

# Supplement for

# Cabinet

On **Wednesday 16 March 2022 At 6.00 pm**

## Agenda Item 7 - Scrutiny Reports

### Contents

7. **Scrutiny reports**

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Scrutiny Committee met on 02 and 07 March 2022.

The following Scrutiny reports are included:

- Climate Emergency Review Group Update
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
- Allocation of Preventing Homelessness Grant 2022/23
- Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptations Policy
- Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2022
- Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework

The agenda, reports and any additional supplements can be found together with this supplement on the [committee meeting webpage](#).

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 09 February 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Climate Emergency Review Group Update

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Scrutiny-requested update on actions arising from the Climate Emergency Review Group.
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Tom Hayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Pursue a zero carbon Oxford
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

## Introduction and overview

1. At its meeting on 18 January 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered an update report on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency since the publication of the Scrutiny Climate Emergency Review Group report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Tom Hayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Green Transport, for presenting the report, Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy, for his support to the meeting and Rose Dickinson, Carbon Reduction Team Manager, for authoring the report and support to the meeting also.

## **Summary and recommendation**

3. Councillor Tom Hayes, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford introduced the report. It was highlighted that the Zero Carbon Action Plan presented was a coproduced, composite document which included the accepted recommendations of the Climate Emergency Review Group as well as suggestions from the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change, from other key stakeholders, as well as internal Council expertise.
4. Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy added that the Action Plan was published in March 2021 and was a living document mostly comprised of a RAG rating tracker. The Committee was informed of the intention for the Action Plan to be updated and submitted to Cabinet for consideration later in 2022.
5. Discussion of the huge topic of carbon reduction was justifiably broad, including issues around biodiversity, the Council's retrofitting programme to tenants, the efficiency of the Council's commercial property, and ways to engage landlords and tenants on carbon reduction issues. Beyond these, the Committee makes a total of four recommendations on issues around clarity of information, disability inclusiveness, and work progress.

## **Clarifying Information Provided**

6. On the basis that the Zero Carbon Action Plan is a living document, and is expected to be released publicly when it is published for Cabinet later in the year, the Committee suggests an amendment to the way the data is presented.
7. The Action Plan is, as mentioned above, essentially a RAG rating of the actions the Council wishes to pursue as part of its journey towards reaching zero carbon. Green items are those which are on track. Within the Action Plan there are actions which are deemed to be on track, for which resource is not currently in place, for example action 48, where the Council will seek external funding to expand Oxford's electric vehicle charging capacity. The Committee understands that it is necessary in the light of uncertainty to make rational assumptions, and in this specific instance there are strong reasons to believe that this action is on track. It is also true, however, that such funding has not been granted. The Committee suggests that it would be helpful to all reading the Action Plan to know how the actions are progressing against expectations (the current RAG rating), but also to know exactly how far it expects to be able to progress each goal with the current resources available, a statement of where the Council stands on its journey instead of how well it is progressing. This suggestion is likely not to be possible for some actions, but for those it can it will act as a safeguard against over-promising and under-delivering should unforeseen problems arise.

***Recommendation 1: That when the Council next updates its Zero Carbon Action Plan it provides, where possible, clarity over how far existing, allocated resources are expected to move the Council towards each goal.***

8. On a wider note, the Committee notes that the phrase ‘net zero,’ although generally understood as a broad concept, is one which has no universally agreed definition. There is consensus about the need to include emissions which are directly attributed to an organisation, but no such consensus exists over what sits within and without the definition in regards to indirect emissions. Issues such as whether the carbon impact of investments, procurement or should be included are a topic of debate and their inclusion and exclusion is inconsistently applied. Although they are indirect, the carbon impacts of these activities can be substantial indeed, for some organisations more than their direct emissions. Banks which finance fossil fuel extraction, for example, are liable to have a greater indirect carbon impact than that arising from their direct operations.
9. A consequence of this inconsistency is that the carbon outputs which can exist under the ‘net zero’ umbrella are very broad. Within the city, Oxford has a disproportionately high number of people who are actively engaged with these issues, and for whom this degree of detail matters. Likewise, the Council is recognised as a trailblazer of good and innovative practice amongst local authorities on many carbon reduction issues. The Committee feels it behoves the Council to respond to these facts by providing greater detail on what the Council means when speaking about ‘net zero’. It is not realistic to suggest that every reference by the Council to ‘net zero’ is accompanied by a definition. However, in key strategic documents where the concept plays an important role, the Committee suggests it is not overly arduous to provide information on the assumptions and definitions which underpin usage of the phrase. This is particularly the case as the Council has largely unpicked these issues and determined its definition already in its December Cabinet report on Net Zero Targets and Green Gas Purchasing.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council provides a clear statement of the assumptions and definitions it is applying when referencing net zero in strategies and other documents.***

### **Disability Inclusivity**

10. The report provided to the Committee read as follows for the equalities impact assessment: “No adverse impacts on any part of the community have been identified at this stage, however Oxford City Council will continue to consult with Legal Services to ensure all projects have due regard to the public sector equality duty.” The Committee feels that this response does not adequately reflect the impact individually, collectively or cumulatively of the policies in this report and their impact on groups with protected characteristics, in particular, those with disabilities. More work needs to be done in future iterations of this report to better address impacts on groups with characteristics living, working and travelling to Oxford City. For example, a review of ZEZ exemption grace period for disabled drivers in light of their anticipated lack of access to electric vehicles on the motability scheme.

