

# Agenda

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## Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Thursday 17 May 2018**

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Time: **6.00 pm**

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

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For any further information please contact:

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# Scrutiny Committee

Membership of this Committee will be confirmed at the meeting of Full Council on 15 May 2018.

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# AGENDA

	Pages
<p><b>1 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2018/19</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to elect a Chair for the 2018/19 Council year. The Chair must be from one of the opposition groups.</p>	
<p><b>2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2018/19</b></p> <p>The Committee is asked to elect a Vice-Chair for the 2018/19 Council year. The Chair Vice-Chair can be from any political group.</p>	
<p><b>3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p>	
<p><b>4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p>	
<p><b>5 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b></p>	
<p><b>6 MINUTES</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 05 April 2018 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.</p>	7 - 12
<p><b>7 SCRUTINY OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND PANEL ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer has submitted a report setting out a draft set of operating principles for the Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year and to establish Standing Panels and appoint Standing Panel Chairs.</p> <p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Agree</b> the Committee Operating Principles for the 2018/19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1;</li> <li>2. <b>Agree</b> to re-establish the Finance, Housing and Companies Standing Panels for the 2018/19 municipal year;</li> <li>3. <b>Elect</b> Chairs of the Finance, Housing and Companies panels; and</li> <li>4. <b>Note</b> the schedule of meetings for the 2018/19 municipal year.</li> </ol> <p>Officer Contact: Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer</p>	13 - 22

<b>8</b>	<b>WORK PLAN AND FORWARD PLAN</b>	<b>23 - 34</b>
	<p>The Scrutiny Committee operates within a work plan which is agreed at the start of the Council year. The work plan will be reviewed at each meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest <a href="#">Forward Plan</a> (which outlines decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board or Council). The Committee is asked to review and note its work plan for the 2018/19 council year.</p> <p>Separately from regular consideration of the Work Plan, the Scrutiny Committee conducts an annual Work Plan review, which will take place at the Committee meeting on 5 June. Committee members are encouraged to submit items for the Work Plan longlist to the Scrutiny Officer by 21 May. The Committee is advised to prioritise items based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is consideration of the issue timely?</li><li>• Is it a corporate priority?</li><li>• Is the issue of significant public interest?</li><li>• Can Scrutiny influence and add value?</li><li>• Is it an area of high expenditure?</li></ul> <p>Contact Officer: Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY</b>	<b>35 - 58</b>
	<p>The Scrutiny Committee has asked for this item to be included on the agenda for pre-decision scrutiny. The City Executive Board on 22 May will be asked to approve amendments to the current Discretionary Housing Payment Policy and to note the trends in expenditure detailed in the report. This is an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the City Executive Board.</p> <p>Lead member: Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services Officer Contact: James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager</p>	
<b>10</b>	<b>OXFORD TOWN HALL</b>	<b>59 - 62</b>
	<p>The Scrutiny Committee has asked for a report to enable them to consider how the Council can improve the profile and accessibility of the Town Hall. This is an opportunity for the Committee to note the work that is already underway, and make any comments and recommendations as necessary.</p> <p>Lead member: Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services Officer Contact: David Hunt, Commercial Manager, Community Services</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>63 - 64</b>
	<p>This item is for the Committee to note and comment on recent executive responses to Scrutiny recommendations. Since the last meeting the Board has responded to recommendations on Health Inequalities.</p>	

## 12 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings for 2018 are scheduled as followed:

### **Scrutiny Committee**

- 17 May
- 05 June
- 03 July
- 30 July (provisional)
- 06 September
- 08 October
- 06 November
- 04 December

### **Standing Panels**

Housing Standing Panel: 05 July, 11 October, 12 November

Finance Standing Panel: 04 July, 10 September, 06 December

Companies Panel (*Provisional dates*) 07 June, 31 July, 11 September, 29 October, 12 December, 03 January 2019

All meetings start at 6.00 pm

## **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.

\*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.

## Minutes of a meeting of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE on Thursday 5 April 2018

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### Committee members:

Councillor Gant (Chair)

Councillor Curran

Councillor Henwood

Councillor Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Taylor (for Councillor Chapman)

Councillor Altaf-Khan

Councillor Fry

Councillor Ladbrooke

Councillor Lygo

### Officers:

Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer

Mish Tullar, Corporate Policy, Partnership and Communications Manager

John Mitchell, Committee and Member Services Officer

### Also present:

Councillor Marie Tidball, Board Member for Young People, Schools and Public Health

## 92. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chapman, Paule, Thomas and Azad. Cllr Taylor attended as a substitute for Cllr Chapman.

## 93. Declarations of interest

None.

## 94. Minutes

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2018 as a true and accurate record subject to the addition of "*Lifestyle*" after "*Fusion*".

## 95. Report back on recommendations

Cllr Ladbrooke gave an account of the City Executive Board's consideration of the Living Wage Review Group's report. He was pleased to note that the Board had accepted the vast majority of the group's recommendations. There were some concerns in relation to the position of apprentices who were at risk of becoming stuck in a poverty trap and it was agreed that this should be logged as a future piece of work for the Committee to look at in early Autumn. Cllr Ladbrooke had been confirmed as the Council's Oxford Living Wage Champion for the remainder of his term of office as a Councillor.

## **96. Work Plan and Forward Plan**

The Scrutiny Officer updated the Committee on the latest significant changes to the Plan. There had been some slippage in the timescale of some forthcoming agenda items, and offered reassurance that sight would not be lost of those items which were important to the Committee in the new year. He reminded members of the Committee that he would welcome suggestions from them for future Work Plan items.

In relation to the Committee's request to consider a report on the impact of the Westgate Shopping Centre on the local economy the Scrutiny Officer explained that there was a lag in the data available to provide a meaning long term analysis of the developments impact. However, headline data concerning footfall and occupied shop units was positive. The Committee noted that this was similar explanation to that given several months previous.

The Scrutiny Officer also highlighted that slippage in the Executive Board's decision making in relation to the East Oxford Community Centre Improvement Scheme meant that the Committee's 3 July 2018 meeting was no longer exclusively reserved for consideration of the Local Plan. The Committee were content to note this change in the Work Plan.

Attached as an appendix to this item were brief extracts from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee report into the effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees of 2017. The Chair noted that the Committee measured up quite well against the Select Committee's recommendations for best practice. There were of course some areas which would be worthy of examination, engagement with the public for example. If the Select Committee's recommendations were to be implemented, it would require a more radical rethink of how the Committee operates, such as the suggestion that Scrutiny Committees report to full Councils rather than Executive Boards. The Scrutiny Officer said revised government guidance on the operation of scrutiny would be issued later in the year, and the Chair agreed to liaise with the Scrutiny Officer to consider how to take this issue forward.

The Committee noted the report.

## **97. Health Inequalities Progress Update**

The Committee had commissioned an update from the Policy and Partnerships Team Manager on the progress made against the recommendations made by the Committee in March 2017.

Cllr Tidball spoke to the report drawing attention to Appendix 1 and the 60 recommendations of the Oxfordshire Health Inequalities Commission, responsibility for which was shared with partner organisations. The recommendations had originally been presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in 2016. She encouraged members



of the Committee to get in touch if there were matters in relation to those recommendations where they thought more should be done.

She drew attention to two particular matters of concern. First was the absence of a clear pathway for those leaving prison and other institutions. Secondly was the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping in the City and the associated influx of people from neighbouring districts and the parallel need for those Districts to contribute to the associated costs. She also noted the importance of addressing the issue of fuel poverty, support for which had been provided by the City Council in the form of a helpline.

Appendix 3 of the report noted progress with the Committee's 10 previous recommendations made to the City Executive Board made in March 2017. A great deal of innovative work had been undertaken with the help of £100k from the City Council and £100k matched funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group. Cllr Tidball said there were important pieces of work which needed some additional dedicated officer resource to accomplish, drilling down into the data more thoroughly and pulling together related areas of work in, for example, housing and adult social care.

The data provided in the report were, in places, quite dense. On the one hand it would be helpful for high level messages to be drawn from them for a wider audience but, also, there was a need for a more detailed analysis which would, among other things, allow resources to be more closely matched to need. There might be merit in seeking to secure the services of an academic from one of the City's two universities or a health partner to ensure that no opportunities are lost from linking with any work already underway in this area.

Some data already gleaned from the City's customer service team had illustrated that there were 'hot spots' of deprivation lying within areas otherwise not considered to be of particular concern. It was suggested that there might be merit in looking at the correlation between air quality indicators and life expectancy.

Cllr Tidball noted with concern the loss of some Early Years provision previously provided by the County Council but was optimistic about the development of community led children's centres based in the City and supported by the City Council. The loss of provision for older children (via youth clubs etc) was, also, a source of great regret and the potential consequences of that, drawing parallels with a recent increase in youth violence in London, were noted.

While the development of the community led children's centres was to be commended, there was some concern that they might not be in areas where the local communities were empowered, mobilised and articulate and where the need might be greatest; it was important that they should offer open access, be sustainable and serve areas of deprivation.

Cllr Taylor, as a Councillor who had previously been involved in the original scrutiny of the Oxfordshire Health Inequalities Commission's recommendations, was disappointed that little discernible progress had been made in altering the fundamental inequalities that had been identified but was pleased that Cllr Tidball was taking every opportunity to hold the County Council and other key partners to account as necessary.

In working with partners, while it was possible to exert influence about some matters, it was important to be clear about those matters in relation to which the City Council was in a position to make a direct difference itself and then to be able to measure that difference. Given the multi-agency element of many of these issues, a joint approach to communications would be desirable, not least to maximise public awareness.

Cllr Tidball was able to provide strategic leadership in relation to these matters in her position as a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust and took every opportunity to raise matters of concern as appropriate. Similarly the Corporate Policy, Partnerships and Community Manager and the Policy and Partnerships Team Manager represented the Council on the relevant partnership groups. Collectively they were clear about what the City Council needed to do to address the matters of concern and, "had the ear" of key partners but their capacity to engage in the necessary cross cutting work was limited.

