Council we are aiming to increase recycling across the city. Our Community Centres currently do not all have contracts which include recycling, and so we are working to change this. We have started with four centres in the city to switch over to recycling contracts. We have worked to ensure centre users are made aware of proposed changes in advance of contracts being made live so they can share their thoughts and any concerns with the foreseen practicalities of the new contracts. This is to make sure new contracts suit the centres' needs as best as possible. We are continuing to roll this programme out to all other Community Centres.

Future work

15. Currently, we have a system of accreditation through Community Matters called VISIBLE which assesses policies, procedures and meeting community needs. This process has seen 4 Community Associations successfully achieve the accreditation. However the process, cost and ability to achieve for smaller Associations of this accreditation has led to some discussions as to whether there could be amore localised accreditation especially as we have now audited all the Community Associations.
16. There has been a lot of recent work on addressing the lease/licence issue with Community Associations. As part of this, we have been discussing with Oxford Federation of Community Associations (OFCA) the development of an Operational Agreement. This would be developed jointly with OFCA to reflect:
 - the legal and safe minimum for operation
 - developmental needs expressed by the community
 - The Council's and Community Associations own observations of improvement needs.
17. This could be developed as The Oxford Standard for Community Centres with an agreed route for assessment on a Gold, Silver and Bronze scale:

Bronze That an Association is achieving the minimum standards for running a Community Centre, that all legal responsibilities and

safety considerations for users are conducted in a timely and appropriate manner. This is the COMPULSORY minimum standard

- Silver Association has achieved its agreed targets in the 3 strands set out; partnership working, local involvement, and capacity building.
- Gold Association are reaching out to the local community to monitor their situation; conducting local consultations on satisfaction and needs/ desires, reporting and analysing results and creating specific action plans to develop, improve or change their way of operating.

18. It is hoped to take this approach forward soon following discussions and agreement with all the relevant stakeholders.

Summary

19. There have been a number of initiatives and projects taken forward by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Team to ensure that the Community Associations operating with Oxford City Council Community Centres have had support in the valuable voluntary work that they do for local communities. This will continue to enable local residents, particularly those in areas of deprivation, to access social, leisure, learning and other opportunities, take part in the life of their neighbourhoods, get help and support locally and build community cohesion and wellbeing.

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Background papers: none

Version number: 1

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To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28th. November 2012

Report of: Area Forum Review Panel

Title of Report: Area Forum Start Up Review -2011-2012

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present the views of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Operation of Area Forums in the first year

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Members: Councillors Sanders and Wilkinson

Policy Framework: Stronger, Active Communities

Recommendation(s):

For the Scrutiny Committee to consider the report findings and recommendations and decide how it wishes to take the review forward.

Introduction

1. The Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee set a Review Panel (RP) to consider the operation of Area Forums. These were agreed by Council within new democratic arrangements starting in May 2011. The RP consisted of Councillors Sanders and Wilkinson. This was expanded after interim consideration to also include Councillors Campbell and Sinclair.
2. The original intention had been to report in late 2011 but the RP decided that they needed to observe more meetings to see progress and development before they gave a view. On the presentation of this view the Committee asked for further opinions to be taken. This has now happened and conclusions and recommendations have been adjusted on the basis of these.

3. The observations detailed in the body of the report are based on research done by the RP in 2011/2012, no meetings have been observed in this Council year.
4. The scrutiny committee did not set any criteria for the RP to work within so the information below contains not only the opinions of the RP but the method used to decide on the criteria for review.
5. The RP would like to thank all those officers and councillors involved.

