

Inequality Scrutiny Panel - Overview of Oxford City Council's contribution to combatting inequality

Work & Lead Service (Officer)	Description	Identified gaps / opportunities <i>(Previous Scrutiny recommendations in italics)</i> <i>(Call for evidence responses are shaded)</i>
Meeting Housing Needs		
Increasing the supply of affordable housing Housing and Property (Dave Scholes) 247	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of new social housing at Barton and elsewhere. • Policy of 50% affordable housing in new developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting ethical or institutional investors into the city to rent quality accommodation at affordable rates. • Explore different models of housing that are more versatile and affordable. • Further consideration of factors around inequality and public health in the planning and development of sites. • Increasing the variety of housing within new street scenes. • Review balance of dwellings policy. • <i>Explore how the City Council can become a more agile operator in the housing market to ensure it secures best value for new property acquisitions (agreed in part).</i> • <i>Pursue 'real asset lettings' at a pace.</i> • Enforce 50% affordable housing from developers. • Offer incentives to big institutions that choose to let property at affordable prices. • House students in student accommodation. • Moratorium on new student accommodation.
Increasing occupancy Housing and Property (Bill Graves)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives offered to tenants to 'downsize' (Removal and Expenses Scheme). • Mutual exchange scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better exploit the benefits of Homeshare schemes. • <i>Research to understand the future requirements of people at the younger end of the 'Older Persons' category, so that the City Council can plan to best meet their future needs.</i> • <i>Prioritising the creation of new social housing for single older people if the review provides evidence that this could reduce under-occupancy or meet the current or future requirements of older tenants.</i> • <i>Promote the National Home Swap scheme.</i> • Penalise those who buy properties and can afford to leave them empty.

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Homelessness interventions Housing and Property (Dave Scholes) 248	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting options in cases of statutory homelessness. Around half of the new requests received come from new or emerging households. Increasingly, people have to be placed outside of Oxfordshire. Tenancy sustainment activities, working with more difficult groups such as vulnerable people and those with anti-social behaviours. Funding to agencies that support rough sleepers. This includes working to improve people's soft skills and CV writing, prior to volunteering and eventually paid work. Part-funding the provision of debt solutions. Homelessness Strategy: No second night out (NSNO), accommodation procurement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring County Council cuts to the Adult Homelessness Pathway and intervening to get the best results from any changes. Strengthen support for entrenched rough sleepers. Building better links with universities and business to get more volunteer help with programmes such as coaching and mentoring to help vulnerable people into work. Assist in changing the current NSNO policy priority to one of need over visibility and the verification process to enable speedier hospital discharge and ease of hostel access. Assist in ensuring that a number of hostel bed spaces are allocated for the specific discharge from hospital of the most needy people experiencing homelessness Review NSNO and seek the views of homeless stakeholders to enable a more rights based approach to be adopted. The practice of forcefully evicting camps of rough sleepers is stopped until hostel bed spaces are available. Assist in bringing about a county wide discharge policy for people experiencing homelessness as per best practice guidelines.
Landlord Services Bill Graves (Landlord Services Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property adaptations Garden Scheme Concessions for blue badge holders on garage rental Major projects such as Tower Blocks 	
Housing standards (Council housing stock) Housing and Property (Martin Shaw)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising the standards of our housing stock with the adoption and delivery of an Oxford Standard which is higher than the Decent Homes standard. 	
Housing standards (private rented sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMO licencing (non-mandatory). The development of a Private Rented Sector Strategy to improve standards in this sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider viability of rent controls. Extension of HMO scheme to single household properties.