11. Two aspects of the Action Plan are necessary to consider in order to provide an inclusive plan for disabled residents – full consideration of the impacts of proposed actions on individuals with different disabilities, but also a consideration of the cumulative impact of the proposed actions when taken together. It might be that taken individually a particular action may cause minor inconvenience to a disabled person, but when such inconveniences are layered on top of one another, or there are unconsidered interactions between policies, the cumulative effect may severely limit their social participation.
12. Disability-inclusive policy, according to the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, is enabled by ‘meaningful participation in policy-making in this area at all levels,’ resulting in ‘tailored climate action.’ This is some distance from the Council’s undertaking that it will engage with legal colleagues to ensure that legal duties are met. The Committee wishes to see this meaningful participation more effectively met by involving disability groups more regularly, and more importantly at an earlier stage. The further plans develop it becomes costlier and less effective to retrofit disability-inclusivity into them; it is much more effective to develop disability-inclusive plans from the outset. This is an issue which the Council’s Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group has raised previously.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council makes greater efforts to ensure that climate policies and action on climate change are disability inclusive, including involving disability groups at the earliest stage.***

### **Work Progress**

13. One specific issue on which the Committee was disappointed by the lack of progress was over the creation of cycle greenways into the City. Funding was secured to see the development of a concept masterplan but has not progressed, owing to Covid. The point is taken that taking a strategic and holistic approach to transport issues does require time, political stability from partners and staff resource to realise the fullest potential of any cycle ways. Covid and the change in administration at the County Council were deeply disruptive. Further, both Councils have had higher priority transport initiatives to deliver, such as electrification of the bus fleet and a bus prioritisation plan submission to government and even emergency-funded cycling initiatives. However, the Committee’s view is that now that these causes of delay are more distant, the continued importance of greenway development means it should be prioritised. The Committee would like to see the Council be proactive in its work with the County Council to restore impetus to the delivery of this element of the Action Plan.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council works with the County Council to prioritise the delivery of cycle greenways into the City which were paused owing to Covid.***

### **Further Consideration**

14. The Committee is likely to revisit this issue when the update to Cabinet is provided later on in 2022.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 18/01/22 concerning the Climate Emergency Review Group Update report.**

**Response provided by Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Green Transport and Zero Carbon Oxford, Councillor Tom Hayes**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>1) That when the Council next updates its Zero Carbon Action Plan it provides, where possible, clarity over how far existing, allocated resources are expected to move the Council towards each goal.</b>	Yes	
<b>2) That the Council provides a clear statement of the assumptions and definitions it is applying when referencing net zero in strategies and other documents.</b>	Yes	In December 2021 Cabinet set a definition for 'net zero' in relation to the Council's work to decarbonise its own assets and the wider city: <i>Net zero can be achieved by reducing emissions as far to zero as possible, with any remaining hard-to-decarbonise emissions compensated with greenhouse gas removals.</i> We will apply this definition as a 'boilerplate' as appropriate on Council documentation concerning carbon reduction.
<b>3) That the Council makes greater efforts to ensure that climate policies and action on climate change are disability inclusive, including involving disability groups at the earliest stage.</b>	Partially	The Council have initiated a number of actions such as the creation of the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group, which was initially set up during the early months of the pandemic to consider proposals to change highways and footways for the safe reopening of the high streets and to support emergency active travel measures. The Focus Group also had a longer-term objective to ensure all transport and movement measures should be accessible and inclusive for people in Oxford with disabilities.  It should be noted that the legal duties in respect of delivery of Transport initiatives rest with Oxfordshire

		<p>County Council, not Oxford City Council. However, the City Council are a key stakeholder – and sometimes funder – of schemes within Oxford and have guidance in place to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is considered by the Council’s decision makers both at the inception and during the lifetime of projects.</p> <p>This guidance includes the Council’s Initial Equalities Impact Assessment form which sets out the questions that should be asked by the Council’s decision makers during the initial stages of a project, and includes a requirement to consider who the project team will consult on any new policies or projects, or on proposed changes to an existing policy or service, to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts. Oxford City Council will continue to ensure that impact assessments are implemented in relation to projects concerning climate policies and action on climate change.</p> <p>The EV Strategy has been commissioned with a clear requirement to consider the needs for accessibility by disabled people in respect of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>4) That the Council works with the County Council to prioritise the delivery of cycle greenways into the City which were paused owing to Covid.</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Oxford City Council continues to priorities the Greenways Project –jointly funded in partnership with the County Council and University of Oxford. The Project was put on hold in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic by mutual agreement, due to all officers being reprioritised to more urgent work. In February 2022, the County Council, as part of its Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), is procuring concept design services for a county-wide Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN), which includes</p>

		<p>work on the prioritisation of active travel routes into Oxford. The SATN project is due to last approximately 12 months. The Greenways Project will benefit from awaiting the conclusion of the SATN project, so that the maximum amount of resource under the Greenways Project can be expended on creating attractive, bid-ready concept designs for the right routes rather than going back over prioritisation or doing concept drawings for implausible routes. Therefore, it looks like the most appropriate target for implementing the Oxford Greenways Project is during the latter part of 22-23 financial year and into the 23-24 financial year. The funds that have already been committed by all parties will remain available for this purpose.</p>
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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 March 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 02 March 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet portfolio holder for Inclusive Communities, for presenting the report and answering questions, Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services for authoring the report and supporting the meeting, and Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People for attending in support also.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Cllr Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities introduced the report. The report was in response to a statutory duty, but the Council wanted to go further than the statutory minimum to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion was at the centre of all work. It set out some ambitious challenges to the Council in terms of how it was working on equalities and had been developed on the back of welcome calls for change on equalities issues.
4. Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services set out how the Strategy development work had been conducted, which had included the use of focus groups in order to understand communities' lived experience. Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People outlined the importance of governance arrangements and highlighted that he chaired the internal Equalities Steering Group. He gave assurance that equality, diversity and inclusion was high on the agenda and that the strategy would provide the framework to drive the agenda forward in the future.
5. Unsurprisingly for an overarching framework, the Committee's discussion was very wide, taking in issues such as Scrutiny's future contributions to this agenda, modern slavery, statistics and monitoring, member and officer training, and inclusive language. In total, five recommendations are made relating to i) specific policy recommendations, ii) wider equality, diversity and inclusion issues relating to faith communities, and iii) textual amendments to the Strategy text itself.