How the RP started

6. Within the outline of new democratic arrangements agreed by Council, Area Forums were set up as flexible tools to better contribute to community engagement and leadership through locally elected representatives. It was envisaged that the form and function of these arrangements would vary to fit the needs of the local area and the knowledge of local members about what is likely to work.
7. Specifically the agreement of Council was that Area Forums would be used as a community engagement tool to:
 - Engage communities to develop local plans and policy interventions that seek to address local issues
 - Support active neighbourhood management
 - Allow residents and communities to raise local priorities and discuss and take forward actions needed
 - Form local partnerships to include councillors, schools, businesses, community leaders and communities
 - Help the Council to better understand local priorities
8. To give an informed and useful opinion the RP decided it needed to have some criteria around which to judge the success of operation in the first year and in this wanted to recognise that Area Forums are only one part of improvements in community engagement and leadership. Given the flexible nature of the concept the RP members decided to attend the “start up meetings” for each Area Forum to listen to what councillors said were their ambitions for their Area Forum and in doing this hoped to be able to select a set of criteria that would fit with the ambitions of all members.
9. When listening to councillors at their start up meetings some common aims did emerge. These were not always expressed as aims but were implicit in what was said and discussed. The common features were:
 - Councillors need to act as “community leaders” to bring forward relevant/significant issues for their communities. Communities need to be actively involved in this process.

- Issues need to be discussed in the right place, with the right people and groups and at the right time.
- To deliver on community leadership. The issues/themes discussions need to be problem solving in nature resulting in options and conclusions rather than just “talking shops”.
- Options and conclusions need to be taken forward to produce change and resolution for communities and if this cannot happen then clear; open and honest reasons should be available quickly and appropriately.
- Follow up and championing of options and recommendations by councillors and officers alike is essential.
- City Council officers (across all services) need to be supportive of this form of engagement and how it will relate to their service.
- Relationship building across partners and community groups within areas is important to achieve a willingness to trust, engage, and be part of problem solving. Councillors in their areas are key to developing these relationships.

Other issues were raised but the list above was mentioned by all.

10. Area Forums are only one tool to improve community engagement and leadership. To successfully measure improvements in this area we would not be looking at Area Forums in isolation. We would instead focus on changes in community actions, attitudes, perceptions and confidence. These things are likely to take a long time to develop. The RP view of Area Forums is therefore only a part of this and provides for a step along the way.
11. Using the common aims voiced by councillors the RP set a framework within which to make judgements on the success of Area Forums and decided early on that these could not be measured in a quantitative way instead the RP would have to attend meetings to observe, talk, listen and inquire.
12. It is worth emphasising at this point the common “offer” at start up to councillors, in their area groupings, by the organisation was to deliver the concept through cross area meetings which officers would support no more than 4 times a year.

Framework for judgements

13. What the RP decided to look for:

- **Are the right things on the “agenda”?**

How themes are developed, by that we mean what happens behind the Forum with councillors to engage communities so they have an active part in setting or guiding what is discussed

- **Are councillors leading and acting rather than talking and complaining?**

Are all the appropriate people around the table; is information and support available to enhance discussion; are discussions brought to options/conclusions and converted into actions; is ownership taken for those actions

- **Are councillors making a difference?**

Is leadership taken in assuming responsibility for actions; who takes the lead (councillor, officer or both); how are communities kept informed and engaged; what is actually different; and has the Forum produced meaningful outcomes?

14. The RP attended nine Area Forum meetings and all start up meetings to report against this framework. The detail of opinion is available to councillors on request. Overall views and findings are given below.

Findings

15. Within the principle of flexibility and doing what works in an area, Area Forum meetings varied in their style but were broadly viewed within four types:

- Individuals and groups invited around a topic or issue (problem solving).
- Facilitated community discussion around a specific topic.
- Workshops around a topic or issue
- Traditional agenda led meeting run loosely in the traditional committee style

16. Most had open sessions planned at the beginning or end which were set as an opportunity to engage informally with local councillors and officers.

17. It is difficult to say which of these was the most appropriate or useful because it was obvious that all have their merits providing that the subject matter, attendees and resources matched the style. The table below gives the RP view on their observations of meetings and their usefulness within the concept of community engagement and leadership.