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Environmental Development (Ian Wright)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project tackling unlawful dwellings (Beds in Sheds). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Extend funding for Beds in Sheds beyond September 2015 (agreed).</i> Limit the number of HMOs.
Estates regeneration City Development (Fiona Percy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great Estates Programme Blackbird Leys regeneration programme Tower Block Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Block unnecessarily developments that force the elderly to move.
Work on reducing Fuel Poverty Environmental Development (Joe Carr/ Debbie Haynes) 249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed to post for energy/fuel poverty strategy. Establishing energy targets for property on carbon reduction, energy efficiency. Investing to improve thermal efficiency in the Council's housing stock. Free energy audit for every tenant. Development of an Energy and Water Strategy. Funding the Affordable Warmth Network free helpline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tenant-facing Direct Services staff encouraged to offer appropriate advice on the use of free electricity (agreed).</i>
Creating Opportunities		
Youth Ambition Strategy Leisure, Parks and Communities (Ian Brooke)	<p>The strategy focuses on 15-21 year olds, and our approach is to engage young people in positive activities and by doing so help them to broaden their perception of their own capabilities and to stimulate ambition and positive insertion into the community.</p> <p>These activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted free swimming. Youth Ambition Grants programme to proactively seek applications from organisations aiming to reduce Child Sexual Exploitation and Extremism as well as applications supporting increased educational attainment and increasing the power and influence young people have over services that affect their transition into adulthood. Positive Futures Holiday Activities Fund - applications were invited from suitably qualified and experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the feasibility of recruiting a women and girls participation officer to increase female representation / engagement across the programme and to also support vulnerable young people to stay safe, reduce risky behaviours and as a result reduce the risk of young people being either victims or perpetrators of crime. Increased training for all delivery staff enabling them to identify risk indicators and increased links to Thames Valley Police and Public Health to refer young people to specialist services when required. Increased training for young people supporting them to effectively engage with democratic processes and be the change they want to see in their communities. Continue to develop the partnership agreement with the county Council to ensure effective high quality

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250	<p>organisations and individuals to deliver activities for young people in Barton, Wood Farm, Blackbird Leys & Greater Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Cowley Marsh and East Oxford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Ambition Sports – multi-sports sessions are delivered on the doorstep of the following regeneration areas: Barton, Blackbird Leys, Cutteslowe, Rose Hill and Wood Farm. Sessions are free or a nominal fee is in place, which helps engage young people and break down barriers to participation. Girls' only sessions are delivered to provide a welcoming space for young women. Sports sessions also offer training and volunteering opportunities. Session leaders/instructors support young people to identify and access positive exit routes/pathways. • Positive Futures and Sports sessions are delivered by session leaders (recruited by OCC). There is now a tiered approach to recruitment; future leader, session leader and team leader – this provides the opportunity for young / less experienced people to get in to work and develop their skills. • Youth Voice – developing Area Youth Action Teams in our regeneration areas supporting young people to identify projects they want to carry out to improve their community and more actively engage with Council processes, supporting us to develop services that genuinely meet their needs. Young people from vulnerable groups now sit on the Youth Ambition Grant Panel, the Positive Futures Holiday Fund and the Youth Partnership Board and are actively engaged in the development, delivery and review of projects and services. 	activities for young people within the city
Educational Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KRM Programme of work to raise attainment in primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend shared equity loan scheme to more teachers.

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251 Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	schools in Oxford City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Programme for schools. Pilot co-production project with two secondary schools in East Oxford around parental engagement and homework. Shared equity loan scheme for head teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Any future City Council educational programmes are co-designed with schools and are cohesively focused on achieving long term improvements in educational attainment and reductions in inequalities (agreed).</i> Encourage schools to ensure families eligible for free school meals register their children, and support holiday meal initiatives. Funds for education should continue and be targeted at the most disadvantaged areas. Encourage schools to use the Pupil Premium. More teaching assistants in schools. Improve facilities at public libraries (e.g. toilets). Bring back grammar schools, decent standards and schools ability to discipline children and parents who bring down that standards for all students. Increase literacy hours for Keystage 1 pupils up to 20 hours weekly for those that need it. Abolish 'ability sets' / small group teaching. Children whose first language is not English should receive more personal tuition in schools. More programmes aimed at teenagers who at present are at risk of getting into trouble.
Business in the Community Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing Education/Business Links to schools, including mentoring, placements and other support. Over 30 City Council staff volunteered as mentors. 	
Employment and Skills Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson, Neil)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to Employment & Skills Board, City Deal and European Structural Investment Funding. Programme of work to increase skills and employability opportunities for less advantaged individuals. Particular focus on large developments including Barton, Westgate and Northern Gateway. Development of Employment and Skills plans with key stakeholders including developers to drive agenda forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to improve and influence the provision of targeted careers advice in schools and intervene earlier (years 7-8). No replacement for the Connexions service. Scale up interventions that extend the benefits and opportunities of development to the whole city (see apprenticeships). Further use of social clauses to create more and better opportunities for young people living in areas of