The Committee had recently scrutinised the City Council's Children and Young People's Strategy, one of the objectives of which was that young people should be "healthy and safe" and the use of leisure centres and parks would contribute to that objective. It was noted that the County Council would be consulting on its own Children and Young People's plan in June and it would be important for the City Council to take that opportunity to make representations about these matters as they affect children and young people noting, for example, concern about the lack of youth service provision.

There was a shared recognition of the increasing incidence of mental health issues amongst young people and the lack of sufficient capacity in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and the Primary Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service to cope with demand. It was important that those who needed help from these services were able to access it without delay. This was another matter which should be raised in the response to the County's draft Children and Young Peoples' Plan.

Cllr Tidball reminded the Committee about the introduction of a "Youth Impact Zone" which would focus on a geographic area and encouraged Members to engage with it.

The promotion of physical activity of all kinds, whether at community and leisure centres or elsewhere, was important and opportunities for it needed to be local and, if charged for, affordable. Some courses only ran for limited periods of time when continuity would be preferable. A host of low cost, high value activities such as exercise, nature walks etc were not dependent on gym membership. A "Green Spaces" conference, involving key partners, was to be held the following month which would include promotion of physical activities. While activities as a means of prevention were important, sight should not be lost of those who need support now which included, for example, those at the end of life.

Social prescribing was recognised as something which had the capacity to make a valuable contribution but, at the same time, it was noted that there were not always suitable organisations to prescribe to; they needed to be local and available in areas of deprivation.

It was noted that the Barton Healthy New Town (the aim of which was that all residents should have an equal opportunity to good physical and mental health and good health outcomes) was explicit in its promotion of social prescribing. A review of the provision in Community Centres was looking at how to attract other groups which could be part of the social prescribing network.

The Barton Healthy New Town also promoted the “Make Every Contact Count” initiative which sought to enable general members of the community “through opportunistic conversations in everyday life” to have “positive conversations” with others about health matters. While it was good to empower lay people with the skills to help others, it was also important to ensure that where there was a need for more specialist support, it was available and from those who had the necessary professional training.

In conclusion the Committee resolved that the Council should:

1. **Prioritise** strengthening its policy development and research capacity in order to better understand and address health and other inequalities in the City, with a focus on providing tangible outcomes and improvements for local services; and
2. **Engage** with local universities and health partners to explore opportunities for pooling local data and expertise to better understand and address health and other inequalities in the City.

## **98. Dates of future meetings**

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Committee in the present municipal year. The Committee had undertaken some very useful work in that time and the thanked all those involved for their contributions to it.

Meetings for 2018 are scheduled as followed:

### **Scrutiny Committee**

- 17 May
- 05 June
- 03 July
- 30 July (provisional)
- 06 September
- 08 October
- 06 November
- 04 December

### **Standing Panels**

Housing Standing Panel: 09 April, 05 July, 11 October, 12 November

Finance Standing Panel: 07 June, 10 September, 06 December

Companies Panel: dates tbc

All meetings start at 6.00 pm

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Thursday 17 May 2018**

**To:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 17 May 2018  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Officer  
**Title of Report:** Scrutiny Operating Principles and Standing Panel Arrangements

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To adopt a set of operating principles for the Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year, establish Standing Panels and appoint Standing Panel Chairs.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Gant, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee 2017/18
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	'An Efficient and Effective Council.'
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:	
1.	<b>Agree</b> the Committee Operating Principles for the 2018/19 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1;
2.	<b>Agree</b> to re-establish the Finance, Housing and Companies Standing Panels for the 2018/19 municipal year;
3.	<b>Elect</b> Chairs of the Finance, Housing and Companies panels; and
4.	<b>Note</b> the schedule of meetings for the 2018/19 municipal year.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Draft Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles

## Introduction and background

1. At the start of a new administrative year there is a need to re-establish the key principles by which the Scrutiny Committee, and its standing panels, will operate. An updated set of operating principles proposed by the Scrutiny Officer is set out in Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration.
2. The Committee is able to delegate responsibility for scrutiny of certain issues to specific standing panels, which report back to the Committee with recommendations. The

Committee should consider whether it wishes to re-establish the previous standing panel arrangements, or any new arrangements. Once the standing panels have been agreed, it is recommended that the Chairs of the panels also be appointed by the Committee.

### **Role of the Scrutiny Committee**

3. Scrutiny operates to provide public assurance that the City Executive Board is carrying out its business effectively, and taking decisions in the best interests of the residents of Oxford. To provide this assurance, the Committee carries out research, reviews and hears from independent experts, making recommendations for service improvement where necessary. The focus of the Committee's work is to hold the Executive Board to account, and assist the Council in developing policy. As outlined in the Council's Constitution, the Committee can:
  - a) Carry out research and consultation on policy options, and introduce schemes to involve the public in developing policy;
  - b) Review the performance and decisions of the Board, and council officers (but not decisions on individual planning or licensing applications);
  - c) Review the progress of the Council and individual services in achieving its policy aims and performance targets;
  - d) Work with national, regional and local organisations to promote the interest of local people.
  - e) Review executive decisions in respect of any companies wholly or partly owned by the Council and hold the shareholder to account for the performance of those companies. The decisions of Council-owned companies do not fall within the remit of the scrutiny committee.
  - f) Require the attendance of Board Members and Senior Officers to answer questions about their decisions and performance.
  - g) Hold other public service providers to account (though there is no requirement for them to respond).
4. Members of the Committee are encouraged to read the Council's Scrutiny Guide for Councillors which provides a detailed review of how the Committee operates, how to be effective, and the support and development opportunities available to members. Hard copied of the guide will be available at the meeting on 17 May 2018.

### **Operating Principles**

5. The Council's Constitution sets out the role and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee, as outlines above, but it is not prescriptive about how the scrutiny function will be organised and managed. In previous years, the Committee has agreed a set of operating principles to govern key aspects of their work that are not covered by the Constitution. Key matters addressed in the document include: resource expectations, membership guidelines for panels and meeting frequency.
6. The Operating Principles are designed as a reference document to guide the Committee's work, and a draft set of principles for adoption are set out in Appendix 1.

The Committee may make revisions as it sees appropriate within the confines of the Constitution, relevant legislation and resource capacity.

### **Standing Scrutiny Panels**

7. In previous years, the Committee has established Finance, Housing and Companies Panels to undertake detailed scrutiny of decisions and issues relevant to their remit. The Committee are invited to agree a set of standing panels for the year, and are recommended to continue with the current arrangements, or a similar provision. As a guide, in assisting with the Scrutiny Committees workload, 39 of the 74 reports considered by scrutiny in 2017/18 were done so by standing panels.

Standing Panel chairs must be members of the Scrutiny Committee in order that there remains a direct line of reporting and accountability. After identifying which panels to appoint, the Committee is requested to also appoint Chairs of these panels, who will take an organisational role until each Panel's full membership is established at the next Committee meeting on 5 June. The number of members to sit on each Panel can be decided by the Committee at the meeting on 5 June 2018, once all nominations have been received.

8. This provides sufficient time for any new members to become familiar with the scrutiny function, and consider whether they want to be involved in any Panels.
9. The Scrutiny Officer will ask group secretaries for membership nominations for each of the Panels, in accordance with the Operating Principles. It is recommended that the Companies Panel membership continues to be constituted of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, and the Chairs of the other standing panels plus one member from any group not already represented as was done in the previous year.
10. The Members Allowances Scheme allocates an additional 25% of the basic member allowance (£1,254 in 2018/19) to a maximum of two standing panels chairs, on the basis that panels meet at least 5 times a year. Where there are more than two standing panels, 50% of the basic allowance (£2,508) will be divided between the panel chairs. This Special Responsibility Allowance is to reflect the additional responsibility of panel chairs. Members can forgo this additional allowance if they wish.
11. The number of members to sit on each Panel will be decided by the Committee at the meeting on 5 June 2018.

### **Alternative options**

12. Standing Panels, and the recommendations that are developed as part of their work, have a track record of being effective at Oxford City Council. This report proposes that the Committee establishes Finance, Housing and Companies Standing Panels for the 2018/19 municipal year. However, the Committee is not required to accept this recommendation, and may choose to form alternative arrangements. An outline of other options considered in producing this report include:
  - a) Merging the Finance and Companies Panels into one single standing panel. This option is not proposed on the basis that it would be more appropriate to keep council and companies business separate.

- b) Merging the Finance and Housing Panels. This option is not proposed on the basis that the workload, meeting frequency and duration would be unfavourable for members of the Panel.
- c) Adding council performance to the remit of the Finance Panel (performance scrutiny is currently undertaken by the whole Scrutiny Committee each quarter). This option is not proposed on the basis that all members of the Scrutiny Committee will likely want to review this information which relates to a wide range of Council services.

13. If the Committee decides to set up alternative Standing Panel arrangements, the Scrutiny Officer will liaise with the Chair and return to the next available Committee meeting with a revised proposal for agreement.

### **Scrutiny Work Plan**

14. The fundamental role of scrutiny is to achieve positive outcomes for local people by undertaking a targeted and thorough examination of the council's service to residents. However, even between the Scrutiny Committee and its standing panels, it is not possible to examine every service in detail. Therefore, the Committee must prioritise and plan its work accordingly.
15. The Committee will be invited to agree an indicative Work Plan for the year at their meeting on 5 June 2018. This allows reasonable time for new members to contribute to the Work Plan longlist, which is being coordinated through the Scrutiny Officer. Please send any items to the Scrutiny Officer before 21 May 2018, together with any background information, so that they may be included in a report for 5 June 2018. The Work Plan is kept under review throughout the year and will remain reactive to the Forward Plan and new suggestions.
16. In previous years, the Scrutiny Committee has created various time limited review groups to carry out in depth research and scrutiny into a specific issue. For example, the Oxford Living Wage and Devolution reviews. The establishment of any Scrutiny Review Groups can be considered at the same time as the annual work plan on 5 June 2018, with review group membership being confirmed at the next committee meeting on 3 July 2018.