Style	Positive	Negative	Comment
Individuals and groups invited around a topic or issue (problem solving).	Allows consideration of the "right stakeholders"	Often misses the perspective of the community Requires	This method was observed to reasonable effect. On a few

	<p>Problem solving is easier and more likely</p> <p>Open and honest discussion is more likely</p> <p>Can allow for equal status amongst statutory and voluntary groups</p> <p>Solutions are much more likely to stick</p> <p>Builds trust between partners</p>	<p>excellent chairing and facilitation skills and if these don't exist discussions can be counter productive or one sided</p> <p>Can undermine community trust and engagement if outcomes are unclear and not communicated well</p>	<p>occasions it was clear that the topic had not been pre-planned carefully by councillors and so the right people and focus wasn't delivered.</p> <p>Some meetings lacked the drive to bring issues to agreed solutions and actions so they could be taken forward into the community.</p> <p>With more investment this could be a successful method of running a problem solving meeting outside an Area Forum but was not in the view of the RP a suitable mechanism for Area Forums.</p>
<p>Facilitated community discussion around a specific topic.</p>	<p>Allows all comers to engage in the debate</p> <p>Builds confidence amongst communities</p> <p>Hear directly what people think and where the tensions are in communities</p> <p>Gives councillors a real opportunity to visibly lead</p>	<p>Requires good quality facilitation to be successful</p> <p>Requires councillors to be very actively engaged in the discussion through listening, concluding and directing. Without this it can be counter productive for all.</p> <p>Good quality</p>	<p>This was observed to reasonable effect and was always led very well by officers rather than councillors. Some councillors contributed very little.</p> <p>These discussion meeting operated very well in some areas particularly when led by experienced</p>

	<p>their communities in issues that engage them</p>	<p>outreach and advertising is required to avoid polarised or one sided discussions</p>	<p>community development workers. The RP commented that this type of meeting is likely to happen anyway within general community development work.</p>
<p>Workshops around a topic or issue</p>	<p>Allows all comers to engage in a debate</p> <p>Allows for strategic or complex issues to be challenged or developed by communities</p> <p>Gives councillors real opportunities to understand in detail the views of communities and then champion these</p> <p>Builds real partnership and trust</p>	<p>Requires good quality facilitation to be successful</p> <p>Requires councillors to be very actively engaged with their communities and be prepared to lead and negotiate solutions.</p> <p>Good quality outreach and advertising is required to avoid polarised or one sided discussions</p>	<p>This was observed not to good effect.</p> <p>It was clear from the comments of residents they didn't like the style ("like being at school")</p> <p>The discussions weren't always facilitated well so most people seemed frustrated.</p> <p>This style has limited use within the terms of Area Forums but could be useful in general community development work led by officers</p>
<p>Traditional agenda led meeting run loosely in the traditional committee style</p>	<p>Allows for clear leadership and direction by councillors</p> <p>Can build trust and partnership</p>	<p>Without good outreach work can be a poor tool to engage broad public opinion</p> <p>Can be off putting</p>	<p>This was observed to good effect. Despite being the style that most matches the Area Committee format it proved</p>

	Allows for competing issues to be handled on the same agenda	to those who dislike formality Can be perceived as bureaucratic and simply going through the motions	successful. This was mainly down to sound management by councillors
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18. Most Forums moved their meetings around the area. This proved to be useful and allowed some attempt to focus subjects around communities.
19. Open sessions were provided by most Area Forums. The intention of these was not obvious but advertised as an opportunity for councillors and residents to talk informally. The RP observed little useful interaction or effort to create any.
20. When listening to the residents it was clear they had often come for the “open session” but were expecting something more akin to the more formal Area Committee” style when they could raise issues publicly and directly with officers and councillors in an effort to call them to account.

Outcomes against the set framework

21. Below are the views of the RP against the framework agreed. They are based on direct observations of meetings in the council year 2011/2012. The RP accept that these are the observations of a few people and therefore not a broad representation of opinion. The RP however did:
- View meetings and form opinions individually. When brought together these individual opinions varied very little.
 - Set their observations against a framework that was derived from the common ambitions of all councillors for Area Forums

Are the right things on the “agenda”?