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		<p>deprivation. Clarity required as to how the Council will ensure that developers deliver social clauses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to extend Employment and Skills Programme beyond May 2015. • Encourage academies to remove barriers at age 16. • Encourage employers to advertise all local job opportunities as open to part time and flexible working in the absence of convincing reasons against. • Lack of interim opportunities for recovery from illness/ESA/start work. • A lack of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in Oxford. • Encourage more employers to recruit people with mental health problems and disabilities.
Apprenticeships Human resources (Jarlath Brine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted recruitment of apprentice cohorts to OX1-OX4 postcodes and underrepresented groups. • Equalities/ Apprentices Officer member of Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Group. • 25 Apprentices employed directly by the City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the creation of sustainable OX1-OX4 apprenticeships is built into all major procurement contracts (e.g. Barton/ Westgate/ Northern Gateway) • Apprentice webpage. • <i>Reinstate £50k from 2015/16 or a sufficient amount to fund no fewer than 25 apprentices in future cohorts (not agreed).</i> • <i>We recommend that the City Council seeks to increase apprentice pay in the next budget round (not agreed).</i>
Job clubs Neighbourhood Services (Angela Cristofoli)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants provided to job clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to identify a sustainable funding stream. Currently proposals are being developed for an ESF bid but the future is uncertain. • More interventions to help NEETS as many need mentors and job clubs (esp. in Lye Valley where there are 160 NEETS).
City Council Employment practices Human resources (Jarlath Brine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Ticks accreditation & annual audits; facilitate reasonable adjustments for job applicants declaring a disability. • Stonewall Diversity Champion. • Diversity awareness workshops & EqIAs for CEB reports. • Contribution of equalities analysis for annual and small grants application process analysis recommendations. • Lead on Youth Careers Fest for the Council and other support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive feedback to unsuccessful applicants could be better targeted. • Genuinely interactive and easy to access recruitment webpages with simple but impactful guidance, e.g. this is what a great application looks like. • Flexible/ progressive recruitment, e.g. accepting CVs, more widespread use of assessment centres/ stakeholder

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	<p>for Job Fairs, e.g. assisted Crisis with an employment event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Community Association volunteers with HR advice. Champion a diverse workforce and lead on the Equalities Action Plan (contained within the Annual Workplace Equalities Report). Co-ordinate work experience & undergraduate placements across services with a focus on students living/ studying in Oxford. Promote equality, diversity & inclusion internally for staff through training support around the behavioural framework, career development/ interview coaching, and a suite of personal development workshops. Support employee volunteering. 	<p>panels/ team involvement rather than the historic one interview approach before appointment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted at BME and other underrepresented groups, an annual managed calendar of generic mock interview/ CV writing/ job application advice workshops & drop in surgeries linked with other Council services. Consider health impact assessments.
Digital Inclusion Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out of wifi in public places. A project with the Internet Institute to enable access for young people in secondary Schools to the internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider extending free broadband to all City Council tenants (in receipt of full benefits). Improve City Council website to make it more intuitive.
ESOL Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externally funded programme of activities including; the development of specialist ESOL Classes, classes for those volunteering to teach/support do ESOL classes, and classes aimed at women and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An evaluation report is currently in draft form. This will propose the way forward to improve the coordination and access to ESOL classes and support for ESOL.
Culture Culture Team (Ceri Gorton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free cultural activities and events Free Heritage offer at the Museum Dancin' Oxford produces a range of high quality free outdoor professional dance performances in public spaces annually. Stagecoach Oxford has given the festival free bus tickets for the Barton / BBL bus routes to enable residents to access the city centre events free of charge. Free Baby Boogie events at Leys Family Centre, Roundabout (Barton), Northway and Donnington Doorstep. 18 free dance workshop events in Barton, Donnington and BBL (led by professional artists from visiting national dance companies to Oxford). Oxford City Council's Dance Development Programme includes a heavily subsidised programme entitled "Dance for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Add an objective to extend cultural opportunities to excluded communities (agreed in part).</i>