### **Member Support**

17. The Scrutiny Officer is the lead officer responsible for ensuring that members of the Committee receive the support they need in order to be effective in their role. New and returning committee members will be offered an informal 1-2-1 induction meeting with the Scrutiny Officer. This meeting can also be used to discuss personal development needs, explore how the Committee can be most effective over the coming year, and reflect on the work of previous years. The Scrutiny Officer will be available year round to support the Committee, its standing panels and review groups, together with the wider Committee and Member Services Team.
18. There is also a variety of external training and development opportunities open to all members. The Scrutiny Officer will send out prompts throughout the year for upcoming development sessions. More information on support and training opportunities can be found in the Scrutiny Guide for Councillors. The first scrutiny training event in the new



year will be a session on 4 June run by the [Centre for Public Scrutiny](#) called *key skills and knowledge for effective scrutiny*. New members are encouraged to attend. A second training session called *advanced finance scrutiny* will be held on 26 June. Finance Panel members may wish to attend.

### Key Scrutiny Dates: May – July 2018

Date	Event
9 May	The Scrutiny Committee agenda for 17 May is published
15 May	The Scrutiny Committee members are appointed at Annual Council
17 May	The Scrutiny Committee will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair;</li> <li>• Establish standing panels and their Chairs;</li> <li>• Consider any outstanding business from 2017/18.</li> </ul>
21 May	Deadline for submitting items for the Scrutiny Work Plan report.
5 June	The Scrutiny Committee will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an indicative Work Plan for 2018/19</li> <li>• Agree standing panel membership</li> <li>• Establish review group(s) and chair(s)</li> <li>• Consider any outstanding business from 2017/18..</li> </ul>
3 July	The Scrutiny Committee will establish the membership of any review groups and prioritise and start review(s).

### Schedule of meetings

Members of the Committee are invited to take note of the schedule of meetings for the next 12 months:

Scrutiny Committee	Finance Panel	Housing Panel	Companies Panel (Provisional Dates)
5 June 2018	4 July 2018	5 July 2018	7 June 2018
3 July 2018	10 September 2018	11 October 2018	31 July 2018
30 July 2018	6 December 2018	12 November 2018	11 September 2018
(Provisional)	7,8,9 January 2019	4 March 2019	29 October 2018
6 September 2018	(budget review)	8 April 2019	12 December 2018
8 October 2018	16 January 2019		3 January 2019
6 November 2018	30 January 2019		
4 December 2018			
14 January 2019			
5 February 2019			
5 March 2019			
2 April 2019			

A 6 month forward view of meetings will be included on each agenda throughout the year.

Report author	Stefan Robinson
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Service area or department	Law and Governance
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**Background Papers:** None

## **Draft Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles 2018/19**

### **Meeting Arrangements**

1. At least 10 Committee meetings will be scheduled each year to match the City Executive Board meeting cycle. This is to enable pre-decision scrutiny of decision to be taken at the next Board meeting.
2. All public addresses and councillor contributions will be directed through the Chair.
3. The Scrutiny Committee will hold the City Executive Board and Senior Officers to account publicly at committee meetings.
4. The Chair will report regularly to Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee. The Committee may also produce an annual report.

### **Standing Panels and Review Groups**

5. The Scrutiny Committee will set Standing Panels and Review Groups each year to consider selected issues in more detail.
6. Standing Panels will hold meetings throughout the year, and consider quarterly performance reports, Executive decisions and other issues within their remit.
7. Review Groups will be formed to undertake issue led and time bound 'task and finish' reviews of specific issues, before concluding their work with a report and recommendations, usually to the City Executive Board.
8. Review Group and Standing Panel meetings will be held in public or private as the meeting business dictates.
9. Standing Panel and Review Group Chairs must be members of the Scrutiny Committee and can be from any political group. Panel Chairs will be elected at the first meeting of the Committee in the municipal year. Review Group Chairs will be elected by the Committee when the groups are established.
10. Standing Panels will meet approximately 5 times each year to consider items and decisions that fall within their remit. Review Groups will meet as often as is required for them to conclude their work. The Scrutiny Committee will oversee the work of Review Groups to ensure they do not overrun unduly.
11. The Scrutiny Committee will commission and scope the work of Standing Panels and Review Groups and therefore has final agreement on their recommendations. With the Chair's agreement, there may be occasions where this is not possible and reports will go directly to the City Executive Board.
12. In any given year, the organisation has capacity to support either:
  - a) 2 Standing Panels and 3 Review Groups; or
  - b) 3 Standing Panels and 2 Review Groups
13. No substitutions will be allowed on Standing Panels or Review Groups. This is to provide continuity of membership given the focused nature of their work.

14. Chairs of Standing Panels and Review Groups will report back to the Committee on progress and outcomes. They will also be invited to present their reports and recommendations to the City Executive Board.

### **Political Balance**

15. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee must be a member of the opposition, and the Vice-Chair can be from any political group.
16. The membership of Standing Panels and Review Groups will be set by the Scrutiny Committee and drawn from all non-executive members. Group secretaries will be asked to nominate members to any such groups for agreement by the Committee.
17. Standing Panels and Review Groups do not have to be politically balanced and the Committee will use the following guide for appointment:
- 4 members – 1 from each political group plus another administration member.
  - 5 members – 1 from each political group plus another 2 administration members.
  - 6 members - 1 from each political group plus another 2 administration members.
- The sixth member will be agreed by the Committee.
18. Where a political group is unable to take up a seat, or decides that it will waive the seat, the Committee will agree the new appointment.

### **The Scrutiny Work Plan**

19. The [Work Plan](#) will consist of a number of issues for consideration informed by consultation with all councillors and Senior Officers. Guidance criteria for prioritising work will be provided by the Scrutiny Officer, but the Committee are responsible for agreeing their Work Plan.
20. The Work Plan will be reviewed at every meeting and adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of changes to the [Forward Plan](#) of executive decisions.
21. Items will be taken forward as resources allow and scoped before Review Groups are commissioned.
22. The management of the Work Plan will be with the whole Committee, with the Chair and Vice-Chair taking an “organisational role” between meetings.
23. Individual scrutiny members, or any 4 other members of the Council, will be able to put an item on the agenda of a Scrutiny Committee. All Councillor Calls for Action and Call-Ins will be considered at a public meeting of the Committee.
24. Members of the public can also suggest a topic for the Work Plan. Suggestions can be submitted via the Council’s [Work Plan Suggestion Form](#), or at a meeting of the Committee.
25. The Scrutiny Committee and its Panels will provide as much notice as is possible when commissioning reports from council officers (minimum 6 weeks).

## **Co-option**

26. At the discretion of the Committee, residents and other specialists may be co-opted as non-voting members of the Committee, Standing Panels and Review Groups, as the subject matter dictates for a period ending no later than the day of the first meeting of the next council year. The Committee may discontinue an appointment at any time.

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## SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

### May 2018 - August 2018

Published on: 09/05/18

The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its people. Time is allowed within this plan to consider topical issues as they arise throughout the year as well as decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board. This document represents the work of scrutiny for the start of the 2018-19 council year and will be reviewed at each meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The work plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our [suggestion form](#). See our [get involved webpage](#) for further details of how you can participate in the work of scrutiny.

The following criteria will be used by the Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and prioritise suggested topics:

- Is consideration of the issue timely?
- Is it a corporate priority?
- Is the issue of significant public interest?
- Can Scrutiny influence and add value?
- Is it an area of high expenditure?

Some topics will be considered at Scrutiny Committee meetings and others will be delegated to standing panels. Items for more detailed review will be considered by time-limited review groups.

The Committee will review the Council's [Forward Plan](#) at each meeting and decide which executive decisions it wishes to comment on before the decision is made. The Council also has a "call in" process which allows decisions made by the City Executive Board to be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented.

## Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel responsibility and membership

Committee / Panel	Remit	Nominated councillors
Scrutiny Committee	Overall management of the Council's scrutiny function.	To be confirmed at Full Council on 15 May 2018
Finance Panel	Finance and budgetary issues and decisions	To be confirmed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 June 2018
Housing Panel	Strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions	To be confirmed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 June 2018
Companies Panel	To scrutinise shareholder decisions relating to wholly Council-owned companies.	To be confirmed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 5 June 2018

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### 17 MAY 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Scrutiny Operating Principles and Standing Panels	No	To consider a proposal to re-establish the Committees operating principles and standing panels for 2018/19.	Customer and Corporate Services	Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer
Oxford Town Hall	No	To consider how to improve the profile and accessibility of the Town Hall.	Finance, Asset Management	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services
Discretionary Housing Payment policy	Yes	To review the Discretionary Housing Payment policy	Customer and Corporate Services	James Pickering, Welfare Reform Manager

### 5 JUNE 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Annual Scrutiny Work Plan Review	No	To formulate a plan of work for the Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year.	Customer and Corporate Services	Stefan Robinson, Scrutiny Officer
Safeguarding Annual Report	Yes	To consider progress made on the Safeguarding Action Plan, key findings from the external safeguarding Audit, and a revised Safeguarding Policy.	Young People, Schools and Public Health	Daniella Granito



Modern Slavery	Yes	To approve the Modern Slavery Act – Transparency Statement for 2017 – 2018.	Community Safety	Linda Ludlow, Human Exploitation Coordinator
Fusion Lifestyle Service Plan and Performance Dashboard	Yes	To consider Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan and the performance dashboard.	Leisure, Parks and Sport	Lucy Cherry, Leisure and Performance Manager

### 3 JULY 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Sustainability Strategy 2017	Yes	To consider the revised Sustainability Strategy, which will go to CEB for approval for public consultation.	A Clean and Green Oxford	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Workplace Equalities	No	To consider the diversity of the councils workforce, and strategies in place to promote workplace equalities.	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development	Paul Adams