How themes are developed, by that we mean what happens behind the Forum with councillors to engage communities so they have an active part in setting or guiding what is discussed

22. What is discussed is one of the most important building blocks to success. To engage communities councillors have to provide Forums that challenge and celebrate the issues that are important to residents in the most appropriate form. Acting as community leaders councillors have a key role in guiding this.
23. It is clear that councillor engagement in setting agendas/topics/issues for discussion is variable. It was obvious that many themes had been

suggested by officers and some councillors based on what is known about developments and issues in areas rather than what is known about what communities want to say and discuss. Some of these proved successful some proved not to be and very few (if any) engaged a broad range of the community. It was hard to “see” the outline concept for a Forum agreed at Council in some meetings.

24. In start up planning meetings the concept voiced for getting communities involved in setting the agenda was simple:

- Councillors would hold their usual ward meetings/surgeries/walkabouts and continue to deal through these with locally confined issues.
- Any issues that couldn't be resolved here or were common across a group of wards or were particularly contentious in nature or were difficult to resolve in isolation would be taken forward for discussion at a Forum.
- Councillors would keep abreast of strategic issues or developments planned in their wards and decide if any of these should be brought to an Area Forum for community discussion.
- Councillors would begin to encourage partnerships to develop on Forums and influence the agenda.

25. This process seemed to provide for a good starting point in beginning to allow local people, through their local representatives, to set the agenda. It wasn't obvious that this happened. Items on agendas were often “topical” or had a topical flavour but were clearly not those that engaged a broad range of people or even particular groups in a ward or group of wards. The RP wonder whether this type of Forum is ever likely to engage a good cross section of communities. In reality outside of a few very engaged residents people turn up and take part when they see a good reason to do so and that reason usually needs to have some direct effect on them now or in the future. Agendas did get better but much depends on the enthusiasm and input of councillors and residents. This must improve.

26. Each meeting had methods of asking “what topics should appear on agendas” and some suggestions were made. This does however provide for a rather narrow selection from those who had turned up to the meeting and on its own is not within the spirit of what we are trying to achieve but may improve over time. The RP in particular felt it was not appropriate to hold public consultations over planning proposals within the Area Forum arena: these should be held separately.

Are councillors leading and acting rather than talking and complaining.
Are all the appropriate people around the table; is information and support available to enhance discussion; are discussions brought to options/conclusions and converted into actions; is ownership taken for those actions

27. The original concept for the formation of Area Forums was to allow councillors to engage and lead their communities, form partnerships, problem solve and develop plans for their communities. Area Committees with their formalities and bureaucratic processes were considered to be a poor tool within which to do this. When listening to councillors at start up meetings it was clear that councillors have differing views about what community leadership means and how to go about achieving this. Levels of interest and engagement in the concept are variable amongst councillors but all agreed that for Area Forums to be successful councillors would have to take a leading role with their communities. All of the forms of Forums seen provide opportunities for councillors to do this but it was not often observed.
28. Getting the “right people” to a meeting is important regardless of the form of Area Forum or the subject matter for debate. This includes not only the appropriate people to deliver the solution or give advice and information but also the communities, individuals, groups etc that might be affected or have an opinion. Without this at best the meeting and its outcomes are “marks in sand” and at worst talking shops. Some attempt had been made at all meetings to get appropriate partners and officers there but communities were not engaged in the appropriate place or number. As an example a number of Forums had broad discussions around youth services and provision. Very few young people were engaged in these debates.
29. Engagement of communities is multi-faceted and time consuming and relies on many factors but to set a Forum as a community engagement tool and then not engage the communities under consideration is ineffective. It seems likely that without much more support and training councillors will not be able to achieve this through Forums. The amount of time and money available to do the outreach work and advertising necessary to improve on this is not available. This significantly undermines their usefulness and differing forms of Forums must be explored with local residents and councillors.
30. Regardless of the nature or style of the meeting it is important that councillors are seen to:
- Handle the difficult discussions.
 - Provide options and pathways.
 - Be honest about what can and cannot be done.
 - Draw consensus.
 - Agree actions and next steps.
 - Allocate these to individuals and champion them.
 - Report back to communities on implementation.