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	Parkinson's"- run in partnership with English National Ballet. The programme also includes 3 theatre trips per year to London to see an ENB performance – this is heavily subsidised to make it affordable and accessible.	
Maximising household income		
Council Tax Reduction scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of a Council Tax Reduction scheme for residents on a low income. 	
Oxford Living Wage Human resources (Simon Howick) 254	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate and implement the Oxford Living Wage for all Council Employees & as an exemplar for other local employers to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve promotion of Living Wage Week. Look to develop an Oxford Living Wage brand/model, similar to Fair Trade or Organic. <i>Survey all suppliers to measure compliance with paying the Oxford Living Wage (agreed).</i> <i>Actively explores the merits of incentivising businesses to pay the Oxford Living Wage through offering business rate discounts (agreed).</i> <i>Seek to be more pro-active in engaging with employers and encouraging them to pay the Oxford Living Wage. This could also involve raising the profile of the Oxford Living Wage on the City Council website and listing employers that have committed to paying it (agreed).</i> Commit to a regional Living Wage.
Welfare team response to government welfare changes Customer Services (Helen Bishop, Paul Wilding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to people affected by the impacts of welfare reforms, people in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments and those in rent arrears. Many of these interventions are transformative and focused on changing lives rather than just income streams. In some instances interventions last for over 12 months. The team has successfully moved around one third of the people they work with into sustainable jobs. These include people with multiple complex needs, those who face tough barriers such as the long term unemployed, and people wouldn't be expected to find a job in a government scheme such as parents with over four children who are affected by the bedroom tax. Restore have trained staff to recognise mental health issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop a strong partnership approach so that interventions can be deeper and wider. Transformational interventions that change lives not just income streams are prioritised wherever possible.

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Financial Inclusion Customer Services (Helen Bishop, Paul Wilding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Inclusion Strategy. This has been described as the process which ensures a person's incoming money is maximised, their out-goings are controlled and they can exercise informed choices through access to basic financial services. The strategy sets out current and future actions divided into four categories: debt, income, housing, and skills, with both short and long term outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Financial Inclusion work is prioritised and funded over the medium term. Support Credit Unions to have a wider and more effective reach. Ensure that address checks are carried out to ensure that wherever possible, cases do not need to be passed to bailiffs. Lobby for more progressive Council Tax.
Advice services for residents facing social and financial problems Customer Services (Helen Bishop, Paul Wilding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants provided to advice agencies for 3 years. One-off isolation funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau in 2014/15 generated over £1m of additional income for clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some advice agencies appear to be operating beyond their capacity. Strengthen advice offering for Older People, better promotion of Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit. CAB do not routinely record all 'secondary issues'. The withdrawal of legal aid in particular for family law, debt, housing, employment, and welfare benefits. Increase support for advice centres. Certain areas of the city have no local provision. Increase provision of interpretation/translation services at advice centres.
Social inclusion / support to vulnerable groups		
Social Inclusion Communities and Neighbourhoods Service (Luke Nipen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Social Inclusion Fund (£60k) supports community projects that help people of all ages feel more included in their community, builds their skills and increases their sense of achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reinstate £60k of funding beyond April 2015.</i> Rethink punitive policies towards those who live on the city's waterways.
Grants to voluntary bodies Community and Neighbourhood Services (Angela Cristofoli/ Julia Tomkins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Grants are aimed at projects that do one or more of the following (£95k awarded in 2013-14): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community activities and cohesion Get more people involved with the arts Tackle anti-social behaviour and improves community safety Promote and protects the natural environment and biodiversity Tackle social inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide longer term funding to Asylum Welcome. <i>Work with OCVA to improve outreach and engagement activities with diverse community and voluntary groups, with a focus on building capacities and supporting bid-writing.</i> <i>Provide a greater separation between grants allocated to smaller, localised community groups and those that seek to achieve wider community benefits (agreed in part).</i>