### 30 JULY 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS NONE

### 6 SEPTEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Planning and Regulatory Services Improvement Plan	No	To consider progress made against the Planning and Regulatory Services Improvement Plan	Planning and Regulatory Services	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory
Draft Local Plan	Yes	To present the draft Local Plan following public consultation on the preferred option.	Planning and Regulatory Services	Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner
East Oxford Community Centre - Improvement Scheme	Yes	To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	Culture and Communities	Vicky Trietline, Development Project Management Surveyor

### 8 OCTOBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Monitoring grants to Community/Voluntary Organisations 2017/18	Yes	To monitor the reported achievements resulting from Community and Voluntary Grant allocations for 2017/18	Customer and Corporate Services, Culture and Communities	Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer

## FINANCE PANEL

### 7 JULY 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
The Local implications of Brexit	No	To monitor and consider the impacts of Brexit on the Council and the local economy.	Finance, Asset Management	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q4	Yes	Quarterly Integrated Report, including Finance, Performance Management and Risk	Finance, Asset Management	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager

### 10 SEPTEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Monitoring social value	No	To consider the case and opportunities for monitoring social value through integrated financial, social and environmental accounting.	Finance, Asset Management	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services
Legal Services Income Generation	No	To consider the Council's income generation through Legal Services	Customer and Corporate Services	Anita Bradley, Head of Law and Governance
Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20	Yes	To review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Customer and Corporate Services	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits
Treasury Management Annual Report	Yes	To consider the Treasury Management Performance Report	Finance, Asset Management	Bill Lewis, Financial Accounting Manager
Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q1	Yes	Quarterly Integrated Report, including, Finance, Performance Management and Risk	Finance, Asset Management	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager

## 6 DECEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Quarterly Integrated Report, Finance & Performance Q2	Yes	Quarterly Integrated Report for Finance, Performance and Risk	Finance, Asset Management	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager

## HOUSING PANEL

### 5 JULY - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Empty garages and former garage sites	No	To receive an update on how the Council is dealing with empty garages and former garage sites.	Housing	Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager
Quarterly Housing Performance Report	No	To review the quarterly performance report for Housing Services.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing

### SEPTEMBER – DATE TBC

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Draft Local Plan (Housing Policies)	Yes	To review the policies contained within the draft Local Plan.	Housing	Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner

### 11 OCTOBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Oxford Rent Guarantee Scheme Pilot Review	Yes	Review of the two year pilot to know if this pilot is to continue	Housing	David Rundle, Private Rented Team Leader

### 12 NOVEMBER 2018 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

Agenda item	Decision	Description	CEB Portfolio	Report Contact
Tenant satisfaction TBC	No	To monitor tenant satisfaction survey results.	Housing	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

### TO BE SCHEDULED

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>CEB Portfolio</b>	<b>Report Contact</b>
Great Estates update	No	To receive an update on progress made in developing masterplans for estates and working up and delivering a rolling programme of priority improvement schemes.	Housing	Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager
Leaseholder relationships	No	To consider Council relationships with leaseholders including the views of individual leaseholders.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services
Impacts of absent owners on housing availability	No	To consider the impacts of foreign investors and other absent owners on housing availability in the city.	Housing	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing Services
Flexible tenancies	Yes	To pre-scrutinise any decisions on the local implementation of government plans to prevent local authorities in England from offering secure tenancies for life to new council tenants in most circumstances.	Housing	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager

## COMPANIES PANEL

The Companies Panel will meet prior to meetings of the Shareholder Groups. Provisional dates for the Companies Panel are outlined below.

**7 JUNE 2018**

**31 JULY 2018**

**11 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**29 OCTOBER 2018**

**12 DECEMBER 2018**

**3 JANUARY 2019**

# FORWARD PLAN (as at 04/05/2018)

## REPORTS TO CEB AND COUNCIL

### CEB: 15 MAY 2018

<b>ITEM 1: ID: I019061</b>	<b>LOAN GUARANTEE TO OXFORD HARLEQUINS RFC</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
To consider a proposal to give a loan guarantee to the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in respect of a loan to Oxford Harlequins RFC for works to the changing rooms at Horspath Road	

### ANNUAL COUNCIL: 15 MAY 2018

<b>ITEM 2: ID: I016990</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL COMMITTEES 2018/19</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed</b>
To appoint to Council Committees for the 2018/19 Council year.	

### CEB: 22 MAY 2018

<b>ITEM 3: ID: I018920</b>	<b>CLEAN BUS TECHNOLOGY RETROFIT SCHEME</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
The Council has been awarded £1,662,930 of funding from the Joint Air Quality Unit, DEFRA/DfT to retrofit buses in Oxford with emissions reduction equipment, in the interest of improving air quality. This report seeks project approval as well as a request for budget variation to take account of the incoming capital funding.	

<b>ITEM 4: ID: I018508</b>	<b>REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
Review of Discretionary Housing Payment policy	

<b>ITEM 5: ID: I018998</b>	<b>EXTENSION OF LOAN TO LOW CARBON HUB IPS</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
Report to support the extension of an existing loan facility to Low Carbon Hub	

<b>ITEM 6: ID: I019015</b>	<b>REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 USE OF SURVEILLANCE POWERS AND AMENDED PROCEDURE DOCUMENT</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
To note the Council's use of the investigatory powers for the year 2017/18 and to approve the Council's amended policy and procedure document	

## CEB: 13 JUNE 2018

<b>ITEM 7:</b> <b>ID: I018791</b>	<b>EXTENSION OF HOME CHOICE PILOT</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
A report seeking to extend the existing Home Choice Pilot for an additional six months.	
<b>ITEM 8:</b> <b>ID: I016991</b>	<b>FUSION LIFESTYLE - ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2018/19</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed</b>
To endorse Fusion Lifestyle's 2018/19 Annual Service Plan for the continuous development, management and operation of leisure services in Oxford	
<b>ITEM 9:</b> <b>ID: I018595</b>	<b>MODERN SLAVERY ACT – TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT 2017-2018</b> <b>Report Status:</b>
To approve the Modern Slavery Act – Transparency Statement for 2017 – 2018.	
<b>ITEM 10:</b> <b>ID: I019171</b>	<b>OXFORD CITY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2017/18</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
To report on the progress made on the Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2017/18. To present on key findings from our external safeguarding Audit Dec 18. To present the draft safeguarding action plan in response to these findings for 18/19. To table a revised safeguarding policy for Oxford City Council for approval	
<b>ITEM 11:</b> <b>ID: I017365</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2018/19</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
To review and appoint council representatives to Outside bodies for 2018/19	
<b>ITEM 12:</b> <b>ID: I019144</b>	<b>Q4 2017/18 INTEGRATED REPORT</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Report of Financial Outturn, Risk Management and Performance results for 2017/18	
<b>ITEM 13:</b> <b>ID: I019143</b>	<b>TENANCY STRATEGY AND TENANCY POLICY 2018-2023</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
To request the City Executive Board to recommend to Council, approval of the amended Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy 2018-23 (and associated appendices) following a period of consultation.	
<b>ITEM 14:</b> <b>ID: I018675</b>	<b>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2018-2021</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.</b>
The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for development of planning policy documents, including consultation periods and other key milestones.	

## **CEB: 11 JULY 2018**

<b>ITEM 15:</b> <b>ID: I015077</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2017</b> <b>Report Status: CEB: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information</b> <b>Council: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information</b>
The report will provide the revised Oxford Sustainability Strategy, which will set out the vision for Oxford's sustainable future and steps we are required to take to deliver it. The report will recommend approval of the draft strategy for public consultation.	

<b>ITEM 16:</b> <b>ID: I019103</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON THE WOLVERCOTE AND CUTTESLOWE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision needs further consideration or information</b>
This item to be submitted to CEB for approval that the correct documents have been submitted to meet the legal tests for the formal submission of the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe Neighbourhood Plan to go out on public consultation and then Examination.	

<b>ITEM 17:</b> <b>ID: I019158</b>	<b>CITY WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW - BOUNDARY COMMISSION'S INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR COMMENT</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Decision reliant on another action or process</b>
The Boundary Commission will publish its draft proposals on a new ward scheme for Oxford. The Council is invited to comment.	

<b>ITEM 18:</b> <b>ID: I019172</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
The children and young people's strategy has been consulted on and adjustments have been made. This is the final version that needs to be approved by the City Executive Board.	

## **COUNCIL 23 JULY** **CEB: 14 AUGUST 2018**

<b>ITEM 19:</b> <b>ID: I019076</b>	<b>QUARTERLY INTEGRATED REPORT, FINANCE &amp; PERFORMANCE Q1</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Quarterly Integrated Report, including, Finance, Performance Management and Risk	

## **CEB: 18 SEPTEMBER 2018**

<b>ITEM 20:</b> <b>ID: I014947</b>	<b>DRAFT LOCAL PLAN</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.</b>
To present the draft Local Plan following public consultation on the preferred option.	

<b>ITEM 21:</b> <b>ID: I015275</b>	<b>EAST OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE - IMPROVEMENT SCHEME</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional : Decision needs further consideration or information</b>
To present an improvement scheme for the East Oxford Community Centre following public consultation.	

<b>ITEM 22:</b> <b>ID: I017364</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME FOR 2019/20</b> <b>Report Status:</b>
To review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme	

<b>ITEM 23:</b> <b>ID: I015525</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE: ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE 2017/18</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed</b>
<p>The Treasury Management Performance Report 2017/18 is submitted twice a year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· December 2017 – the position at the 30 September 2017 (Half Year)</li> <li>· September 2018 – the position at 31 March 2018 (Full Year)</li> </ul>	

## **COUNCIL 01 OCTOBER**

### **CEB: 16 OCTOBER 2018**

<b>ITEM 24:</b> <b>ID: I014681</b>	<b>MONITORING GRANTS ALLOCATED TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2017/18</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional</b>
To monitor the reported achievements resulting from Community and Voluntary Grant allocations for 2017/18	

<b>ITEM 25:</b> <b>ID: I017048</b>	<b>OXFORD RENT GUARANTEE SCHEME PILOT REVIEW</b> <b>Report Status: Provisional: Awaiting further information, advice or input.</b>
Review of the two year pilot to know if this pilot is to continue	

## **CEB: 14 NOVEMBER 2018**

<b>ITEM 26:</b> <b>ID: I019077</b>	<b>QUARTERLY INTEGRATED REPORT, FINANCE &amp; PERFORMANCE Q2</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Quarterly Integrated Report for Finance, Performance and Risk	

<b>ITEM 27:</b> <b>ID: I019075</b>	<b>REVIEW OF FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
A report reviewing the first year of the three year Strategy agreed in 2017.	