In short form a real partnership with communities on issues and solutions.

31. A couple of Area Forums have clear processes for agreeing actions and assigning them but other action plans were not agreed or assigned at meetings but put together afterwards by officers and placed on the web site at varying intervals. This left participants sometimes unclear about what was to happen and who was to make it happen. A couple of Forums provided for some feedback on outcomes but mostly it was not clear how actions were progressed to delivery or reported back to those in the community interested in their resolution. The link back into the organisation is through the allocated senior officers and the RP did not explore in any detail the actions of senior officers after Area Forum meetings so accept that more work may have been done than was apparent.
32. For a significant number of meetings some councillors made very little contribution to the discussions and debates and took very little part in forming consensus around actions.
33. Senior officers were allocated as supports to councillors in Area Forums to form links back into the organisation. This was seen by the RP as a potentially useful role and seemed to give councillors a good link in persuading for their communities. In practice the input varied considerably. One senior officer took his role seriously, had engaged in the debate at Area Forums and it was clear had been involved behind the scenes. Other contributions were not obvious. To go forward this relationship needs to be more firmly established and pursued on both sides.

Are councillors making a difference?

Is leadership taken in assuming responsibility for actions; who takes the lead (councillor, officer or both); how are communities kept informed and engaged; what is actually different

34. This is difficult to answer at this stage. As discussed above councillors vary considerably in their engagement with communities through Area Forums. That is not to say some councillors don't engage with communities because of course they do but Area Forums are clearly not the method of choice for many councillors and some see little benefit to this as a local engagement exercise.
35. The ideas and outcomes that seem to have the potential to make the most difference are those that are likely to move forward into community development plans or compliment the work underway in Neighbourhood Forums.
36. Regeneration Areas already have in development Neighbourhood Forums where significantly more input and resource is available to engage communities and partners in decision making around infrastructure, cultural and social developments in the area. Councillors could quite reasonably ask what more is to be gained

from a Forum particularly one that doesn't have the resources to deliver on the engagement necessary to add value.

37. For other areas where there are no or limited regeneration plans Housing and Communities staff are working with communities developing community plans and to do this successfully are engaging councillors, communities and partners. Councillors could quite reasonably ask what more if anything they could get out of an Area Forum until this work is embedded.
38. When thinking about the scale and diversity of our communities those people who attend Forums are few in number and for some areas mostly similar to those who attended Area Committees. Some councillors report that fewer people attend Area Forums than Area Committees. These people will get something from the experience and there is evidence that actions have been brought forward that will make a difference and contribute to community cohesion. The RP asks "Is this good enough?" and what would make it better.

Conclusions and Recommendations

39. The RP set their conclusions and recommendations around the guiding question set by the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee when the review was set:

"Are Area Forums working?"

40. The answer to this question varies depending on councillor's point of view at the outset. Positions vary with all supporting the concept of community leadership and recognising they have a part in this but a number unsure or unclear on delivery and achievement.
41. What is clear is that Area Forums framed as area meetings, with agendas covering broad based issues, with no decision making power or direct access to this and following a formulaic style :
- Are not universally supported by councillors with a number seeing very little community value to the process and therefore not the "engagement of choice".
 - Do not attract residents in any number and so do not often provide for any meaningful community engagement or leadership.
 - Produce outcomes that are limited in nature and style by the process itself.

One size very clearly does not fit all. Community engagement and empowerment is multi faceted and this was recognised at inception. We should move forward with no pre-determinates on form but rather led by what will work for individual communities. The Council has no plans to devolve budgets to area groupings apart from budgets given to individual councillors so this has not been considered by the RP.

Can Area Forums Work

42. It is clear that community development and leadership is a concept that is valued by the Council and significant investment through staff and buildings is made in this area. The RP therefore thought the better question to answer was

“How can we improve on the current arrangements”?