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<p>The work of neighbourhoods team</p> <p>Communities and Neighbourhoods Service (Angela Cristofoli)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community development. Engaging with diverse groups including BME and older people to help them to develop their priorities and engage in their geographical community. This involves trying to overcome negative perceptions of the City Council, which are poor in some cases. 18 month project funding provided to CAB to provide capacity for home visits to reduce unclaimed benefits. Activities for older people aimed at reducing isolation e.g. Go Active programme. Working with health partners in regeneration areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased presence of City Council services at Community Group meetings. Promote the City Council as an employer by advertising in community papers. <i>A high level review to flag up any issues of non-compliance with the Equalities Act.</i> Much more public engagement. Restore area parliaments.
<p>Community centres in priority neighbourhoods</p> <p>Communities and Neighbourhoods Service (Mark Spriggs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 19 operational community centres in Oxford, many of which are owned by Oxford City Council. The centres are managed by Community Associations made up of local workers and volunteers. Delivery of new Rose Hill Community Centre Reduced fees for tutors using Blackbird Leys Community Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider better utilisation of Community Centres to support the City Council's objectives. Extend discounts for tutors to more community centres.
<p>Leisure</p> <p>Leisure, Parks & Communities (Lucy Cherry)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active women campaign Free swimming for under 17s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund marking of football pitch at Peat Moors. Work with bus companies to improve access to the new BBL pool from Hollow Way. Keep Temple Cowley Pools open. Try to work more closely with the Pakistani community to encourage them into sport and community participation. Maintain provision of youth services, libraries, pools and sports centres.
<p>Neighbourhood Management</p> <p>Corporate Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot focusing on 3 areas: Rose Hill, The Leys and Barton. Working with local members and community organisations to develop action plans to address local needs, grow community capacity and improve public services. 	
<p>Work on reducing Food Poverty</p> <p>Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Poverty Conference with Housing Associations planned for May/June 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the lead role in facilitating the network of emergency food aid providers. Network meetings would enable providers to work more effectively and share resources and best practice. Capacity building – explore how the City Council could

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		<p>apply its experiences of capacity building in other sectors to build partnerships and remove admin from voluntary organisations providing emergency food aid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better signposting to emergency food aid providers. • Explore other models of addressing the issues raised by food banks, for example the community shop model, and how this works in the UK and other European countries. • The Council should have a food policy to address the needs of the poorest households, helping to sustain local food capacity near to where they live. • Activities to change attitudes towards surplus food.
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. • To promote the wellbeing of children and young people and vulnerable adults. • Safeguarding Section 11 Self- assessment and Action Plan. 	<i>Scrutiny Committee to review in April 2015.</i>
Partnerships supporting vulnerable groups and action plans Policy and Partnerships Team (Val Johnson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing Successfully Partnership • Stronger Communities Group • Vulnerable Adult Action Plan in process of development. • Breaking the Cycle Plan on going review of activities in place, including health inequalities, children and young people, training and employment and community engagement. • City Council Health and Housing Working Together Action Plan in place and reviewed 6 monthly. • City Council Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan • City Council Children and Young People Plan • Improving GPs' understanding of the City Council's role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No overriding strategy for inequality. • Link with OCCG review of Health Inequalities in Oxford. • Single point of access in the form of an assessment of needs website • There are very few day centres for chronically mentally ill people. • Exercise more influence over the NHS, OCCG etc. • Encourage better disabled access to shops/restaurants.

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