## **COUNCIL 26 NOVEMBER**

### **CEB: 18 DECEMBER 2018**

<b>ITEM 28:</b> <b>ID: I019079</b>	<b>DRAFT CONSULTATION BUDGET 2019/20</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Draft budget for consultation for 2019/20	

## **CEB: 22 JANUARY 2019**

### **COUNCIL 28 JANUARY**



## **CEB: 12 FEBRUARY 2019**

<b>ITEM 29:</b> <b>ID: I019081</b>	<b>CAPITAL STRATEGY</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Capital strategy update	
<b>ITEM 30:</b> <b>ID: I019080</b>	<b>BUDGET 2019/20</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Budget 2019/20	
<b>ITEM 31:</b> <b>ID: I019078</b>	<b>QUARTERLY INTEGRATED REPORT, FINANCE &amp; PERFORMANCE Q3</b> <b>Report Status: Confirmed for this meeting</b>
Quarterly Integrated Report: Finance, Performance and risk	

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**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 22 May 2018  
**Report of:** Head of Financial Services  
**Title of Report:** Review of Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To seek approval to amend the current Discretionary Housing Payment policy and to note the trends in expenditure detailed in the report.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Vibrant, Sustainable Economy, Strong and Active Community
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Corporate Plan; Financial Inclusion Strategy.
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
1. <b>Approve</b> the revised Discretionary Housing Payment policy.	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
Appendix 2	Case Studies
Appendix 3	Risk Register
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

## Introduction and background

1. On 12 June 2013 the City Executive Board (CEB) approved a new Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy. The policy made significant changes to the way the Council administered DHPs. The most significant change was that awards would be subject to an agreed action plan to improve the applicant's financial sustainability. Against a backdrop of significant welfare reform and consequent reductions in benefit entitlement, this approach was introduced to ensure that people being supported with DHPs were taking steps to find more sustainable solutions to their situation. Since 2013 the policy has been reviewed annually to help manage expenditure in line with changes to the DHP grant provided by the Government.
2. Government funding for DHPs has fluctuated in recent years. National funding was increased for 2013/14 and 2014/15 as a result of the introduction of the Benefit Cap and the Bedroom Tax. In 2015/16 funding reduced significantly, which saw Oxford's grant reduce from £514,496 to £288,092. Funding has increased for 2016/17 and 2017/18 in response to the further lowering of the Benefit Cap from £26,000 to £20,000 in November 2016. Oxford's grant for 2016/17 was £376,792 and for 2017/18 is £509,495. National funding is now reducing again, and so Oxford's grant for 2018/19 is £405,010.
3. The Welfare Reform Team has reviewed the existing policy in light of the wider rollout of Universal Credit (UC) from October 2017, and from feedback obtained from customers who have received DHP's throughout the last year. The revised policy is set out in Appendix 1.
4. One of the challenges of UC is that customers migrating to it will not receive a payment for a minimum period of five weeks. **Members should note that DHP cannot be paid in this period.** This is because DHP can only be paid where the customer is in receipt of either Housing Benefit, or the Housing Cost Element of UC.

## Expenditure

5. The table below summarises DHP expenditure since 2013.

**Table 1 – Annual Expenditure since 2013/15**

Year	Expenditure	Percentage of Grant
2013/14	£431,244	82%
2014/15	£476,147	92%
2015/16	£270,505	94%

2016/17	£379,009	101%
2017/18	£494,566	97%

6. The table above represents the net DHP expenditure. For 2017/18, the gross expenditure was £530,326. This figure gets reduced where DHP overpayments are raised and repaid. Although such overpayments aren't actively recovered from recipients, where payment is made to a landlord, any DHP overpayment is automatically recovered from future payments.
7. In 2017/18, 789 applications for DHP were made by 357 separate customers, of which 631 (80%) were successful. Of the awards made in 2017/18, 39 were to customers who had been in receipt of DHP for more than a year. Of these customers 8 have been in receipt of DHP for more than two years. This is a significant reduction on the equivalent figures for 2015/16 when 149 awards were made to customers who had been in receipt of DHP for over a year. This reflects the positive outcomes that customers have been able to achieve whilst engaged with the Welfare Reform Team. Those in receipt of DHP for longer periods of time tend to be customers with more complex needs, or those with no practical options to change their circumstances.
8. 158 applications were turned down in 2017/18, which is a reduction from the 194 which were declined in 2016/17, despite receiving 45 more applications this year. The most common reason for turning down applications over the two years was that applications did not meet the DHP policy criteria (55 cases) i.e. the customer's circumstances fell under section 2.4 of the DHP policy, which are instances where we do not usually intend to pay DHP, unless there are circumstances where paying the DHP would strongly support the policy objectives. Whenever a DHP application is turned down, the customer is still offered the support of the Welfare Reform Team. Table 5 provides the top 5 reasons for turning down a DHP in the last two years.

**Table 2- Reasons for refusing DHPs from 2016-18**

Reason for refusal	Totals 2017/18	Totals 2016/17
Doesn't meet DHP policy criteria	22	33
Customer's income is sufficient to pay shortfall	20	25
Customer has no rent shortfall	19	15
DHP would not sustain tenancy	18	25
No long term plan to reduce DHP reliance	14	35

9. Table 3 compares the details of DHP awards and expenditure by benefit category for all years since 2013/14, when the Benefit Cap and Bedroom Tax were introduced. Please note that the category of “Other” relates to circumstances where an applicant is not entitled to full Housing Benefit. This will usually be as a result of having greater income than the minimum level which attracts full Housing Benefit or due to deductions made in respect of non-dependant adults living at the property.

**Table 3 – Breakdown of DHP Expenditure by Welfare Reform since 2013/14**

<b>Reason For Claim</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Benefit Cap	£213,065	£224,293	£128,180	£237,161	£418,410
Bedroom Tax	£124,386	£95,135	£40,860	£38,136	£31,037
Local Housing Allowance	£93,005	£121,441	£83,006	£92,370	£71,532
Combination of Above	£1,681	£5,410	£1,219	£636	£1,670
Other	£12,550	£29,870	£17,240	£10,812	£6,591

NB: The figures quoted in paragraph 6 above, are taken from the Benefits system, and are different from those in the above table. This is because the benefits system takes account of awards for claims which end prematurely, or where there are minor adjustments to the amount of benefit claimed, but cannot easily record the reason for the claim. Hence the reason for claims is recorded manually in a spread sheet together with the original award amount (the figure shown Table 3).

10. Table 3 shows that the main driver of expenditure is the Benefit Cap. Since the Benefit Cap was introduced in 2013, it has affected 640 households in Oxford. However 383 of these cases have only been impacted since the Benefit Cap was reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 in November 2016. Payment of DHP allows the customer the time and space to work with the Welfare Reform Team to obtain a benefit which qualifies them for an exemption from the Cap. Since November 2016, 215 customers have been supported to gain an exemption from the Cap, of which 98 have done so by moving into work or increasing their hours of work, so they become eligible for Working Tax Credit (or the equivalent element within Universal Credit). Appendix 2 contains a couple of case studies which show how the payment of DHP facilitates the Welfare Reform Team to support customers affected by the Benefit Cap.
11. DHP awards require action plans to be agreed so that customers are supported to manage their financial shortfalls themselves. The top five actions agreed for

the last two years are shown in the table below. An action plan would not be agreed for awards made for a short fixed period, such as supporting someone as they move into employment. There have only been 65 awards made without conditions in the last two years.

**Table 4 - Top 5 conditions for DHP awards from 2016-18**

Agreed action	Totals 2017/18	Totals 2016/17
Look for work	210	202
Apply for another benefit	129	96
Engage with a specialist support service	100	63
Prepare for work	95	65
Obtain debt advice	81	78

## Monitoring

12. The consistency of decision making will continue to be monitored by undertaking a check on 10% of all applications, whether successful or unsuccessful. DHP expenditure is also reported on a monthly basis and includes details of the amount of expenditure being made in respect of different Welfare Reform measures, and the number of cases receiving multiple awards throughout the year. Both actual and forecast DHP expenditure will be reported so that pressures can be identified as early as possible.

## Policy Changes

13. The main objective of the DHP policy remains unchanged. This is to provide short term relief to applicants in order to give them time to find more sustainable solutions to their financial arrangements. The following paragraphs outline amendments that have been made to the policy.
14. The DWP have amended regulations relating to Universal Credit claimants who are moving to temporary accommodation or specified accommodation (formerly known as supported accommodation). In such circumstances, the UC award ends and a new claim for Housing Benefit must be made. In order to allow DHP to be paid, the DWP have created a concept called “underlying entitlement of DHP” which applies during this transition. The DHP policy has been updated to reflect this change.
15. Section 2.4 of the policy covers situations where the Council will not usually award a DHP unless to do so would strongly support the policy objectives. The following two criteria have been added to this section:

- Where the rent charged is of such an amount that the tenancy would still be unsustainable even if realistic steps to improve the household situation were achieved
- To cover the reduction to Universal Credit awards due to the imposition of third party debt deductions

16. Where references to Housing Benefit are made, the policy has been amended to reflect the equivalent conditions in Universal Credit. This includes the start date of awards, other effective dates and the maximum award that can be paid.

### **Financial implications**

17. Oxford's DHP grant for 2018/19 is £405,010 which means a maximum of £1,012,525 can be spent next year. Regulations permit local authorities to spend two and a half times their grant on DHPs. Any expenditure over and above the grant, up to the ceiling, is a direct cost to the Council.