43. Community engagement, development and leadership is important to regeneration, social well-being, effective representation and the health of the Council, we must and are moving forward on this. As seen in the body of the report the Council and councillors have:

- Neighbourhood forums developing in regeneration areas.
- Community development plans under consideration.
- Tenants and Residents Associations either existing or being encouraged.
- Parish Councils.
- Action Groups.
- Community Associations.
- Various formal and informal lobby and residents groups.
- Councillor ward surgeries, ward meetings, open sessions, walkabouts, street surgeries and ad hoc meetings.

44. All of these provide broad community engagement and deal with the very local issues that residents are interested in. Most are resourced to do the job and are actively supported by the organisation, councillors and residents.

45. Anyone of these activities or groups could fit within the original concept of an Area Forum for those residents involved without any need for a further layer of meetings styled as forums meeting simply for the sake of it.

46. The key is that members and residents will have the best view of what is likely to work in their areas to deliver on the concept and it is for local members to discuss and agree with officers what is needed and what can reasonably be delivered within the resources available. This discussion should be unencumbered by pre determined views on form and structure.

47. It wasn't clear in monetary terms how much resource has been made available to Area Forums. The RP noted that money had been found to book rooms and provide some publicity and other “administrative” arrangements but the bulk of the resource came in the form of the officer's time to support and encourage the process. It is probably difficult to quantify this officer time because staff are either in Communities with a brief for an area or are service delivery staff. In

making the recommendation below the RP are looking for an open debate about how to get the best for areas within these available resources.

Recommendation 1

That an informed debate takes place between councillors in their area grouping and community development officers to agree how councillors community leadership roles can best be delivered and supported in their areas within the councillor, officer and likely resident resources available.

48. It was obvious to the RP, based on the evidence taken at first hand, that whatever local practices are in place they need to be linked into the various discussion, development and decision making process of the Council. Without this communities become frustrated and are less likely to engage in a positive manner. Councillors already have some rights of access and challenge on behalf of their communities but more thought needs to be given to how community, views, solutions and demands can be heard and considered within the governance and officer structures of the Council. The senior officer link to an area was a good start but relied too much on the attitude and outlook of the officer concerned so proved to be only marginally successful.

Recommendation 2

That the Council considers within its governance structures how the community voice can be heard in a way that allows:

- **Ideas, issues and solutions from communities to be heard and considered by decision makers through their ward councillors in a timely manner.**
- **For service and officer protocols to exist that link community views within service construction and outcomes.**
- **In all circumstances for the views and challenges of communities to be responded to via their local councillors or decision makers whichever is more appropriate.**

Recommendation 3

For the various mechanisms already available to councillors to champion the views of their communities within the organisation to be detailed clearly within protocols and made clear to all.

49. Local councillors are key to connecting local people to the Council and therefore good community leadership skills amongst councillors are likely to provide for more effective community empowerment. When talking to councillors and attending and listening to the debates at Forums it was clear that this was accepted by councillors but the

skill level and understanding of what this meant in practice was variable amongst councillors. Support and training is needed to improve on this. Training programmes for councillors are currently under developed in the Council and the RP would like to see work in this area in partnership with councillors and learning from the best to help councillors move forward in their roles as community leaders.

Recommendation 4

That the Chief Executive facilitates a cross party debate on the various roles played by elected councillors as ward representatives and members of the Council. The aim of these debates would be to get broad agreement on the expectations and requirements to allow training and support programmes to be designed, put in place and command the respect and engagement of all.