## Specific Policy Recommendations

6. On page 13 of the policy the Council undertakes to perform certain actions, including 'Champion digital inclusion and accessibility as we move towards 'digital by default' services, working with partners to ensure there is access to devices, connectivity and skills development. Where appropriate, we will use Council funding and infrastructure, such as free community centre Wi-Fi, to support residents to get online, so that no one is excluded as we move towards fully digital service delivery.'
7. The Committee is in absolute agreement with the view expressed in the strategy that access to the internet is a basic necessity to function in modern society and that digital exclusion does exist and is highly detrimental to an individual's wellbeing. The Committee notes that provision of free community centre wi-fi is presented as an example of how the Council might address this problem. However, the way it phrased means it is caveated by the need for wifi to be appropriate. There are alternative ways to interpret this, so this suggestion may already be in train. However, in case, given that the technological and financial challenges are very low, the benefit to residents high, the Committee seeks assurances that free wi-fi will be provided at community and leisure centres as a matter of course.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council provides free public wi-fi in all its community and leisure centres.***

8. On p.13 bullet point 2 the Strategy references the Council's intention to go cashless. The Committee understands the financial imperative of making the savings available by doing so, meaning that it accepts this policy. The Strategy itself touches on the Committee's concerns. 'We recognise that some people may need more support than others, and we aim to provide information, advice and support to ensure they are not disadvantaged as we make the transition.'
9. Concern for those left behind by the move to cashless has been the subject of a number of recommendations by Scrutiny over recent years. It is often the case that those who struggle with electronic payments are those who are financially vulnerable, and many of the Council's services operate to support and provide opportunities for people in those circumstances. Exclusion arising from a policy of going cashless, even if unintentional, stops the most vulnerable from accessing things they badly need.
10. The Committee recognises that the Council is aware of the issue. However, it would simply like to reinforce its concern. The document being agreed is a strategy document, which does not go into specifics. Nevertheless, it must be fully recognised that there will be individuals for whom going cashless is simply impossible. The implication of the reference in the Strategy to ensuring that nobody will be disadvantaged as the Council makes the transition is that there is an expectation that everybody will eventually go cashless and the challenge is in supporting individuals in making the transition. This is not the case. The Committee's view is that a dedicated plan to address this as an ongoing challenge is necessary, and that long-term mitigations are required rather than simply transitional support.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council ensures that potential exclusionary impacts of moving towards cashless provision on relevant vulnerable residents are mitigated on a long-term basis.***

## **Wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Issues**

11. The initial framing in discussion of the following recommendation was over the recent request by the Hindu community for support in finding a permanent temple space, which prompted discussion around the needs of faith based communities and ensuring that the Council understands in more detail the nuanced needs of faith based communities. In discussing this, the Committee recognised that within any asset based community development approach faith groups are key. They are often the first place their members look for support, their members are more likely than average to be part of an ethnic minority and so need more help to traverse systemic challenges, and are usually motivated to make a positive difference in their localities. The Committee's view is that closer working relationships with these communities - to understand, enable and coordinate with – is a vital plank of an effective EDI strategy. The Committee does not make a

specific recommendation, but highlights building relationships and understanding with faith communities as a preferred area for further work.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council undertakes additional engagement with faith communities to understand their needs and support their contribution towards asset based community development.***

### **Textual Amendments to the Strategy**

12. In addition to suggested changes to policy within the Strategy, the Committee also makes two recommendations to make the text reflect existing Council policy more closely.
13. The first of these is the fact that the Council deliberately does not offer leisure provision on the same basis as a private sector provider. Instead, it seeks to broaden access as much as maximise its return. The Committee's view is that this is an important differentiator between municipal and private sector providers. Given that it is a significant provider of leisure facilities locally, the Council's approach of making leisure provision inclusive and accessible is a meaningful contributor to its overall equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. The Committee recommends making reference to this inclusive provision, particularly examples such as the provision of women-only classes, crèche provision and free of subsidised activities.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council explicitly references in its policy the need for inclusive leisure provision, particularly women-only classes, crèche provision at leisure centres, and free or subsidised activities.***

14. Finally, the Committee raises a suggested amendment to the wording of the draft Strategy. The fifth bullet point on page 10 of the draft Strategy states that the Council will 'Support community groups to access spaces and places where they can come together to enjoy common interests and create new friendships. Where groups want a dedicated space, we will offer them advice, but we will not be able to provide separate facilities for different community groups.' The Committee understands what is meant by this but feels that this is an oversimplification of a complex situation. The Council does provide dedicated space to some organisations. Likewise, the Committee expects that if a community group came forward with a compelling proposal in the future that it would be considered on its merits and not rejected on a point of policy. The Committee's view is that the Strategy may simply be improved by omitting this bullet point altogether and avoiding the complexities and tensions that the statement as written could raise in the future. It is recommended that it is removed.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council removes bullet point 5 on page 10 of the draft Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Strategy.***

## Further Consideration

15. Scrutiny members, the Cabinet member and senior officers were all in agreement that it was important that Scrutiny should review the progress of this work on an annual basis. This will be taken up in the next civic year. Scrutiny is particularly keen that the report evidences the efforts made to report back to the numerous communities consulted with as part of the development of this strategy to maintain two way communication between and shared ownership of tackling equality, diversity and inclusion issues between the Council, community groups and other key stakeholders. Likewise, it also wishes to see evidenced tangible improvements to Council policy based on the learning from the consultation.
16. Whilst the following is contingent on a number of issues proceeding as expected, it is well to flag to members of the Cabinet that Scrutiny is likely to devote additional capacity to equalities issues in the coming civic year. This does depend on two things: firstly, Council agreeing to the proposals of the Constitution Review Group to enable simultaneous meetings of the Shareholder and Joint Venture Group and the Companies Scrutiny Panel. This will free up greater officer capacity to facilitate other work. Secondly, how Scrutiny decides to prioritise its work next year will be up to the new Committee and is dependent on their agreement. Nevertheless, it seems more likely than not that it will happen. The expected form of this work would be a short – probably four meetings – review of one or two key equalities and access topics but is subject to agreement by the future Committee.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 02/03/2022 concerning the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

**Response provided by Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities, Councillor Shaista Aziz**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>1) That the Council provides community wifi in all its community and leisure centres.</b>	Partially	The Oxford “free” Wi-Fi service from BT has been renewed for one year, through to March 23. The service is designed only for a few customers at a time in any one location. There will be cost implications to continue after this that we are currently working through; we will then pull together a business case.
<b>2) That the Council ensures that potential exclusionary impacts of moving towards cashless provision on relevant vulnerable residents are mitigated on a long term basis.</b>	Yes	
<b>3) That the Council undertakes additional engagement with faith communities to understand their needs and support their contribution towards asset based community development.</b>	Yes	
<b>4) That the Council explicitly references in its policy the need for inclusive leisure provision, particularly women-only classes, crèche provision at leisure centres, and free or subsidised activities.</b>	Yes	
<b>5) That the Council removes bullet point 5 on page 10 of the draft Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Strategy.</b>	Yes	



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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 March 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Oxfordshire Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding report
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing and Homelessness Strategy
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 02 March 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet Oxfordshire Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet portfolio holder for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless for attending the meeting, and Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless Manager, for authoring the report and supporting the meeting.

## **Summary and recommendation**

3. Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless Manager introduced the report. He highlighted that this was an annual report which provided an overview of the allocation of funding to provide services for rough sleepers and single homeless people in Oxford in the financial year 2022/23. The provision of services was aimed at preventing and tackling rough sleeping and addressing single homelessness in the City. The pertinent issues within the report included a recommendation in the report for Cabinet related to the lease of Floyds Row, which was the homelessness engagement and assessment centre. Floyds Row was intended to be used as interim accommodation for homeless people while they were supported to access longer-term accommodation, but had not been used as such during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council was looking to return Floyds Row into interim accommodation imminently, which was addressed in the report. The Council planned to move towards its post-pandemic model of service delivery in relation to Rough Sleeping and Homelessness. The new joint commissioning arrangements with partners for Homelessness services would begin in April 2022, which was a key milestone. Overall, there was not much change from the previous annual report. The main change was that many of the services would now be part of the new countywide Homelessness Service.
4. Aside from the issues raised as recommendations, discussion was held over the overall number of street homeless individuals, and the reasons day services funding was being scaled back. The Committee makes two recommendations which relate i) concern over the modus operandi of Greater Change, and ii) to visibility and transparency over in-kind funding for Shelter at the Old Fire Station.

## **Greater Change**

5. One of the grants made by the Council is a £25k grant to Greater Change. This organisation's model is to provide a crowdfunding platform for homeless individuals to pay for things that will help address their situation. Greater Change does clearly seek to address a number of issues: how to provide support for homeless people in an increasingly cashless society, and empowering individuals by enabling them to choose the support they seek. However, the platform also shares the downsides of crowdfunding, which the Committee is concerned about.
6. Ultimately, outcomes are determined by how successful an individual is in presenting their need, rather than the level of need itself. An attractive person with a well told backstory is more likely to receive help than someone with a more prosaic story to tell but is actually in greater need. There is the possibility, therefore, that the funding raised is inefficient, that it purchases fewer positive outcomes than it would if it were directed based on need. There is a counter-argument to this, that by attracting external funding more positive outcomes are generated even if they are individually less efficient.
7. A similar argument is made over what is funded through Greater Change. This is proposed by the individuals themselves. On the one hand it gives autonomy to

the individual, but at the same time it does mean that things are funded which, were it the Council's decision, would not be funded. This again introduces an inefficiency which must be overcome by attracting sufficient external funding. The Committee considers it important that knowing the return on investment is very important in this case.

8. It may seem that the Committee is being over-zealous in seeking close monitoring of the efficiency of £25k of grant funding. However, there is a more fundamental consideration, which is the dignity of those seeking help. If outcomes are dependent on successfully attracting funding there is likely pressure to share information publicly that they may want to keep private in exchange for support. It may be necessary to share pictures, or relate in public painful histories to garner sympathy and secure greater financial help. For some, doing this may be a rational calculus in return for support, but that belies a desperate lack of alternatives. The Committee has deep reservations over expecting an individual to be pressured to be so open publicly in return for support; the outcomes must be exceptional to be justified, and even then the Committee retains strong reservations. As such, it recommends that this funding be kept under particularly close review.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council continues to monitor closely the outcomes and value for money of its grant to Greater Change***

### **Transparency Over In-kind Funding**

9. The Council is in an arrangement with the charity Crisis whereby it provides rent-free accommodation at the Old Fire Station in return for Crisis providing a number of valuable services to the homeless in the city. The Committee is very supportive of this arrangement. The issue it raises does not concern this directly, but the visibility and transparency of this arrangement. It is the view of the Committee that the work undertaken is very valuable, but because the mechanism by which it is funded is slightly opaque, that the Council does not get the credit and recognition it deserves. The Old Fire Station is a valuable building in the centre of Oxford, which the Council has historically made significant investment in and yet the link between the services provided and the Council is obstructed. For the purposes of visibility, recognition and transparency the Committee recommends that the in-kind benefit provided to Crisis is included in future Allocation of Homelessness Prevention funding.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council recognises the financial value to Crisis of providing the Old Fire Station as part of its future reports on the Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding***

### **Further Consideration**

10. The Committee is likely to consider this topic in a years' time, and will be interested to follow up on the progress made by the county-wide alliance on rough sleeping.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 02/03/2022 concerning the Oxfordshire Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding report**

**Response provided by Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless, Councillor Diko Walcott**

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
<b>1) That the Council recognises the financial value to Crisis of providing the Old Fire Station as part of its future reports on the Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding</b>	Yes	In future reports we will include details of the subsidy provided to Crisis and Arts and the Old Firestation in respect of the provision of the Old Fire Station building.
<b>2) That the Council continues to monitor closely the outcomes and value for money of its grant to Greater Change</b>	Yes	Monitoring will be undertaken of the grant provided to Greater Change,

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 March 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy report
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020 - 2024
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 02 March 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet portfolio holder for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless, for attending the meeting, and Becky Walker for authoring the report and supporting the meeting.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Becky Walker, Home Improvement Agency Team Manager introduced the report and outlined the proposed changes to the Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy set out in the Cabinet report. The Committee's areas of discussion traversed relocation grants, issues amongst housing associations, and ways to improve communications as to the availability of this support.
4. Just one recommendation is made on the report, seeking to improve support to disabled tenants in private rented accommodation.

## Support for Disabled Tenants in Private Rented Accommodation

5. Whilst a range of support is available by the Council for those in need of adaptations to properties whilst living in the private rented sector, a barrier to providing this support is the need to have permission from the landlord for any works undertaken. Given the high proportion of residents who live in the private rented sector in the city, unwillingness of landlords to adapt properties causes more people to be in need of adaptations and unable to access them in Oxford than elsewhere.
6. The Committee's discussion in this area focused on the opportunity presented by the Council's Selective Licensing proposals. The Committee understands that, if implemented, the Selective Licensing framework will not give the Council the power to compel landlords to accept adaptations to their property. However, even though compulsion may not be available, it is the Committee's view that Selective Licensing will provide opportunity for the Council to identify, advise and persuade landlords. The Council, as part of this adaptation service, provides a guarantee to landlords that it will return the property to the way it was at the end of the tenancy. This is a very reasonable offer, and the Committee's view is that there will be opportunity to share it and other relevant information when officers are making licensing inspections. To work effectively, this would require training. Similarly, as part of the communication between the Council and private sector landlords over Selective Licensing, information outlining best practice and the Council's offer on disabled adaptations should be made available.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council assuming the Selective Licensing application is approved, develops guidance for landlords on best practice around disabled adaptations for tenants in the private rented sector, and ensures officers making inspections are trained and encouraged to identify and provide advice about disabled adaptations when relevant***

## Further Consideration

7. The Committee does not anticipate revisiting this topic until the Policy is next refreshed.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 02/03/2022 concerning the Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy**

**Response provided by Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless, Councillor Diko Walcott**

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>1) That the Council, assuming the Selective Licensing application is approved, develops guidance for landlords on best practice around disabled adaptations for tenants in the private rented sector, and ensures officers making inspections are trained and encouraged to identify and provide advice about disabled adaptations when relevant</b>	Yes	The Home Improvement Agency webpages have been updated to include guidance for landlords on adaptations in the private rented sector and training for officers inspecting properties in the private rented sector will be developed and delivered in 2022/23

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 March 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Annual Update of the Council Business Plan

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Annual Update of the Council Business Plan report
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 07 March 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet Annual Update of the Council Business Plan report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Susan Brown, Cabinet portfolio holder for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships for presenting the report and answering questions, and Caroline Green, Chief Executive, for supporting the meeting.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report, which looked ahead to year three of the four-year Council Strategy. She said that a key aim in the development of this work had been to be realistic with objectives and ensure a narrow focus in order to achieve the Council's aims – which she felt the document did well.
4. The Chief Executive highlighted that the Council delivered against the majority of its plans last year. She said that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were being reviewed and a separate report was due to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee's Finance and Performance Panel in the near future.
5. The Committee addressed the document at length, raising a broad variety of issues. These included linkages with other plans, growth, the tensions and balances between the Council's priorities, housing availability and rent levels, and transport inclusivity in addition to the topics made as recommendations.
6. In total, the Committee makes eight recommendations which relate i) protecting access to leisure, ii) traffic and transport, iii) civic engagement, iv) tree policy and v) the Council's overall approach. It should be noted that the same challenge of grouping ideas relevantly has been faced in this report in the same way as where to locate undertakings of relevance to multiple strategic objectives in the Business Plan. To clarify, this report has not sought to follow the groupings of the Business Plan and has used its own.

## Leisure Access

7. Within its objective to provide more, affordable housing the Business Plan includes a check and balance to delivering more housing. Much needed development will occur, but also 'sites valued by local people for leisure and recreation will be protected.' Inherent within this is the understanding that there is (or at least can be) a tension between development and protecting existing amenities. The key challenge is where to draw the line in terms of policy.
8. Scrutiny's recommendation is that the Council commits to protect its parks and play areas from development. Public space is a key form driver of equality and access; when it is lost it is those without the means to access private alternatives who lose out. Dedicated parks and play areas are not the only sites used for leisure and recreation, but they are key social assets. The Committee does not wish to take the position that no land used for leisure can ever be developed, but does consider that this subset is worthwhile taking a policy of non-development on. It is hoped that this position can be reflected in the draft Local Plan and, with partner agreement, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, but also consideration given to the appropriateness of any parks under consideration for development by OCHL.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council commits to protect its parks and play areas from development***

9. Linked to the above is a second point. Whilst 'sites valuable to local people will be protected' it is not clear how local people can register the importance of a particular area. In discussion during the Committee meeting it was suggested that the Council's planning function would be the mechanism by which this outcome would be delivered. This is problematic. Planning decisions are made by weighing multiple factors and deciding whether, overall, permission to develop is beneficial. It is perfectly possible, therefore, for a planning application to be granted to develop land which is of considerable importance to a local community if that importance is outweighed by other considerations. This is not the same as ensuring that 'sites valuable to local people will be protected' which implies a veto for those sites of sufficient importance. The Planning function is not sufficient to deliver the Council's intention to protect sites valuable to local people.'
10. If the Planning function is not a suitable mechanism to deliver this outcome, then for it to have hope of being realised an alternative must be devised to determine the requisite levels of public support to prevent development. Further, it must be publicised so that local residents are aware of it. The Committee recommends that this is undertaken as a matter of urgency.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council determines and publicises the means by which local residents can evidence that a site is valued and worthy, therefore, of protection from development.***

11. The Committee welcomes the work undertaken by the Council over the previous year in applying to DEFRA for bathing water status for two areas of river at Port Meadow and is pleased to see that the application for Wolvercote Mill Stream has gone out to consultation. However, the current Business Plan no longer makes reference to this, indicating that it is no longer a priority. In the view of the Committee the progress made to date is to be welcomed, but the work is not complete. Particularly if the application to DEFRA is rejected, work is needed to inform swimmers of the current water quality, safety precautions and facilities. Likewise, if it is granted the bathing water status campaign generated significant public interest, and those members of the public would want to know whether the Council intends to do anything further on this issue. The Committee recommends, therefore, that the Council should include the actions it intends to take in relation to river bathing in the event that the DEFRA applications are accepted or rejected.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council updates its Business Plan to provide information on what it will do concerning river bathing in the event that the river bathing status applications currently under consideration by DEFRA are rejected or accepted.***

## **Traffic and Transport**

12. One of the outcomes to deliver an inclusive economy is that 'the movement of people and goods into and within the city will have improved, resulting in less traffic congestion, better air quality and faster journey times.' Tragically, Oxford has suffered two cycling fatalities in the last month alone, both relating to HGVs. It is the Committee's hope that better movement of goods will also include safer roads, and that the Council should include a reduction in traffic accidents as part of the outcome it would like to see. Given the strong link between HGVs and fatal cycling accidents the Committee would like to see the Council undertake to use

what powers it has to reduce access by HGVs to the city centre, the busiest cycling area, either by time or to those with the best safety equipment and visibility aids.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council includes within the Business Plan a commitment to reducing road traffic accidents, including an action to place restrictions on HGV access to the city centre***

13. Another element to the aim of improving the movement of people and goods within the city is important. It is that the actions taken by the Council will seek to align the steps it takes with its inclusive economy principles. A list of potential projects is provided, but the Zero Emissions Zone is not one of them. The Committee does not read anything into this apart from recognising that many actions could plausibly be listed under multiple strategic priorities. However, at the same time, it is keen to draw attention to the need to ensure that all traffic-reducing measures are subject to alignment with the Council's inclusive economy principles, including the Zero Emissions Zone.
14. Having clarity over the import of what the word 'inclusive' means is also important. Scrutiny hopes that it is understood broadly – that all members of society locally benefit from local economic output, rather than a narrow interpretation that there must be equal access and benefit for those individuals with particular protected characteristics. The reason why this is important is that there exists a cohort of people, small business owners and sole traders who are not necessarily in poverty, but who do operate with little financial cushioning, and who rely for their livelihoods on being able to travel extensively throughout the city centre. Standard rules can have different impacts on groups depending on their circumstances, and the burden of the Zero Emissions Zone proposals will be experienced disproportionately harshly as their livelihoods could be undermined by new policies. Scrutiny is keen that this cohort, who are particularly at risk are given particular consideration when the Oxford Transport Strategy is developed and the Zero Emissions Zone is implemented.

***Recommendation 5: That in the development of the Oxford Transport Strategy the Council is particularly mindful of the impacts on small businesses and sole traders, whose businesses depend on travelling extensively throughout the city centre, of proposals which limit vehicular access.***

## **Civic Engagement**

15. At present one of the outcomes anticipated from the delivery of the Business Plan is 'Citizens will increase their active engagement in civic and political life'. However, no specific actions have been put forward to promote this. A recent government paper<sup>1</sup> exploring political engagement highlights that the key groups politically disengaged at a national level are young people, ethnic minorities, social grade and women. Whilst the Committee would want to see improvements in all these areas, its priority is younger people. In 2018 Oxford was identified as

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<sup>1</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7501/CBP-7501.pdf>

having the second youngest average age of any city in the country.<sup>2</sup> The level of engagement by younger people at Committees and Council does not fully reflect this, and although the City Council may have an unusually high number of working-age councillors, there is a relative paucity at the lower end. In a notably young city it is an interesting that the Council has an older-people's champion, but not an equivalent young-people's champion.

16. Youth Councils are run by young people in order to give a voice to young people in the decision-making process. At present, there are 620 across the UK within the different tiers of local government, from parishes to tier-one authorities. The Committee's view is that given its relative youth, the voice of the city's young people is currently underrepresented and would like to see this corrected. To do so would have budget implications at a time when there is precious little unallocated money, so Scrutiny's recommendation is that the Council undertakes as an action to investigate the practicalities of establishing a youth council, so an informed proposal of what it would take can be balanced against other priorities in next years' budget setting process.

**Recommendation 6: That the Council adds a commitment in the Business Plan to investigate the practicalities of establishing a youth council in Oxford**

### **Tree Policy**

17. One of the actions to make the city 'greener, with more trees and other plants, and increased biodiversity' is the implementation of the Council's Urban Forest Strategy. Scrutiny has, via the Companies Scrutiny Panel, looked at tree management this year already due to concerns that resident issues with trees are a common cause of complaint to members. No recommendations were made at the time, but that same concern persists.
18. The point is taken that the Urban Forest Strategy is not primarily about the Council planting trees directly, but supporting and encouraging all those with the opportunity to become involved in tree planting to do so. Nevertheless, it will involve more trees by the Council being planted for which the Council will have responsibility. If, at present, tree issues are over-represented as a source of complaints to councillors, this is only likely to be exacerbated as the number of trees increases. The Committee suggests that it is important, therefore, that the Council prepares for an increase in demand ahead of time to ensure there is sufficient capacity to manage expected increases. As such, it recommends that the Council undertakes to review its Tree Policy to consider this issue as an action within the Business Plan.

**Recommendation 7: That the Council undertakes to review its Tree Policy as part of its Business Plan**

### **Overall Approach**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43316697#:~:text=The%20UK%20city%20with%20the,sixth%20youngest%20city%2C%20is%2036.5>

19. A strong element of the Business Plan is the recognition that its ambitions run beyond what can be achieved unilaterally, and that the Council therefore intends to partner and influence others to support the delivery of its objectives. With its universities and major hospitals, Oxford's anchor institutions have an unusually concentrated influence over issues directly related to the Council's strategy, such as rent and pay levels, access to leisure and biodiversity. Looking with a positive view, this means that any progress made on these issues with anchor institutions will have a disproportionately big impact. The Committee wishes to urge the Council to keep investing time and effort in engaging time and effort to bring the city's anchor institutions in to helping meet the city's needs over the coming year.

**Recommendation 8: That the Council continues to engage with local anchor institutions over how they can meaningfully address local needs, particularly regarding rent levels, access to leisure space, minimum wages and tree-planting**

### Further Consideration

20. In addition to considering the next update of the Business Plan in a years' time, Scrutiny will of course be interested to follow the delivery of particular outputs as part of its work plan for next civic year. In addition, it is expected that the Finance and Performance Panel and Housing Panel will keep watching briefs over performance against relevant KPIs.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 07/03/2022 concerning the Annual Update of the Council Business Plan**

**Response provided by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships, Councillor Susan Brown**

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<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
<b>1) That the Council commits to protect its parks and play areas from development.</b>	Yes	This is covered in the Council's Local Plan and planning policy. The Business Plan contains a set of actions based on existing policies.
<b>2) That the Council determines and publicises the means by which local residents can evidence that a site is valued and worthy, therefore, of protection from development.</b>	Yes	The planning process already provides the means by which residents can input to decisions on site designations.
<b>3) That the Council updates its Business Plan to provide information on what it will do concerning river bathing in the event that the river bathing status applications currently under consideration by DEFRA are rejected or accepted.</b>	Yes	Action has been captured in the Business Plan 2022-23.
<b>4) That the Council includes within the Business Plan a commitment to reducing road traffic accidents, and relatedly, places restrictions on HGV access to the city centre</b>	No	Oxford City Council has no powers in relation to restrictions on HGV access to the city centre. The work with Oxfordshire County Council on the Connecting Oxford is about reducing traffic volumes and making our roads safer. Both Councils are also working with Oxford University and others to look at the feasibility of consolidating last mile delivery in the city.
<b>5) That in the development of the Oxford Transport Strategy the Council is particularly mindful of the impacts on small businesses and sole traders, whose businesses depend on travelling extensively</b>	In part	Oxfordshire County Council is the Highways Authority and is responsible for the Oxford Transport Strategy. Nevertheless, the City Council is working in partnership with the County Council on the development of the

<p><b>throughout the city centre, of proposals which limit vehicular access.</b></p>		<p>Strategy and implementation of a number of schemes including the Zero Emission Zone and traffic filters. We are mindful of the need to consider carefully the impact of these measures on particular businesses against the wider benefits delivered and we will continue to use our influence with the County Council to seek to get this balance right.</p>
<p><b>6) That the Council adds a commitment in the Business Plan to investigate the practicalities of establishing a youth council in Oxford</b></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The Council already hosts the Children &amp; Young People's Partnership which is currently chaired by the Head Teacher of the Oxford Academy. This partnership is used as an important sounding board for policymaking and enables the council to share insights with a range of partners for our annual children and young person's needs assessment.</p> <p>In addition, the Council's Youth Ambition team supports local youth partnerships around Oxford. Youth Voice is central to our Youth Ambition programme where we listen to and provide opportunities and support to build the confidence of a large number of children and young people so their voices can be properly heard. For example these groups recently discussed how they felt about equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) which has directly fed into the Council's new EDI strategy.</p> <p>It is worth noting that many of the Youth Councils around the country are dominated by children from relatively privileged backgrounds. By comparison, Youth Ambition specifically targets children in Oxford from less privileged backgrounds.</p> <p>Therefore, we believe the Council is already more engaged and networked with a large representative body of children and young people across the city, than many of our peer</p>

		authorities.
<b>7) That the Council undertakes to review its Tree Policy as part of its Business Plan</b>	No	As is noted, the Council has only this year published its Urban Forest Strategy and will focusing on its implementation over the 2022/23 year - in particular the delivery of additional street trees in Oxford, and encouragement of others to plant trees, to mark the Platinum Jubilee 'Queen's Canopy' celebrations. ODS has replanting and maintenance schedules for trees in place and there is also an existing Tree Management Policy that was updated in 2016 under the oversight of the Council's and ODS' tree specialists. Therefore this is not an urgent matter for the Business Plan but will be considered for potential inclusion in the following year.
<b>8) That the Council continues to engage with local anchor institutions over how they can meaningfully address local needs, particularly regarding rent levels, access to leisure space, minimum wages and tree-planting</b>	Yes	Engagement on a range of matters is taking place through the Oxford Strategic Partnership and a number of other regular partnership and bilateral meetings with anchor institutions and this will continue.

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**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 16 March 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Recovery and Renewal Framework

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Recovery and Renewal Framework report
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Liz Wade, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 07 March 2022, the Scrutiny Committee considered the Cabinet Recovery and Renewal Framework report.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Susan Brown, Cabinet portfolio holder for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships for presenting the report and answering questions, and Caroline Green, Chief Executive, for supporting the meeting.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report. She highlighted that the Framework was very high level and was developed as a result of the joint working with other Oxfordshire councils during the pandemic. The purpose of the document was to better align the strategies being brought forward across Oxfordshire so that the councils could continue to work well together.
4. Caroline Green, Chief Executive added that the Framework was also proposed for adoption by other partner organisations, including OxLEP and health bodies. She said that the Framework was reflective of the close working relationships built through the pandemic, which brought multiple agencies together to focus on the response. The Chief Executive added that the Council wanted to build on the traction, which the Framework would facilitate and that consideration would be given to how the partnership reports back on the Framework.
5. Scrutiny questioning included discussion on topics such as reactions to child poverty, the pre-existence of health inequalities, and issues around where this work fits in relation to upcoming governance changes within the NHS.
6. Despite significant discussion on this topic, the Committee recognises that the document is a partnership document, and Scrutiny's views may well be closer to the Council's representatives on this partnership than those of other partner members. As such, it is understood that recommendations need to be made within the sphere of the possible, meaning those made are relatively straightforward and limited to three in number. These recommendations relate to i) ongoing monitoring of the impact of the Framework on the Council and partners, and ii) a textual amendment impacting the understanding of what the Framework is and is not.

## Ongoing Monitoring

7. At present, the Recovery and Renewal Framework is light on how it intends to monitor whether it is working. There is a balance to be found, with monitoring sufficiently rigorous to maintain focus by partner organisations and maintain delivery momentum. On the other hand, it is important that monitoring is not allowed to become an industry of its own and get in the way of the intended outcomes of participating in the Framework. The Committee's suggestion is that a report should be produced after a year, with input from all relevant partners, detailing what has happened as a result of the establishment and participation in the Framework. This level of monitoring is far from intensive, which is commensurate with a venture establishing itself and its identity. However, it will nevertheless give a sense of whether it is making any difference, and knowledge that that question will be asked will help to keep the Framework from becoming crowded out by other priorities. The Committee's view is that this report is most suited to being considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board as a forum which

brings together partner relevant partners, but that it would also be something individual Scrutiny Committees may be interested to consider also.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council requests that a report detailing what has happened as a result of the establishment of the Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework is produced in a year's time to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and also made available for Scrutiny Committee consideration.**

8. On top of this report, the Committee is keen that the Council is able to show, after a year, that the Framework is delivering not only for Oxfordshire generally, but Oxford City specifically. To this end, it requests that a similar document is produced focusing solely on the impacts for Oxford City and its residents.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council provides an update to coincide with the report requested in the recommendation above, reviewing what impact the Framework has had in facilitating partnership working to achieve the council's ambitions to consolidate recovery, address health inequalities and support renewal.**

#### **Amendment**

9. On page 2 of the document there are a number of statements helping to define the Framework and its purpose. One of these is that the Framework is not 'a replacement for existing county-wide plans and strategies.' There is a slight inference in this that only what goes on at County level forms part of the Framework's aims. This is not the case. Indeed, the Council has a long list of policies and strategies it intends to develop which are city-focused but which clearly contribute towards the overarching aims of the Framework. The Committee's view is that the current wording is too narrow and should be amended.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council suggests to partners that the Framework be amended to be clear that in addition to not replacing county-wide strategies, it does not over ride city/district level policies and strategies**

#### **Further Consideration**

10. The Committee's wish to consider this further forms part of its recommendations.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 07/03/2022 concerning the Recovery and Renewal Framework**

**Response provided by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery, and Partnerships, Councillor Susan Brown**

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>1) That the Council requests that a report detailing what has happened as a result of the establishment of the Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework is produced in a year's time to be considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and also made available for Scrutiny Committee consideration.</b>	Y	
<b>2) That the Council provides an update to coincide with the report requested in the recommendation above, reviewing what impact the Framework has had in facilitating partnership working to achieve the council's ambitions to consolidate recovery, address health inequalities and support renewal.</b>	Y	
<b>3) That the Council suggests to partners that the Framework be amended to be clear that in addition to not replacing county wide strategies, it does not over ride city/district level policies and strategies</b>	Y	Note that any changes suggested by councils will need to be agreed by all the chief executives. If it is not possible to secure agreement to the change, we will ensure it is clear that this is the City Council's view and basis for endorsement.