18. By making effective use of the Discretionary Housing Payment budget, and targeting awards effectively, the Council will save the costs of placing people in temporary accommodation or dealing with people who are homeless. Typically the cost of placing someone in temporary accommodation can be 18 times that of sustaining a tenancy using DHPs.

19. The government has confirmed the national DHP budget until 2019/20. However after 2020, with Universal Credit largely rolled out and the ending of the Revenue Support Grant to local authorities, it is possible that government funding for DHP's will also cease. As such it is important that DHP's continue to be used to help applicants become financially sustainable and reduce the long term reliance on this financial support.

### **Legal issues**

20. The recommendations of this report are within the scope of the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 and The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI2001/1167), and subsequent amendments. Whilst the regulations give a very broad discretion, the Council has a duty to act fairly, reasonably and consistently. Each case must be decided on its own merits, and decision making should be consistent throughout the year.

### **Level of risk**

21. An evaluation of the risks associated with the DHP policy has been carried out. A detailed Risk Register is attached at Appendix 3.

### **Equalities impact**

22. An initial impact assessment has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 4. No undue, adverse impacts have been identified. However as the DHP budget is finite, and needs to be allocated within set guidelines, monitoring will



be carried out to ensure there are no unintended consequences of the policy to any specific group of customers.

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<b>Background Papers:</b> None

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## **Oxford City Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Policy**

### **1. Aims**

- 1.1. The overarching objective of this policy is to distribute funding granted under the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme (DHP) in order to prevent homelessness. This will be achieved by providing short term relief to applicants in order to give them time to find more sustainable solutions to their financial arrangements. The policy is also intended to support people who have little scope to change their personal circumstances. Funding provided by this policy is only intended to be used to cover housing costs.
- 1.2. Demand for support through awards of DHP remains high as a result of multiple welfare reforms implemented in recent years, such as the under occupancy criteria in the social sector, the Benefit Cap, and the freeze of Local Housing Allowance rates, plus the continued rise in private sector rents in the city. Furthermore 2018/19 will see a reduction in government funding to the DHP fund. In addition to the overarching objective of the policy outlined in 1.1, the policy also aims to:
- alleviate child poverty and keep families together
  - support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life, including young people leaving care; and
  - support the vulnerable in the local community
  - support the transition into work, particularly for people at risk of homelessness and those moving on from hostel accommodation
  - support the aims of the Financial Inclusion Strategy

### **2. Determination of Applications**

- 2.1. Applications for DHP awards must be made on the form shown at Appendix 1. The Welfare Reform Team will consider all applications for DHP on their individual merit.
- 2.2. In order to be considered for an award of Discretionary Housing Payment applicants must either be entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit. The exception to this is for customers on Universal Credit moving into temporary accommodation, or specified accommodation, and as a result have a period of no entitlement to either benefits, when they can then be considered for DHP for the period of underlying entitlement.
- 2.3. DHP's can not be awarded in the following circumstances:
- To top up an award made under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme<sup>1</sup>.
  - To contribute to the cost of ineligible service charges
  - To assist in paying for rent increases imposed as a result of incurring rent arrears
  - To assist in paying for rent costs arising from the suspension of a Housing Benefit or Universal Credit claim
  - To assist in paying for rent costs which arise from the imposition of sanctions or reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These include any reduction made as a result of not complying with work related conditionality, or deductions to recover benefit overpayments, or in arranging maintenance as directed by the Child Support Agency, or breaching a community service order.

<sup>1</sup> Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides for Local Authorities to make reductions in the amount of Council Tax owed by an individual.

- To cover the rent for the initial period between making a claim for Universal Credit and having Universal Credit entitlement confirmed

2.4. It is not intended to award DHP in the following circumstances, unless to do so would strongly support the policy objectives outlined above:

- Assistance with moving costs, rent in advance, and deposits (unless moving to more affordable accommodation)
- Shortfalls caused by a non-dependent deduction or housing cost contribution.
- Where Capital in excess of £6,000 is held for people of working age, or £10,000 for those of pensionable age
- Where the tenancy was not affordable when it was taken on.
- Where the rent charged is of such an amount that the tenancy would still be unsustainable even if realistic steps to improve the household situation were achieved
- Where an applicant has multiple outstanding debts, and has no plans to seek professional debt advice, or to deal with the debt
- Where there is affordable and suitable available alternative accommodation.
- Where applicants are not prepared to take steps to reduce or remove their need for DHP, and/or state the period of time they require the DHP
- Where multiple family units or households are living in one property, and another household could be expected to make additional contributions to the rent
- Where fraud has been admitted or proven in relation to claims for Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, Council Tax Benefit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme or Discretionary Housing Payments
- To cover the reduction to Universal Credit awards due to the imposition of third party debt deductions

2.5 In deciding whether to award a DHP, consideration will be given to:

- how the award will meet the policy objectives, with priority being given to:
  - applicants who have limited scope to change their circumstances (e.g. a disabled applicant affected by the under-occupancy rules who has had adaptations made to their property)
- the shortfall between Housing Benefit/ Housing Element of Universal Credit and the rental liability
- any steps taken by the applicant to reduce their rental liability;
- any steps taken by the applicant to find work, or increase their hours of work
- the financial and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the applicant, their partner and any dependants and any other occupants of the applicant's home;
- the income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home. (All applicants will be required to complete an Income & Expenditure Form.) Where it is felt that expenditure is inappropriate or incompatible with award of a DHP, the applicant will be referred for debt advice or financial capability support.
- any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant or their family;
- the level of indebtedness of the applicant and their family;
- the exceptional nature of the applicant and his / her family's circumstances;
- whether total DHP expenditure is within the legally permitted level of two and a half times the government's contribution
- the possible impact on the Council of not making such an award, e.g. the pressure on priority homeless accommodation;
- any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Welfare Reform Team.

### **3 Amount and condition of awards**

3.1 The Welfare Reform Team will decide how much to award based on all the circumstances. However, the main determining factor will be a consideration of the applicant's scope for reducing their reliance on DHP's in the future. Where this is possible, awards will usually be made for a maximum of thirteen weeks or three months. If an applicant has limited options for making changes in their circumstances awards will be made for longer periods, of up to 12 months. An award of a DHP does not guarantee a further award at a later date even if the applicant's circumstances have not changed.

3.2 . The start date of the award will normally be:

- the Monday after the Welfare Reform Team receives the written claim for a DHP in cases where the applicant is claiming Housing Benefit; or
- The first day of the current Universal Credit monthly assessment period the applicant is in when their DHP claim is received, where the customer claims UC; or
- the date on which entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit starts; or
- another date, where this fulfils the objectives of this policy better than the dates above.

3.3 An award of DHP will have conditionality attached to it in the majority of circumstances. Any conditionality will be linked to increasing the applicant's income, reducing their rental liability or reducing other outgoings. Conditions will be agreed with the applicant, and support will be available to help them achieve them, either from the Council or from partner organisation(s). Examples of types of conditionality could include:

- Attending work related coaching with one of the Council's partners
- Actively looking for work, with or without the support of the Council, or one of our partners
- Registering for housing and bidding for suitable properties in each cycle
- Seeking assistance to manage debts
- Paying rent arrears
- Engaging with specialist support services

The intention of any conditionality is to assist the customer in improving their circumstances; it is not a punitive measure. However an award of DHP can be cancelled if a customer has not undertaken the agreed activity. Where employment is a reasonable outcome for someone, a condition related to moving into work will always be applied.

3.4 The maximum amount of DHP is calculated under the following rules:

- For applicants claiming Housing Benefit, the difference between the weekly Housing Benefit award and the weekly eligible rent.
- For applicants claiming Universal Credit, the maximum award amount is the level of the monthly Housing Element of the customers Universal Credit award, alongside the requirement that they need further support for housing costs.

3.5 When making a repeat application for an award, the customer must have met the conditions applied to their previous award, be able to set out what actions they have undertaken as a result of that support, and explain their next steps in order to reduce their reliance on DHP awards. Such applications will require an interview with a Council officer before an award can be made.

3.6 When an application for a DHP is declined, the applicant will still be offered support in resolving their situation, either directly from the Welfare Reform Team, from another Council department, or through a referral to one of the Council's partner organisations.

### **4 Administration of Payments**

4.1 Where the applicant appears to be entitled to another state benefit that they are not receiving, they will be advised to make a claim, and provided with details of other agencies in the city who may be able to help with such a claim. Any DHP will be reviewed in light of the result of this claim.

- 4.2 The Welfare Reform Team may need to revise an award of a DHP where the applicant's circumstances have materially changed. Any revision to the award will take effect from the same day as any change to the Housing Benefit award, or the start of the relevant Universal Credit assessment period. If a revision of an award leads to an overpayment then steps will be taken to recover this money if it is reasonable in the circumstances to do so.
- 4.3 A DHP will normally be made payable to the person receiving the Housing Benefit payment or Housing Element of Universal Credit, unless the aims of the policy are better served paying someone else. Where Housing Benefit or HCE is paid to the landlord, and a DHP award is made for more than three months, the Welfare Reform team will review the claim to ensure that payment should continue to be made to the landlord.
- 4.4 DHP will be paid by the most appropriate means available. This will normally be by BACS transfer. The payment frequency will normally be made in line with payments of Housing Benefit, or four weekly for Universal Credit payments.
- 4.5 Decisions regarding DHPs will be notified to the applicant within 10 working days of receiving the last piece of information required to determine the application, and will include:
- Reasons for the decision
  - The start and end date of the award
  - The amount of the award
  - Conditions attached to the award
  - The applicant's right of review
  - Advice that future awards may not be made
- 4.6 A Senior Officer will review any DHP decision that is disputed by the applicant. If the decision is still upheld, any further dispute must be dealt with through the Council's complaints procedures and ultimately by judicial review.
- 4.7 Where a customer has a complaint in the way we have applied our policy, they may ask the Local Government Ombudsman to look at their case, after exhausting the Council's own complaints procedure.

## **5 Fraud**

- 5.1 Oxford City Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a DHP by falsely declaring their circumstances, or providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006. Where the Welfare Reform Team suspects such a fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated and this may lead to the instigation of criminal proceedings.

## **6 Monitoring**

- 6.1 Reports will be extracted from the DHP software on a monthly basis to ensure that expenditure is within budget and is correctly profiled to ensure no overspend at the end of the financial year. Overpayments will be reconciled on a monthly basis. A 10% check will be made of all DHP applications, whether successful or not, to ensure that decision making is consistent and complies with this policy.
- 6.2 The reasons for making a DHP award will be monitored and reported based on the following list:
- Benefit Cap
  - LHA Reductions
  - Housing Benefit reductions due to under-occupation
  - Combination of reforms
  - Other

This will be reported back to DWP in accordance with their requirements.

## **7 Communication of Policy**

7.1 The Welfare Reform Team will publicise the scheme and will work with all interested parties to achieve this. A copy of this policy statement will be made available for inspection and will be posted on Oxford City Council's website.

## **8 Review**

8.1 This policy is effective from 22 May 2018. It will be reviewed no later than 1 June 2019.

Appendix 1:

DHP Application form

## Application for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

### Section 1: About you

To help us to process your claim quicker, please give us your current contact details.

Full Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

.....Post Code: .....

Claim reference number: 80- .....

Home number: ..... Mobile: .....

Email address: .....

*Please note we may contact you regarding your claim and your appointments. We have found that contacting customers by email and text is an efficient way of getting in touch quickly with customers. If you have any preferences about the way you are contacted please let us know.*

### Section 2: About your circumstances

**1. Why are you applying for DHP e.g. bedroom tax, local housing allowance (LHA) shortfall, benefit cap, personal circumstances?**

**2. Have you applied for DHP before?**

☐ Yes- please answer question 2A

☐ No- Please answer question 2B

**2A. Please tell us what are you doing to meet the conditions of your last award?**

**2B. Please tell us what have you tried to do to improve your current situation?**



**3. Are you getting help from anyone at the moment e.g. Tenancy Sustainment, Connection, Crisis, Aspire, Mind, Advice Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Job Clubs, Social Services, etc.?**

**4. Is there anything else you would like us to know about when we are considering your claim e.g. risk of eviction, health, pregnancy, addiction issues.**

**5. When would you like your DHP to start and why? If you want DHP for past period, tell us why did you not apply before?**

### **Section 3: About your new DHP award**

**6. DHPs provide short term financial help for people who are working towards improving their situation so they can afford to pay their rent without this support in the future. Which of the following options are you taking or are you prepared to take to improve your situation?**

☐ Employment/training towards work home)

☐ Downsizing (moving to a smaller

☐ Increasing working hours

☐ Debt/money advice

☐ Moving to cheaper accommodation

☐ Lodger

☐ Other (please specify below):

#### Section 4: About your financial situation

Please give us details of your Income and Expenditure as accurately and completely as you can. This information is needed to make a decision about your Discretionary Housing Payment. You may be asked to provide proof of the amounts declared.

Please state period as Y = yearly or Q = quarterly or M = monthly or W = weekly

##### Income

Income Type	Period	Amount	Income Type	Period	Amount
Wages			Industrial Injuries Benefit		
Wages (partner)			Pension Credit		
Jobseeker's Allowance			State Retirement Pension		
Income Support			Occupational Pension		
ESA			Sick Pay		
Child Tax Credit			Maternity Pay		
Child Benefit			Carer's Allowance		
Disability Living Allowance			Attendance Allowance		
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)			Student Income/ Loans		
Maintenance			Savings/ Investments		
Working Tax Credit			Armed Forces		
Money from Non-Dependant			Independence Payment		
Rent from lodger			Universal Credit		
			Other (please specify)		

##### Bills

Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Total Rent*			Pay TV/ Internet/ Phone Package		
Council Tax (after CTRS*)			Maintenance Payments		
Water Rates			Service Charges		
Gas			Private Pension payments		
Electricity			Insurance e.g. contents, life, pets		
Coal/Wood/Other Heating			Other (please specify e.g. rep		
TV Licence					
Mobile Phone 1					
Mobile Phone 2					

Housekeeping					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Food			Childcare		
Takeaway			Healthcare Prescriptions		
Baby Food/ Milk			Health & Beauty (please specify e.g. haircuts)		
Toiletries			Clothing		
Nappies			Disability Related Care Expenditure		
Laundry/ Dry Cleaning			Gym Membership		
Cleaning Materials			Other (please specify)		
School Uniform					
School Meals					
School Trips					

Travel					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Public Transport			Disability Related Mobility Expenditure		
Petrol			Breakdown Cover/ MOT		
Insurance			Other (please specify)		
Road Tax					
Taxi					

\*Total Rent- tell us what your actual rent is

\*CTRS- Council Tax Reductions Scheme

Please state period as Y = yearly or Q = quarterly or M = monthly or W = weekly

Other costs					
Expenses	Period	Amount	Expense	Period	Amount
Going Out/ Entertainment			Cigarettes		
			Alcohol		
Savings			Gambling		
Pets e.g. food, vets			Holidays		
Pocket money			Meals at work		
Afterschool Clubs			Newspapers/ Magazines		
Birthdays			Subscriptions/ Charities		
Religious Holidays e.g. Christmas, Eid			Other (please specify)		

Debt			
Expenses	Period	Amount	Total amount of debt
Personal Loans e.g. family, friends			
Pay Day Loans			
Credit Cards			
Rent Arrears			
Utility Arrears e.g. gas, water, electrics			
Council Tax Arrears			
HB overpayments/ deductions			
Hire Purchase/ White Goods Loans			
Court Fines/ Bank Costs			
Maintenance Payments			
Catalogue Payments			
Student Loans			
Other (please specify)			

## Section 5: Your declaration

I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.

I understand the following:

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- If I give incorrect or incomplete information, the council may take action (including court action)

against me;

- Oxford City Council is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the purpose of processing personal data in the performance of its legitimate business. You can view the council's data protection policy and privacy notice at [www.oxford.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/privacy)
- We may share your information with and obtain information about you from other departments within Oxford City Council, other local authorities, government departments or financial organisations to ensure that the information is accurate; prevent or detect crime and fraud and protect public funds. We will not sell, share, or rent this information to others in ways different from what is disclosed in this statement.
- The council will use the information I have given to assess my claim for Discretionary Housing Payment, and I agree that the council can verify this if needed;
- I will tell the council about any changes in my circumstance that may affect my claim.

Your signature:

Date:

If you had help filling in this form or someone filled it in for you, please ask them to complete the next section.

I can confirm that I have completed this form on behalf of the claimant. The information contained within the form has been given to me by the claimant. The claimant confirms that this information is correct.

Name and relationship to you of the person who filled in the form:

## **Appendix 2 – Benefit Cap Case Studies**

To protect the customers' identity, the names and some of the details below have been changed.

### **Laila & Jasmine**

Laila has three children and is also a carer. When she first contacted the Welfare Reform Team, she was in temporary accommodation and the high cost of this accommodation meant she had been benefit capped and was losing more than £25 a week from her housing benefit.

We discussed Laila's options and agreed that looking for a benefit cap exemption through working tax credit was the way forward, although Laila had no work experience and was not confident with her English. Laila told us she was interested in working in retail, and we referred her to a job club for help finding work. We also gave her a discretionary housing payment (DHP) to cover the housing benefit she had lost due to the benefit cap.

Laila was offered a council tenancy in July, and her lower rent costs meant that she was no longer benefit capped. When we caught up with her in August, she was looking for work experience through volunteering, and was also thinking about working in a school. Although Laila no longer needed a DHP, she agreed to continue working with us with the goal of finding a job.

Over a period of months, we continued to support Laila. We helped her to deal with a housing benefit overpayment, booked her on training courses to work in a school, provided character references to help her to get a voluntary position, and dealt with other enquiries to the council about energy advice and repairs on her behalf. Laila started volunteering for a charity.

All this helped to build a relationship of trust with Laila, which led to her asking us to help her daughter Jasmin to find work. We met with Laila and Jasmin, who was studying for her A Levels at City of Oxford College, and discussed how to apply for jobs effectively. We helped Jasmin with her CV and covering letter.

When the Oxford Mail held a job fair in Oxford Town Hall, we went with Laila and Jasmin, and coached Jasmin on how to approach employers on the day. She subsequently applied for a vacancy with one of the attending employers, and got the job. Jasmin has now gone through her induction and started working shifts in a restaurant in April.

### **Marianne & Mark**

Marianne & Mark are council tenants with four children. They lost more than £45 a week from their housing benefit when they were benefit capped. Mark had been on the Work Programme and was applying for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) while he waited for surgery.

Mark was keen to work again when he could, and we agreed to give him a discretionary housing payment (DHP) while he waited to hear about his ESA application. When Mark was put into the Work Group for ESA, we referred him for employment support to find work, to help sort out his CV and to improve his skills.

We also arranged an appointment for Marianne and Mark to see an independent money adviser from Citizens Advice Oxford (CAO), and CAO helped them to apply for debt relief orders to deal with their debts.

Mark's ESA ended and he moved back onto Jobseekers Allowance. We kept in regular contact with Mark and his employment advisor to check on Mark's progress in moving back into work, and we were able to keep paying DHP.

After nine months, Mark had not found a job and we discussed whether he would benefit from more direct support in finding work. Mark agreed to this. We arranged for him to go to a Workers Educational Association career development session and made a new referral to Aspire to help him to get a job.

Six weeks later, Marianne rang the council and told us that Mark was about to start a new job. We gave Marianne and Mark an extended payment of housing benefit and advised them to claim working tax credit so that they would be exempt from the benefit cap.

Because Marianne and Mark claimed working tax credit, the benefit cap was removed in June 2015. Mark now works for 30 hours a week.

Marianne and Mark still get some housing benefit, and they no longer need a DHP because they can afford to pay their rent themselves. They need no longer worry about not having enough money to pay the rent, and are more than £140 a week better off than when the benefit cap was applied to their housing benefit.

Appendix 3

					Date Raised	Owner	Gross		Current		Residual		Comments	Controls				
Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence			I	P	I	P	I	P		Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Managing demand	Customers applying for DHP later in the year may not receive support due to high levels of expenditure earlier in the year	Threat	Greater demand for DHP's in the first half of the year	Reduced budget available later in the year	29/3/18	Paul Wilding	3	3	3	2	3	1		Monthly monitoring of expenditure.	1/6/18	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding
Legal challenge	Council successfully challenged on application of policy by unsuccessful applicants.	Threat	Inconsistent application of DHP policy, or awards made which are incompatible with policy.	Reputational damage and potential award of costs.	29/3/18	Paul Wilding	4	2	4	2	2	1		10% check of applications carried out to ensure decision making is consistent	1/6/18	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding
Customer impact	Unintended negative impact on specific customer groups	Threat	Unforeseen consequence of policy on some customer groups	Some customer groups are discriminated against and more likely to be unsuccessful with their DHP applications	29/3/18	Paul Wilding	3	2	3	2	2	1		Monitor successful and unsuccessful applications against the criteria established in the policy	1/6/18	In Progress	25	Paul Wilding

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## Appendix 4

### Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The Discretionary Housing Payment policy is intended to support those who are disadvantaged by changes to Housing Benefit rules, specifically the under occupation rules in the social sector, the Benefit Cap and the changes to Local Housing Allowance rates. The under occupation rules disproportionately impact older customers (from 45 to pension age) and people with a disability. The Benefit Cap affects mainly households where there are lots of children (and in most cases a single parent). The Local Housing Allowance changes impact mainly on households with children. As such, if the DHP policy is not applied correctly, these groups could be disadvantaged.

In the past Citizens Advice has expressed concern at the treatment of income related to disability benefits (Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance). They believe that taking such income into account when determining DHP applications could be discriminatory as such income is intended to meet costs related to the illness or disability concerned. The Council's view is that it is reasonable to take such income into account provided that any expenditure related to such income is also taken into account. The presence of such income prompts officers to ask specific questions related to expenditure on care costs and related items.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The Welfare Reform team have developed strong partnerships with a wide range of support organisations. Where financial support cannot be provided, customers will be referred to appropriate organisations for support..

As the policy is discretionary people who are in groups at risk of being disadvantaged can still receive DHP awards if to do so meets the policy's broader objectives.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision. Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

We are not consulting externally on the change to the DHP policy. The changes to the DHP policy are minor in nature, and in any case all applications are considered on their own merits, and any award made is at the discretion of the Council. As such the process of consultation may raise unrealistic expectations and would be an unproductive exercise at this point, as it would not generate any information that the Council hasn't already anticipated or did not know.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

As this policy is discretionary, all applications will be considered on their merit. Where an application meets the aims of the policy, it is intended to provide support.

The policy is a fairly straightforward one to apply. CEB should note that, as it is a discretionary payment the Council are not intending to set out any circumstances in which we definitely wouldn't support someone. If an application meets various policy aims, it will be successful.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

A 10% check of applications will be carried out to ensure consistency of decision making. This will be done for both successful and unsuccessful applications. Monitoring will be carried out on a monthly basis, and this will also include the reason for the application being made. Regular reports have also been provided to Scrutiny Committee in the last four years. It is expected that this will continue.

**To:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 17 May 2018  
**Report of:** Head of Community Services  
**Title of Report:** Oxford Town Hall

Summary and recommendations	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update the committee on the Oxford Town Hall so they consider how the Council can improve the profile and accessibility of the Town Hall
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive Board Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council, and Board Member for Customer and Corporate Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy Strong and Active Communities An Efficient and Effective Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Corporate Plan
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the Scrutiny Committee resolves to:	
1. <b>Note</b> and comment on the report	

Appendices
None

## Introduction and background

1. This report provides information on the promotion and accessibility of the Town Hall.
2. The report includes investments over previous years and the future projects, income generation, marketing and the balance of bookings.

## Performance

3. The below table shows the income and expenditure for the past three financial years

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Town Hall Events Income	£751,137	£764,963	£744,524
Property Income (Offices & Flat Rent)	£122,742	£137,077	£148,307
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£873,879</b>	<b>£902,040</b>	<b>£892,831</b>
Town Hall Events Expenditure	£419,611	£357,033	£382,192
Facilities Expenditure*	£718,859	£702,336	£708,625
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,138,470</b>	<b>£1,059,369</b>	<b>£1,090,817</b>
Balance	-£264,591	-£157,329	-£197,986

\* Note - the expenditure includes the SAC Offices):

4. The Town Hall facilitated 2902 bookings in 2016/17; this is an average of 242 each month. We also welcomed many new types of events including Prosecco & Vegan festival and some high profile speakers including Gordon Brown. The busiest months were November and February.
5. For all external bookings we ask for a feedback form to be completed, during 2017/18 97% of events were satisfied, with 72% rating the Town Hall and service as excellent.
6. The Oxford Town Hall has a mix of bookings and has to balance the council, civic, community and commercial uses.
- We offer free community usage to groups that have a positive impact on Oxford's residents on Tuesday and Thursday in specific rooms. In 2017/18 we accommodated 380 community bookings on these evenings, an average of 31 per month. This room usage equates to a hireable value of £54,000 per year.
  - The Town Hall also subsidises numerous groups for room hire and equipment for specific groups, in 2017/18 this equated to £79,378 of hireable charges.
  - In 2017/18, 56% of our bookings were internal Oxford City Council meetings, in the previous year this was 49%

## Promotional & Marketing

7. In 2017 we created Sales and Marketing Officer to lead on this at the Town Hall and our other community facilities working with the Commercial Manager. An officer was recruited to this role in June 2017.
8. The main focus of the Sales and Marketing Officer was to increase our exposure online and particularly on social media. Results since June have been:
- Facebook following of 2215, an increase of 18%
  - Twitter following of 3983, an increase of 8%

- c. Launched Instagram, now with a following of 752
  - d. Average website of 7064 per month
9. These increases have been made by posting more regularly and making the content more visual and engaging, for example an increased use of videos.
  10. The appeal of the Town Hall is the dynamic way of how this historic building can accommodate a variety of functions, adding character and elegance to each one of them. We value online channels and invest heavily in them but we also keep a stubborn presence in print publications and of course, we reach out personally to many of our clients.

## **Maintenance**

11. Planned maintenance is extremely important to ensure the venue both looks and operates to the highest level, to ensure it can compete with other similar competitors. Failure to keep on top of maintenance holds significant financial risk for the future and to the use of the Town Hall.
12. Over the previous few years the Town Hall has had significant investment (day to day reactive maintenance not included):

<b>Year</b>	<b>Works Completed</b>	<b>Cost</b>
2015/16	Town Hall Lift Motor Replacement and Refurb	£60k
	Boiler replacement	£140k
	Main Hall redecoration	£167k
	Main Hall audio & visual upgrades	£60k
	Museum Courtyard External Refurb	£32k
	Dumb waiter lift replacement	£25k
	Exercise Yard external works	£35k
2016/17	Chandelier Motors for Main Hall	£30k
	Water Pipework Replacement	£100k
	Replacement Wayfinding signs	£15k
	North Courtyard Fire Escape Refurb	£26k
	Main Flagpole redecoration	£38k
2017/18	Assembly Room Chandelier Motors	£60k
	External Refurb and Redecoration Phase1	£118k

- a. A 10 year maintenance plan for the Town Hall is currently being developed which aims to incorporate these works:
  - i. Light well Refurbishment
  - ii. External Refurb and Redecoration (phased approach)

- iii. Damp proofing and asbestos removal
  - iv. Replacement of electrical distribution boards
  - v. Replacement of Access to Main Flagpole
  - vi. Restoration of central timber cupolas over Assembly Room and Main Hall roofs
13. A new Fire Risk Assessment was commissioned and has been taking place in March and April 2018. It is anticipated that extra works will be required following this which will be confirmed after the report is published.

## **Access**

14. In March 2018, Jane Toplis Associates were commissioned to produce an access report on the Town Hall. They are experts in their field for listed buildings. From this a plan will be created on how we can improve the access to the Town Hall.

## **The Future**

15. The new museum, costing £3.2 million will open in the summer of 2020 and will enhance the Town Hall as a leading venue in Oxford. It will include a new entrance and gift shop, whilst restoring the grandeur of the magnificent 19<sup>th</sup> century building.
16. The focus now for the Town Hall team will be to improve the current Town Hall space where possible to compliment the new museum. This will include reviewing the possibilities of use for current vacant spaces.

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**Background Papers:** None

## Scrutiny recommendation tracker 2017/18 – May 2018

Total recommendations (year to date):	88	
Agreed	71	80%
Agreed in part	13	15%
Not agreed	4	5%

### 17 APRIL CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD - Health Inequalities

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1. That the Council should prioritise strengthening its policy development and research capacity in order to better understand and address health inequalities (and other inequalities) in the City, with a focus on providing tangible outcomes and improvements for local services; and	In Part	<p>Tackling inequalities (including health inequalities) is a priority for the City Council, however we are not the body with statutory responsibilities and budgets for health, public health or social care.</p> <p>Our focus must therefore be on working with partners, including CCG, NHS and County Council to influence strategies, plans and targeted projects that deliver better outcomes on inequalities.</p> <p>We are already doing this in a number of ways, for example through our engagement in Health and Well Being Board, Health Improvement Board, Children's Trust, Stronger Communities Partnership and the Mental Health Panel.</p> <p>In addition we are engaged in health specific projects including Barton Healthy New Town, The Council £100k funding for health inequalities projects match funded by the CCG. This work is supported by a small corporate policy and partnership team that handles this, along with many other issues.</p> <p>We will therefore ask officers to review health related activity, including inequalities to establish priorities, where we need to focus to have most impact on our objectives and what capacity and resources are needed to support this moving forward.</p>
2. That the Council should engage with local universities and health partners to explore opportunities for pooling local data and expertise to better understand and address health inequalities (and other inequalities) in the City	Yes	We will pursue this as part of the work outlined above.

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