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List of background papers:

Version number: 6

Agenda Item 8

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 18 June 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Clack, Darke, Haines, Humberstone, Jones, Kennedy, Altaf-Khan (Chair), Lloyd-Shogbesan (Vice-Chair), O'Hara, Sanders, Wilkinson and Wolff.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lois Stock (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer) and Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR COUNCIL YEAR 2012/2013

Resolved to elect Councillor Altaf Khan as Chair of the Committee for the Council Year 2012/2013.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR COUNCIL YEAR 2012/2013

Resolved to elect Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan as Vice Chair of the Committee for the Council Year 2012/13

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jim Campbell.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In answer to a question from Councillor Jones about planning committees and the subject of the Councillor Call for Action (CCA) Michael Crofton Briggs (Head of City Development) indicated that he understood that members were free to discuss the topic provided that they did not declare a firm position on the St Clements car park development.

Noted.

5. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION RAISED BY COUNCILLOR WOLFF - RE-DEVELOPMENT OF ST. CLEMENTS CAR PARK

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) detailing a Councillor Call for Action (CCA) submitted by Councillor Dick Wolff.

Pat Jones (Principle Scrutiny Officer) presented the report to the Committee and explained the background. The Committee had to hear the representation from Councillor Wolff, and then it had several courses of action open to it. It could:-

- Decide to do nothing.
- Call for further information or take evidence to inform their view. To be clear the committee cannot instruct officers but can ask to see information the Council has.
- Form an opinion at the meeting and pass this to officers. This opinion does not have to be acted upon but the committee can require a response.
- Form an opinion and pass this to the planning committee responsible for the decision. They in turn will decide if this is material to their considerations.
- Report to Council or the City Executive Board should the committee believe there to be a systemic failure. Views do not have to be acted upon but the committee can require a response.

Councillor Wolff was invited to present his call for action.

Councillor Wolff's case.

Subject: The sale of St Clement's Car Park by the City Council and the subsequent planning proposal for the redevelopment of the site.

Councillor Wolff's main concerns were:-

1. The City Council is the landowner, and as a public body should give consideration to and balance the social and economic well being of its communities in the management and disposal of its assets. There are economic considerations in the disposal of this land which should be identified and evaluated. Mitigation measures should be suggested for any negative consequences identified.
2. He emphasised that it was the business of the City Council to be concerned about the vibrancy and life of East Oxford, but the current processes seemed to load this concern onto local traders. It was possible that the redevelopment of the car park would have an economic impact, possibly even a devastating one. The same economic considerations are material to the planning application to redevelop because of the value of this commercial area to the diversity of the City. The Planning committee needs to understand these issues and the effectiveness of mitigation measures. When it makes its decision.

The solution proposed by Councillor Wolff was that an Economic Impact study be commissioned by the Council and made available at the point of decision making on the planning application.

Ward Councillor responses.

Councillor Clack

Asked if this question was specifically about St Clements, or if it could be applied generally across the City? If it is specifically St Clements, how does that fit with the planning process, and is it relevant?

What would be the status of any economic impact study? Would it undermine the planning process?

Would it be better for the Committee to think more broadly – that is, how can we support local businesses generally in these difficult economic times?

Councillor Jones

There is a traffic survey, completed in April 2012, which is on the planning portal website. The evidence is large and detailed. It seems that the car park is only full on Friday and Saturday nights, when respondents to the survey said they were going out to a pub or restaurant. Members of the Committee were urged to look at this full and interesting traffic survey.

Economic impact is not a material planning consideration. If there was economic impact, it was likely to be on specific business, not business as a whole.

If this issues needs to be considered, it would be better to do so on a broader basis.

Officer comments

Michael Crofton Briggs – Head of City Development

Was trying to draw a distinction between the Council as a planning authority and the Council in any other role.

The traffic study was provided by the applicant as it was felt appropriate to do so. The planning committee starts with a neutral position, and the applicant then presents evidence that he/she feels supports the case for granting permission. In the same way, any objector submits evidence that he/she believes supports the case for refusal. It is hard for the Council to commission anything in relation to a planning application, although it can suggest issues to the applicant (such as a traffic study). It cannot, however, insist on anything.

Steve Sprason (Head of Corporate Assets)

The City Council has approved the disposal of the land to a developer, and it should be assumed that the Council had before it all the information that it needed at the time of disposal.

The Council as a landowner seeks to understand and mitigate potential problems. For example, in this case there will be the provision free shuttle bus to the temporary car park and a marketing campaign to give free local publicity to traders. The Council has gone as far as it can.

Debate

During general discussion of this item, the following main points were made:-

- We are already embedded in a process and this CCA comes at a very late stage;
- Disposal of the land was approved by the Council and the receipts will be ploughed back into services for the City;
- It is understood that the retail trade in Oxford is generally healthy, even in poor economic times;
- It is accepted that Councillor Wolff has concerns, but it is unclear what we can do;
- It may be better to consider the retail economy more broadly, and see how we can encourage and support a more vibrant retail environment;
- Don't think we could re-route buses, as is suggested in the CCA, and the other suggestions are not entirely possible either;
- There is often concern where the Council has a dual role, that is, as landowner and planning authority. Is it possible to have a reciprocal agreement with another Council, each to examine the other's planning applications?
- Councillors know their own "patch" better than anyone else. Planning committees make decisions in an open and transparent manner and they are also open to the public to attend. If people are dissatisfied, they can ask the Secretary of State to call in a planning decision, or they can ask the courts to review a decision;
- There is, and has been, an ongoing dialogue with the applicant to see how any economic impact could be mitigated;
- There is no evidence that there is a systematic failure here;
- Councillor Wolff could be advised to submit his comments to the relevant planning committee.

Outcome

The Committee thanked Councillor Wolff for his concern and for drawing this issue to its attention.

It decided, having considered all submissions placed before it both written and oral, that it would not call for further evidence or make any comments at this stage to officers, planning committees, Council or City Executive Board.

Instead, the Committee thought that that the best way to deal with the issue was to add to the Work Programme an item which would examine in general terms the viability of small businesses and district centres in Oxford, in order to see how the Council could help create greater economic vibrancy in the City.

Resolved to add the above item to the Work Programme.

6. WORK PLANNING 2012/2013

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the Committee's work programme for the Council year 2012/2013. Pat Jones presented the report and the draft Work Programme to the Committee and explained the background to it. She outlined the ways in which the Committee worked and explained the resources that were available to it.

The Committee expressed the following interests:-

- Role and duties of the Communities and Neighbourhoods team;
- Assistance for small businesses (arising from the earlier CCA);
- Role of Community associations;
- Finishing work on Area Forums (begun in the last Council year);
- Finishing work on helping young people into employment or training (also started in the last Council year);
- Standing panels for housing issues and educational attainment;
- Examination of the Customer Contact Strategy;
- Exploring local celebratory events (for example the Cowley road Carnival);
- Enfranchisement and empowerment.

It was agreed to have 3, rather than 4, formal committee meetings, in order to allow more work to take place within panels and review groups.

The following items and lead members were agreed:-

Issue	Panel / Lead Members
Supporting young people	Councillors Altaf Khan, Lloyd Shogbesan and Kennedy
Housing standing panel	Councillors Sanders, McCreedy, Humberstone and Campbell (to be confirmed)
Educational Attainment	Councillors Clack, Kennedy, Altaf-Khan, Jones and Campbell
Customer Contact	Councillors Wilkinson and Campbell (to be confirmed)
Health and wellbeing select committee follow up	Councillor Jones to continue
Enfranchisement and empowerment – to go to a Committee meeting	Lead members: Councillors Darke, Jones and O'Hara (to be confirmed)

Celebratory events – to go to a Committee meeting	Lead members: Councillors Lloyd-Shogbesan and Wolff
Supporting the local retail economy – to go to a Committee meeting initially, then consider how this might develop	
Community associations – to go to a Committee meeting	

7. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd April 2012, with one amendment: the addition of Councillor Altaf Khan as present at the meeting.

8. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved:-

- (1) To note the dates of meetings for the rest of the Council year;
- (2) That the Principle Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officer would consider the dates and recommend one to be removed as previously agreed – this was likely to be the 3rd December meeting.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm