

Agenda

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Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday 17 October 2011**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

For any further information please contact:

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Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chair	Councillor Jim Campbell	St. Margaret's;
Vice-Chair	Councillor Dee Sinclair	Quarry and Risinghurst;
	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan	Headington Hill and Northway;
	Councillor Laurence Baxter	Quarry and Risinghurst;
	Councillor Mary Clarkson	Marston;
	Councillor Beverley Hazell	Marston;
	Councillor Graham Jones	St. Clement's;
	Councillor Shah Khan	Cowley;
	Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan	Lye Valley;
	Councillor Gill Sanders	Littlemore;
	Councillor Ruth Wilkinson	Headington;
	Councillor Nuala Young	St. Clement's;

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AGENDA

Pages

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have on items contained in this agenda.

3 **WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

1 - 10

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

Background Information
Scrutiny Committees work each year within a programme agreed by Councillors. This item will appear on all future agendas to allow members to see progress on the work programme items, and plan agenda for future meetings. Attached is the current work programme that was agreed by Councillors at an informal meeting in July.
Why is it on the agenda?
This item is presented here to allow the Committee to agree lines of enquiry for future meetings; take an overview of progress, and gauge support for, and Councillor interest in, the items agreed.
Who has been invited to comment?
The Principal Scrutiny Officer will present the report and answer questions.
What will happen after the meeting?
The Chair and Vice-Chair will continue to monitor the Committee's work programme and report to future meetings.

4 **PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND INCREASING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY AND DECISION MAKING**

11 - 26

Contact officer: Sebastian Johnson, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer
01865 252317; [srjohnson@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:sjohnson@oxford.gov.uk); Val Johnson, Policy Team Leader
01865 252209 vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information

The Committee selected Community Engagement as one of its themes for the year. Of particular interest was partnership working and increasing public involvement in decision making.

Why is it on the agenda?

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications was asked to provide information in response to the following questions:-

Partnership Working

The committee's overall objective is to understand and critically appraise our engagement with partners, and understand the tangible value to Oxford's residents from this.

- Accepting that partnership working is somewhat in flux because of changing government directives and local/county priorities, what are the current arrangements for partnership working and how are things likely to "settle"? Can you include in this the partnerships that are in operation, who are our representatives (officer and member) and what are the reporting back mechanisms?
- What is the City Council hoping to gain from the partnerships it is involved in - i.e. what are our priorities for engagement and outcomes? Can you include in this how we make judgements about progress towards our priorities, and how strategies for engagement are developed as the partnership progresses?
- How much money do we spend on each of the partnership structures?
- What are the priorities for the Oxford Strategic Partnership for the coming year and how does this group fit with, and influence, our decision making process?

Public input into policy and decision making:

- The assessment of how much influence the public have currently and, assuming this is variable across our different activities, where is our focus for improvement?
- What are the plans to deliver on this objective and within what terms and targets?

Who has been invited to comment?

Sebastian Johnson, Peter McQuitty and Val Johnson will attend the meeting and present the report to the Committee.

Councillor Bob Price (Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships) will also attend the meeting.

What will happen after the meeting?
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Any recommendations will be passed to the appropriate Board Member or City Executive Board for consideration.

5 PANEL REPORT - CLEANER GREENER OXFORD

27 - 38

Contact Officer: Alec Dubberley (Democratic Service Officer) Tel 01865 252402, adubberley@oxford.gov.uk.

Background Information

The Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee established the "Cleaner, Greener" Panel under its last work programme. The focus was the gathering of opinions from a broad section of the community in Blackbird Leys in order to assess the success and sustainability of the "Cleaner Greener" campaign.
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Why is it on the agenda?

This is an update report from the Panel. Members of the Panel and a Democratic Services Officer will present the report and its findings.

As only one of the Committee's current membership is currently involved with this Panel, the Committee is asked to decide whether it wishes to pursue the matter further, and if so, to nominate members to serve on it. If the answer is yes, the attached report presents a number of recommendations for furthering the work of the Panel.

Who has been invited to comment?

Alec Dubberley (Democratic Services Officer) will attend the meeting and present the report to the Committee, assisted by Panel members present.
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Councillor John Tanner (Board Member for Cleaner Greener Oxford) and Councillor Val Smith (Member of the Panel) will also attend the meeting.

What will happen after the meeting?
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Any recommendations will be passed to the appropriate Board Member or City Executive Board for consideration
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6 INTERIM REPORT - YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT

39 - 46

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

Background Information
<p>A Review Group was established during the Council year 2010/2011 to develop a young peoples' engagement project. This review continues into this year. .</p> <p>The project has been developed with the Positive Futures Team and has three over-riding aims:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with and support young people who are disadvantaged; • To provide lasting skills for the young people involved; • To encourage and launch a group of young people to form the first "Positive Futures Youth Forum", and to do all possible to sustain this as a positive engagement, listening and involvement group for the Council and its partners.
Why is it on the agenda?
<p>The item is presented here to give the Committee an update on progress so far.</p>
Who has been invited to comment?
<p>Councillors Sanders, Sinclair and Campbell are members of the review group. They, along with the Principal Scrutiny Officer, will introduce the item and give an overview of their progress and thinking to date.</p>
What will happen after the meeting?
<p>Any recommendations made will be considered by group members as part of their work.</p>

7 MINUTES

47 - 56

Minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2011 attached

8 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following dates have been agreed by Council:

12th December 2011
7th February 2012
2nd April 2012

Please note that the Committee will meet at 6pm.

DECLARING INTERESTS

What is a personal interest?

You have a personal interest in a matter if that matter affects the well-being or financial position of you, your relatives or people with whom you have a close personal association more than it would affect the majority of other people in the ward(s) to which the matter relates.

A personal interest can affect you, your relatives or people with whom you have a close personal association positively or negatively. If you or they would stand to lose by the decision, you should also declare it.

You also have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to any interests, which you must register.

What do I need to do if I have a personal interest?

You must declare it when you get to the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you. You may still speak and vote unless it is a prejudicial interest.

If a matter affects a body to which you have been appointed by the authority, or a body exercising functions of a public nature, you only need declare the interest if you are going to speak on the matter.

What is a prejudicial interest?

You have a prejudicial interest in a matter if;

- a) a member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interest; and
- b) the matter affects your financial interests or relates to a licensing or regulatory matter; and
- c) the interest does not fall within one of the exempt categories at paragraph 10(2)(c) of the Code of Conduct.

What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?

If you have a prejudicial interest you must withdraw from the meeting. However, under paragraph 12(2) of the Code of Conduct, if members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about that matter, you may also make representations as if you were a member of the public. However, you must withdraw from the meeting once you have made your representations and before any debate starts.

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Work programme debate outcomes

General Principles

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

At least half of the available committee meetings will be organised around “select committee principles” with lead members working with officers to determine lines of inquiry and attendees. Co-option around themes will be considered to enhance the expertise and views of the committee

A Housing Standing Panel has been set to bring together all housing issues and therefore mirror the organisation of the Council. A tenant representative has been invited to be part of this Panel

The programme remains flexible and open to reorganisation by committee. A complete review will be undertaken by the Chair and Vice-Chair in January 2012

The information that follows shows:

- The themed draft programme and focus
- Current nominations
- Projected agenda schedules
- On going Panels
- Housing Panel

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Draft Work Programme 11/12

Theme	Area(s) for focus	Likely Status of Inquiry	Nominated/interested councillors
Housing	1. All strategic and landlord issues previously contained within the remit of Communities and Partnership and Value and Performance Scrutiny Committees. A separate programme is attached for	<p>Standing Panel with all housing issues considered on this agenda with the exception of HRA financing changes which will be considered by the Finance and Performance Panel within the Treasury Management Strategy</p> <p>Representative from the Tenant Involvement and Monitoring Panel. Named deputy to take the seat when holder is absent</p>	<p>No councillor substitutions allowed</p> <p>Cllrs. Campbell, Sanders, McCready and Humberstone</p> <p>Barrie Finch - co-opted from the Tenant Involvement and Monitoring Panel</p> <p>Grace Oshinbolu – named deputy from the Tenant Involvement and Monitoring Panel</p>
Public Health	Focus under consideration. The guidance is that emphasis should be on activities where the Council is involved or can have some influence through partnership working. A suggestion: To consider the services provided through Health Centres in the City. How are these targeted and was is	<p>Single issues committee meeting</p> <p>Target meeting date: 12th. December</p>	<p>Cllrs. Jones and Sinclair</p> <p>The committee is looking for 1 additional member</p>

4

	the take-up		
Community Engagement	<p>To invite the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to brief the committee and answer questions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working - what the City Council is hoping to see and achieve through the reforming partnership structure How the service development to “Increase public input into policy and decision making” is to be delivered and within what objectives and measurements <p>As a separate item to invite County officers and the Cabinet member to outline the changes in Youth Service provision and what this practically means for young people in the City</p>	<p>Committee briefing Target meeting date: 17th. October</p> <p>Committee inquiry Target meeting date: To be decided</p>	<p>Councillor Wilkinson</p> <p>The committee is looking for at least 1 additional member to express an interest in this area</p>
Regeneration	<p>Suggestion: Worklessness amongst young people in deprived communities: (Exact format and attendees to be finalised by nominated members)</p>	<p>Select committee inquiry Target meeting date: February 2012</p>	<p>Councillor nominations required</p>
Hosing Stock de-designation	<p>Review of first year of the agreed de-designation programme as proposed by the scrutiny review panel in 2010</p>	<p>Panel Review</p>	<p>All previous review group members still serving Cllrs. Sinclair and Smith (co-opted) plus Anita Fisher IMP</p>

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee Agenda Schedules

Dates	Slots and Items
6 th . June	1. Housing Strategy – issues and next steps 2. Community Engagement – Start up of Area Forums 3. End of year performance figures – Community Housing 4. Spending cuts and the effects on the voluntary sector in Oxford Introduction to David Edwards Meeting full
17 th . October	1. Cleaner Greener Panel Report 2. Interim report – Young Peoples Engagement 3. Partnership working and increasing the public involvement in policy and decision making Meeting full
12 th . Dec	1. Public Health – Single Issue meeting Meeting full
7 th . February	1. Regeneration – Youth unemployment. Single issue meeting Meeting full
2 nd . April	1. Area Forum development – Panel report 2. Stock de-designation 1 st . year review 3. Vacant slot 4. Vacant slot

Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Ongoing panels

Topic	Comment
Young Peoples Engagement Councillors Campbell, Sanders and Sinclair	Interim report in October full report in February
Cleaner greener – Blackbird Leys Councillors Campbell, Humberstone and Smith (local councillor)	Final report in October
Community Engagement – Area Forums Councillors Wilkinson and Sanders	Progress Report in February

Housing Panel

Topics and outline lines of inquiry agreed for 2011/2012

Topic	Lines of Inquiry
<p>Development of the Housing Strategy</p> <p>Lead member:</p> <p>Councillor Campbell</p>	<p>To see a draft of the new strategy as early as possible and in addition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the results against the targets for the expired strategy • Understand the gaps and new issues to be addressed • How these gaps are turned into priorities for action and targets within the proposed strategy • Understand what success depends on in realistic terms and where and how we can have the greatest influence <p>Target timing: October and Dec/January</p>
<p>Effects of recent government changes in housing and benefits and their effects in Oxford (positive and negative). Our policy response to this linked with the use of allocated contingencies</p> <p>Lead Member:</p> <p>Councillor Sanders</p>	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes we are seeing in Oxford, as presented through our services • A judgement on how this likely to develop based on service demands and changes on the way • How we are responding in terms of spending and service delivery • How much of the budgeted contingencies have been used or are likely to be used <p>Target timing: October and February</p>
<p>Estate Management – Service Standards</p> <p>Lead member:</p> <p>Councillor Humberstone</p>	<p>To see and have an opportunity to comment on the scoping of the 6 month review of the new Landlord Service Structure</p> <p>To see outcomes from the review and have the opportunity to engage with and comment the issues arising</p> <p>Target timing: October and</p>

	December/January
<p>Investment in the housing stock beyond decent homes</p> <p>Housing repair – cost and quality</p> <p>Lead member:</p> <p>Councillor McCreedy</p>	<p>To be agreed</p> <p>Timing: asap</p>
<p>Tenant Involvement</p> <p>Lead member:</p> <p>Barrie Finch</p>	<p>To consider proposals/strategies to improve tenant involvement and how these compare to best practice</p> <p>In 6 months time (February/March) to have details of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of tenants actively involved • The activities tenants are involved in • The overall structure provided by the Council for tenant engagement • How these structure provide for real opportunities for tenants to influence and effect change. Examples of this happening <p>Target timing: October, February/March</p>

Potential Meeting Schedule

Meeting Date	Items	Lead Panel members
28th October 2.00pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy – issues, understanding and options 2. Effects of housing and benefits changes in the City. Response and costs 3. Scoping of the review of estate management changes 4. Tenant involvement best practice and structures 	
14 th . November 5.30pm	Just in case date	
1 st . December 5.30pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Strategy – formal consultation response 2. Results of the review of estate management changes 3. Housing repairs vfm 4. Housing reform landlord/tenant issues 	
? January	Just in case date	
? February	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effects of housing and benefits changes in the City. Response and costs 2. Housing repairs vfm 3. Housing reform landlord/tenant issues 4. Tenant involvement 	
? March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing repairs vfm Housing reform landlord/tenant issues 	

To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17th October 2011

Item No:

Report of: Head of Policy, Culture and Communications

Title of Report: Policy, Partnerships and Consultation

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report on:

- current arrangements for the Council's partnership work in the city and county;
- review of priorities for the Oxford Strategic Partnership
- public input into policy and decision making

Report approved by:

Finance: Martin Westmorland

Legal: Helen Lynch

Recommendation(s):

That this report is noted and that members of the Scrutiny Committee communicate their views on partnership working, priorities and public input into policy and decision making so that this can help inform the current review of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, the vision for the city and priorities.

Introduction

1. This report outlines the work of the Policy Team in policy, partnership and consultation work at the City Council.
2. Alongside this report members of the Policy Team together with the Leader of the Council will present and answer questions on current arrangements for the Council's partnership work in the city and county; review of priorities for the Oxford Strategic Partnership; and public input into policy and decision making

Policy team

3. The Policy Team is part of Policy, Culture and Communications managed by Peter McQuitty as Head of Service. The key functions of the team include:
 - Co-ordinating the production of the Corporate Plan;
 - Supporting policy review and the review of the Policy Framework;
 - Supporting policy development at a strategic partnership level;
 - Providing advice, support and co-ordination in relation to policy development across the Council;
 - Ensuring that there is alignment between the Council's corporate priorities and the supporting policy framework;
 - Co-ordinating and managing the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership;
 - Co-ordinating and managing partnership working with other public sector bodies across Oxfordshire;
 - Co-ordinating the City Council's Safeguarding policy, procedures and implementation;
 - Leading on Fair Trade City status and membership of the City's Fair Trade Coalition;
 - Leading on special partnership and corporate projects as they emerge;
 - Providing a social research function to deliver high quality quantitative data to support policy development, service delivery, and project implementation;
 - Providing a consultation function to deliver high quality qualitative data to support policy development, service delivery, and project implementation;
 - Managing the Citizens' Panel, a core group of 1,000 residents.
4. The Policy Team supports the leadership role of members and officer of the Council through keeping them informed and aware of decisions being made that affect the city.
5. The team comprises of 2.7 full time equivalent posts as detailed below:

Val Johnson, Team Leader and Partnership Development Officer – 3 days per week

- Manages the team
- Leads on county and thematic partnership work and the City County Bilateral (Other 2 days per week paid by all Districts for developing cross district working and supporting the Oxfordshire County and Districts Chief Executive and Leaders meetings)

Sebastian Johnson, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer – Full time

- Manages and co-ordinates the work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership and its sub groups
- Writes and delivers policy briefings and the policy update in Council Matters

Mark Fransham, Social Research Officer – 2.5 days per week

- Leads all statistical and data analysis and is the link with the Oxfordshire Data Observatory
- Prepares chart of the month and the Oxford Profile

Margaret Melling, Consultation Officer (maternity cover) – 3 days per week

- Leads on the Council's main consultation work including managing Talkback and the Talkback Panel
- Co-ordinates and oversees other consultations through the Consultation Officers Group

Data analysis and research

6. The role of data analysis and research is key in ensuring that the needs of the city are well evidenced and is used to inform the city council's priorities and plans and influence other partnership policy and plans, such as the Oxfordshire Childrens Plan, public health policy and economic development.
7. Data analysis and research also keeps members and officers aware of key trends and issues facing the city. These are provided through the Oxford Profile, the statistics section on the website and the "Chart of the Month".
8. Data and research is also provided to other partners in the public, voluntary and private sectors. This information has been used to support the development of bids with other agencies, for example Big Lottery Fund, HCA funding and Heritage Lottery Fund.

Partnership working – Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP)

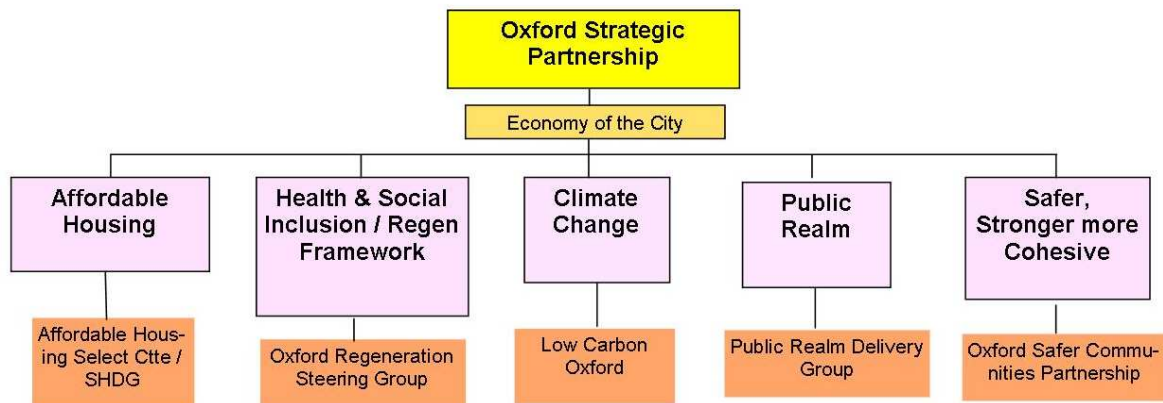
9. The Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) was formed in 2003 following the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) as part of the Local Government Act in 2000. LSPs bring together, at a local level, the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors working to a shared vision and set of priorities for an area (in this case Oxford city).
10. The OSP published its Sustainable Community Strategy in 2008 – "Oxford: A World-Class City for Everyone". The strategy is summarised as:

Our over-riding vision is that Oxford will be a world class city for everyone.

There will be a cross cutting theme of the economy in the city and five flagship issues where the OSP feels it can add value:

- *Affordable Housing*
- *Health and Social Inclusion*
- *Climate Change*
- *Quality of the Public Realm for Residents and Visitors*
- *Safer, Stronger, more Cohesive City*

11. The following image illustrates the structure of the OSP and its sub groups:



12. Key successes since 2008 include:

- Development and adoption of the Regeneration Framework and embedding the “Breaking the cycle of deprivation” work across the city and county local strategic partnerships
- Leading work in the city to explore development of a partnership action plan for improvement in educational attainment
- Delivery of the OSP Affordable Housing Select Committee’s report and recommendations which resulted in:
 - Improved relations with developers and the introduction of a developer forum
 - The work and findings of the Select Committee through the OSP cited as an exemplar by IDeA
 - Process and findings viewed positively by the HCA and thought to have had an impact on Oxford/Oxfordshire choice as a single conversation pilot area and the Barton regeneration funding.
- Launch of the Low Carbon Oxford initiative with organisations responsible for over half of the city’s carbon emissions committing to collaboratively reduce emissions by 3% each year and work to develop a more sustainable and green city. Low Carbon Oxford has assisted in securing over £250k funding from central Government to support community low carbon projects
- The forming of the public realm group, a partnership group overseeing the style and management of the public realm in the city. The group has overseen the development and publication of the popular Oxford Public Art and Architecture Maps.

The future of local strategic partnerships and the OSP

13. In the last 18 months we have seen a number of government policy initiatives and changes that have impacted on partnership working, these include:

- Deleting the Local Area Agreement
- Deleting the National Indicators
- Deleting regional bodies (SEEDA and GOSE)
- Deleting the Audit Commission and the National Framework of Standards
- Introduction of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- Changes to the Health and Well Being Board linked to the NHS reforms

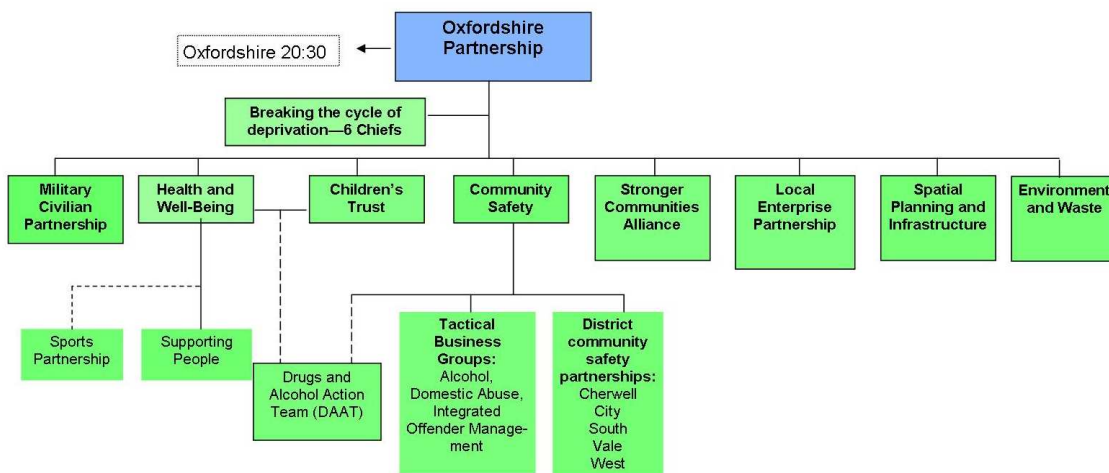
14. Government stated its intention in the Best Value Statutory Guidance to repeal the statutory duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy and the Localism Bill proposes to repeal section 4 of Local Government Act 2000. Until now this duty has been fulfilled through the work of local strategic partnerships (LSPs). Removal of the duty would, in effect, make the continued existence of LSPs a local decision.
15. The Board of the OSP has unanimously agreed that the partnership should continue. The City Council as the co-ordinating body (and provider of staffing resource) has stated its support for the continuation of the partnership. The Cross Party Working Group has stated its support for the continuation of the partnership.
16. Further consultation with existing partners, key employers in the city and other stakeholders is taking place on the future of the partnership, its priorities and membership.

Continuing and emerging new priorities for the OSP

17. The partnership is in the process of reviewing the current Sustainable Community Strategy and developing an updated vision and set of priorities. The continuing and emerging priorities and key issues include the following areas:
 - Economy and links to LEP
 - Educational Attainment
 - Youth Services
 - Older people’s services
 - Wireless Oxford
 - Public realm outside of city centre
 - Regeneration
 - Low Carbon City
 - Safer Oxford
 - Stronger Oxford

Partnership working – Oxfordshire Partnership and thematic partnerships

18. The following image illustrates the current structure of the Oxfordshire Partnership and the countywide thematic partnerships. It should be noted that this structure is under review.



19. The Priorities are set by the Oxfordshire Partnership in the County Sustainable Community Strategy “Oxfordshire 20:30”. The priority themes are:
 - A World Class Economy
 - Healthy and Thriving Communities
 - Environment and Climate Change
 - Reducing Inequalities and breaking the cycle of deprivation
20. Key successes through working with Oxfordshire partnerships include:
 - Development and adoption of the “Breaking the cycle of deprivation” work in both Oxford City and Banbury
 - Influencing the Oxfordshire Children and Young People Plan, to include homelessness and poverty issues
 - Leading work in the city to explore development of a partnership action plan for improvement in educational attainment
 - Improved Safeguarding arrangements for the city
 - Strengthening cross-district work leading to a greater city and district influence on decisions made at a county level
21. At a county level some changes to partnership structures are being proposed. It is likely that the Oxfordshire Partnership will meet only once a year and will maintain communication through newsletters and forum events. These will provide information and stimulate discussion on single topics
22. The Public Service Board, previously responsible for delivery of the County Strategy Oxfordshire 20:30 and the delivery of the Local Area Agreement, has stopped meeting but can be recalled if required.
23. The Oxfordshire 20:30 strategy is being revised and updated and accountability will be through the Oxfordshire Chief Executives Group (County, Districts, Primary Care Trust and Thames Valley Police).
24. The Oxfordshire and Districts Leaders Group meet to discuss issues that affect cross district and county wide issues and priorities, e.g. Military Covenant.
25. Some of the thematic partnerships which operated under the auspices of the Oxfordshire Partnership will remain but without the current lines of accountability. There will be a new duty to have a statutory Health and Wellbeing Board which will incorporate the work of the Children’s Trust.
26. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is the other principle forum for joint work and has been successful in securing an Enterprise Zone in the Science Vale area.
27. The Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership will remain. The role of the Stronger Communities Alliance and the County Community Safety Partnership are still under review.

Member and Officer Involvement and Feedback

28. The following table illustrates member and officer involvement in partnerships

Partnership	Lead Member / Officer	Co-ordinating Officer
Oxford Strategic Partnership	Cllr Bob Price	Sebastian Johnson

	Peter Sloman	
Oxford City Regeneration Steering Group	David Edwards	Val Johnson Graham Stratford
Low Carbon Oxford	Cllr John Tanner	Jenny Davidson Sebastian Johnson
Public Realm Delivery Group	Cllr Bob Price	Sebastian Johnson
Oxford Safer Communities Partnership	Cllr Bob Timms Tim Sadler	Richard Adams
City County Bilateral	Cllr Bob Price Peter Sloman	Val Johnson
Oxfordshire Partnership	Cllr Bob Price Peter Sloman	Val Johnson
Oxfordshire and District Leaders Group	Cllr Bob Price Peter Sloman	Val Johnson
Oxfordshire Chief Executives Group	Peter Sloman	Val Johnson
Military Civilian Partnership	Mike Newman	Val Johnson
Health and Well Being	Cllr Antonia Bance (representation under review)	Val Johnson
Childrens Trust	Cllr Antonia Bance	Val Johnson
Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership	Cllr Bob Timms	Richard Adams
Stronger Communities Alliance	Representation under review	Angel Cristofoli Val Johnson
Local Enterprise Partnership	Cllr Bob Price	Michael Crofton-Briggs
Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	Cllr Bob Price	Mark Jaggard
Environment and Waste Partnership	Cllr John Tanner	Jenny Davidson

29. Officers ensure that relevant information is shared with members and officers. This is done through email briefings before and after the meetings take place to enable relevant officers and members to comment and be well briefed. Partnership newsletters are circulated to all members and key officers for information. Short updates are published in Council Matters.

Links to the corporate priorities

30. There are strong links between partnership priorities and the Council's corporate priorities especially relating to Low Carbon Oxford and the Regeneration Framework.
31. The Affordable Housing Select Committee findings and recommendations informed the action plan for the Strategic Housing Delivery Group and the Public Realm Delivery Group's work is influencing policy in culture and arts.

Securing funding and resource

32. Through our cross district working we have been able to influence the expenditure of Local Area Agreement (LAA) funding to support the Council's priorities and the

work of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. The Partnership has secured over £50,000 from LAA reward funding.

Consultation and public input into policy and decision making

33. We consult on-line via the consultation portal; face to face, individually and in groups; and via our Talkback Citizen's panel.
34. In the past year our consultation with residents has had an impact on policy. Examples of changes as a result of consultation include:
 - Amendments to 33 of the 93 sites in the "Sites and Housing Issues and Options" consultation
 - Establishing a new "Friends of the Museum" group
 - Reports shared with Thames Valley Police that help set priorities
 - Reinstatement of a number of items proposed to be removed from the Council's budget
35. Work to improve consultation practice is currently focussed on:
 - Publicising consultation and how to "have your say"
 - Publicity campaign for Talkback (including profiles and photos of Talkback panellists) currently in development
 - Sharing "you said, we did"
 - Extending access to consultation
 - Working with "Harder to Reach" groups such as MyLifeMyChoice, Oxfordshire Unlimited and Oxford's BME communities.
 - Finding alternative approaches in areas of the city with lower response rates (including, for example, recent focus group sessions with Talkback panellists in Blackbird Leys)
 - Evaluating and sharing findings
 - Continuing to share and develop the City Council Consultation Toolkit
 - Sharing experience and best practice across the Council via the Consultation Officers group
 - Understanding the role of consultation within the wider "spectrum" of engagement

Spectrum of Engagement



How do we improve public engagement and input into partnership work?

36. The OSP Board has committed to producing an annual report and holding an annual stakeholder event.
37. It is recognised that the improved engagement with neighbourhoods is required. To achieve this we would like to extend Talkback to have neighbourhood panels and these would link to and inform the Neighbourhood Forums. This would require additional resources.

Conclusion

38. No one organisation can solve all of the city's problems and challenges so a partnership and collaborative approach is required. Initiatives such as Low Carbon Oxford illustrate that the results of partnership and collaboration are greater than those that can be achieved by working in silos
39. Consultation, and high quality research and needs analysis are vital to inform our partnership and corporate priorities and policy development
40. We will value any thoughts and suggestions that Scrutiny Committee may have with respect to our policy and partnership work. The Committee's views on the future of the Oxford Strategic Partnership and the vision and priorities for the future will be fed back to the OSP as part of the wider discussions and consultation taking place with stakeholders in the city.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 2.2

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Policy and Partnership Working

Presentation and report to Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee 17th October 2011

Cllr Bob Price, Leader

Peter McQuitty, Head of Service

Val Johnson, Policy Team Leader

Sebastian Johnson, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer

Mark Fransham, Social Research Officer

Margaret Melling, Consultation Officer

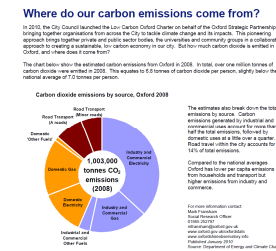


Social Research

Supports strategy development and service delivery through analysis and presentation of quantitative data. One half time post.

- Bespoke analysis for strategy development and influencing partners
- Presentations (e.g. state of the economy for the Oxford Strategic Partnership)
- Respond to enquiries from officers, members, partners and the public
- Dissemination of findings through 'Chart of the Month' and www.oxford.gov.uk/oxfordstats
- Oxford Profile: Key Facts leaflet
- Member of Census Quality Assurance Advisory Group
- Represents us on Oxfordshire Data Observatory

www.oxford.gov.uk



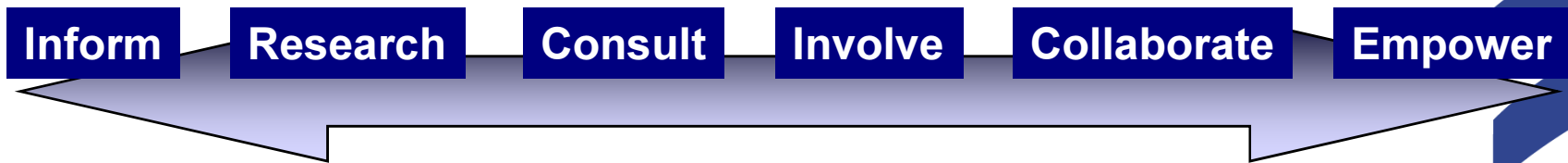
Consultation

In the past year our consultation with residents has led to (for example):

- Amendments to 33 of the 93 sites in the “Sites and Housing Issues and Options” consultation
- Establishing a new “Friends of the Museum” group
- Reports shared with Thames Valley Police that help set priorities
- Reinstatement of a number of items proposed to be removed from the Council’s budget

The work to improve our consultation practice is currently focused on:

- Publicising consultation and how to “have your say”
- Extending access
- Evaluating and sharing best practice



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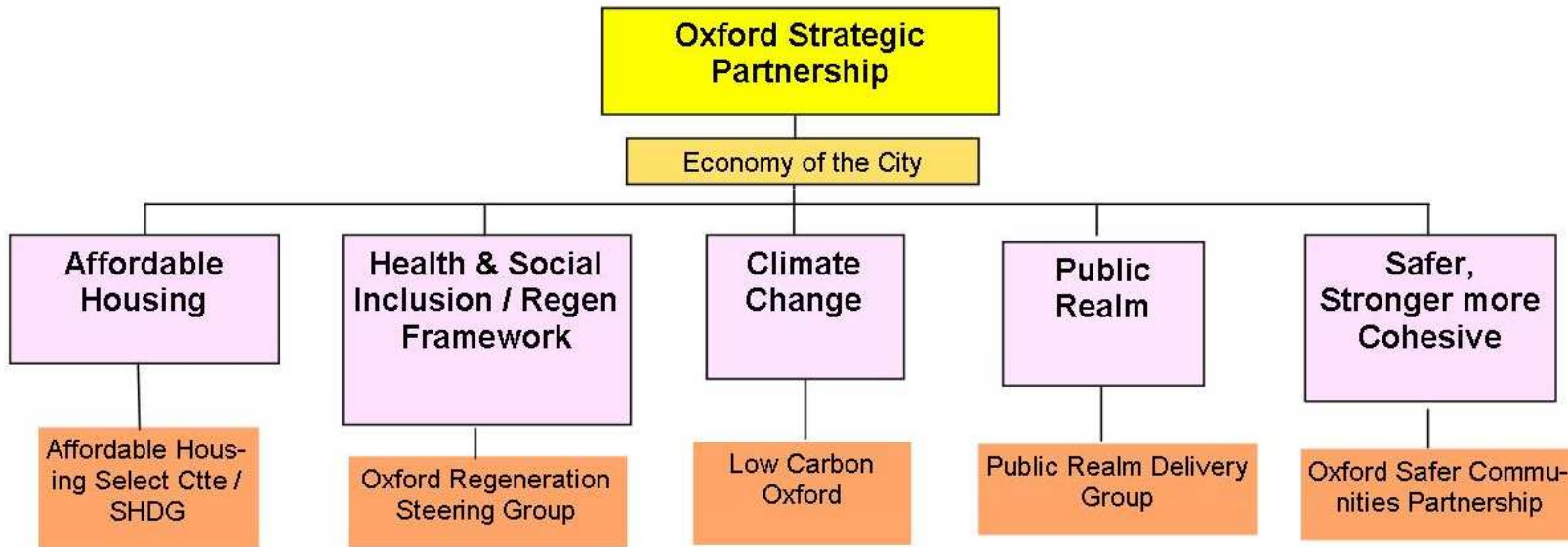


Oxford Strategic Partnership Structure and Sub Groups

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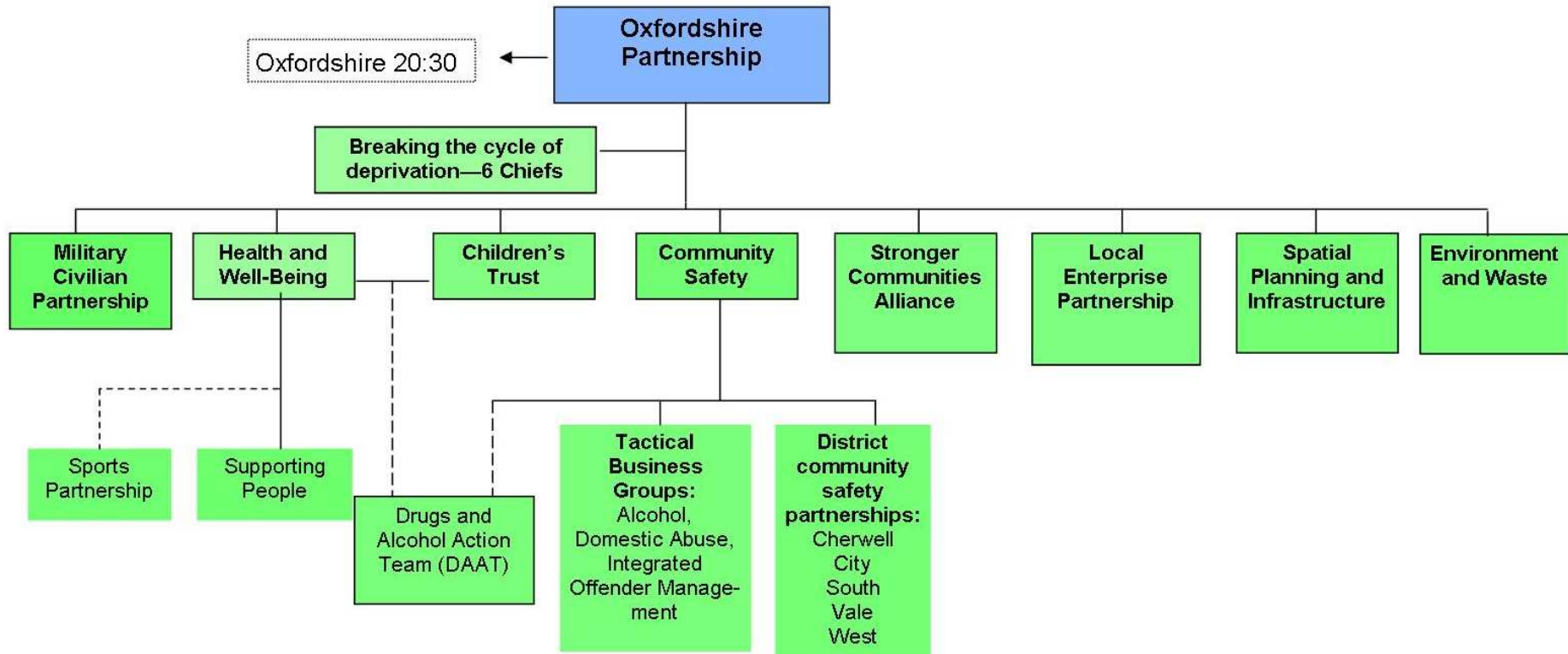


24



Oxfordshire and the thematic Partnerships - Structure

25



Thank You

Any Questions?

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**OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL**



To: Communities and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date: 17 October 2011
Report of: Head of Law and Governance
Title of Report: Cleaner Greener Oxford Scrutiny Panel - Update

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To update the Committee on the work of the Cleaner Greener Oxford Scrutiny Panel

Report Approved by: Scrutiny Committee Chair, Councillor Campbell

Recommendation(s):

Recommendation 1

As only 1 of the committee's members is currently involved in this Panel to decide if it wishes to pursue the issues further and if so nominate members

Assuming a positive response:

Recommendation 2

To ask City Works, Environmental Development and Communities and Neighbourhoods to work with voluntary sector partners (in particular Oxclean) to encourage communities to take part in the Annual Clean up as a way of encouraging and sustaining the community ownership

Recommendation 3

To consider asking Area Forums to take an active part in gauging community opinions on the state of cleanliness of their neighbourhoods This will complement the existing survey work being carried out by the Council in performance measure DS010 which surveys residents' opinions via the talkback panel.

Recommendation 4

For the Panel to pursue the environmental and service issues around flats within the developing HRA Business Plan and report back to either this committee or the Housing Panel

Recommendation 5

To evaluate the measures taken in Druce Way and report back to the committee in the New Year.

Introduction and Background

1. As part of the work programme for the current year the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee decided to continue the Panel established to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of the Cleaner Greener Campaign in Blackbird Leys.
2. The Panel was given the following brief from the Committee “To take opinions from a broad section of the community in Blackbird Leys on the success and sustainability of the Cleaner Greener Campaign in their area.”
3. The following report is written to give a summary of the work carried out since the last update in an attempt to refocus and reinvigorate the Panel’s work. Insufficient evidence has so far been gathered that would enable the Panel to come to a firm conclusion in response to the original scope.

Update and Findings

4. At the Committee’s March meeting an update on work done to date was provided. Since then the following activities have taken place:
 - A survey of residents opinions in The Leys News
 - A meeting with OxClean
 - Local member doorstep surgeries
 - A walkabout on the Blackbird Leys Estate by Panel members
5. Leys News survey

A survey was published in the March edition of the Leys News. Despite the incentive of a chance to win a £30 shopping voucher the survey received only 5 responses. The low response rate makes meaningful statistical analysis of the data impossible although the following two headlines are relevant:

- 3 of the 5 respondents noticed an improvement in the level of abandoned vehicles in the area
- 4 of the 5 respondents noticed an improvement in fly posting in the area.

In the “extra comments” column, 2 respondents talked about the problem of dog fouling, 1 talked about the poor cleanliness of Spindleberry nature reserve, 1 commented on general litter around bus stops and 1 made comments about the importance of prosecuting fly-tippers.

6. OxClean

Officers organised a useful meeting with Vernon Porter, a member of the OxClean Group. He provided some useful insights into the valuable work that OxClean carry out in the city and made the following points:

- A more joined up approach between various statutory and voluntary agencies would achieve better results.
- The community response from Blackbird Leys to the Oxclean annual spring clean was poor
- Windale School in Blackbird Leys was mentioned as an area where rubbish accumulates, particularly when parents are waiting to collect children from school
- Windale Avenue, Gillians Park and the surrounding areas were considered “grot spots”
- OxClean commended City Works for doing a good job in keeping streets generally clean in Blackbird Leys. They said that they would like to see more time spent in removing rubbish from around shrubs and at bus stops

7. Door step surgeries

As part of “door step surgeries” during the spring, Blackbird Leys Ward Councillors asked constituents to give their opinion on how clean their neighbourhoods were. The feedback received was mixed and a selection of comments is produced below:

Ashmole Place	Complaints about rubbish from the pub Brick bin housing area is a location for dumping rubbish and other anti-social behaviour Problems with rubbish disposal in flats but happy with improved cleanliness of the area in general. Pleased that alleyways are being cleaned up.
Warburg Crescent	Residents were pleased with the general cleanliness of area. Problem with top floor maisonettes – rubbish chutes become clogged.
Moorbank	Black bags strewn around the area. Large bins positioned next to front doors. General poor awareness of recycling

8. Walkabout on Blackbird Leys

On 14 June Councillors Campbell and Smith went on a walkabout around Blackbird Leys. The visit was done without notifying officers in City Works so that a typical scene on the estate could be witnessed. In particular visits were made to three main areas which had been reported by local members as to have problems: Stalwart Place, Ashmole Place and Druce Way.

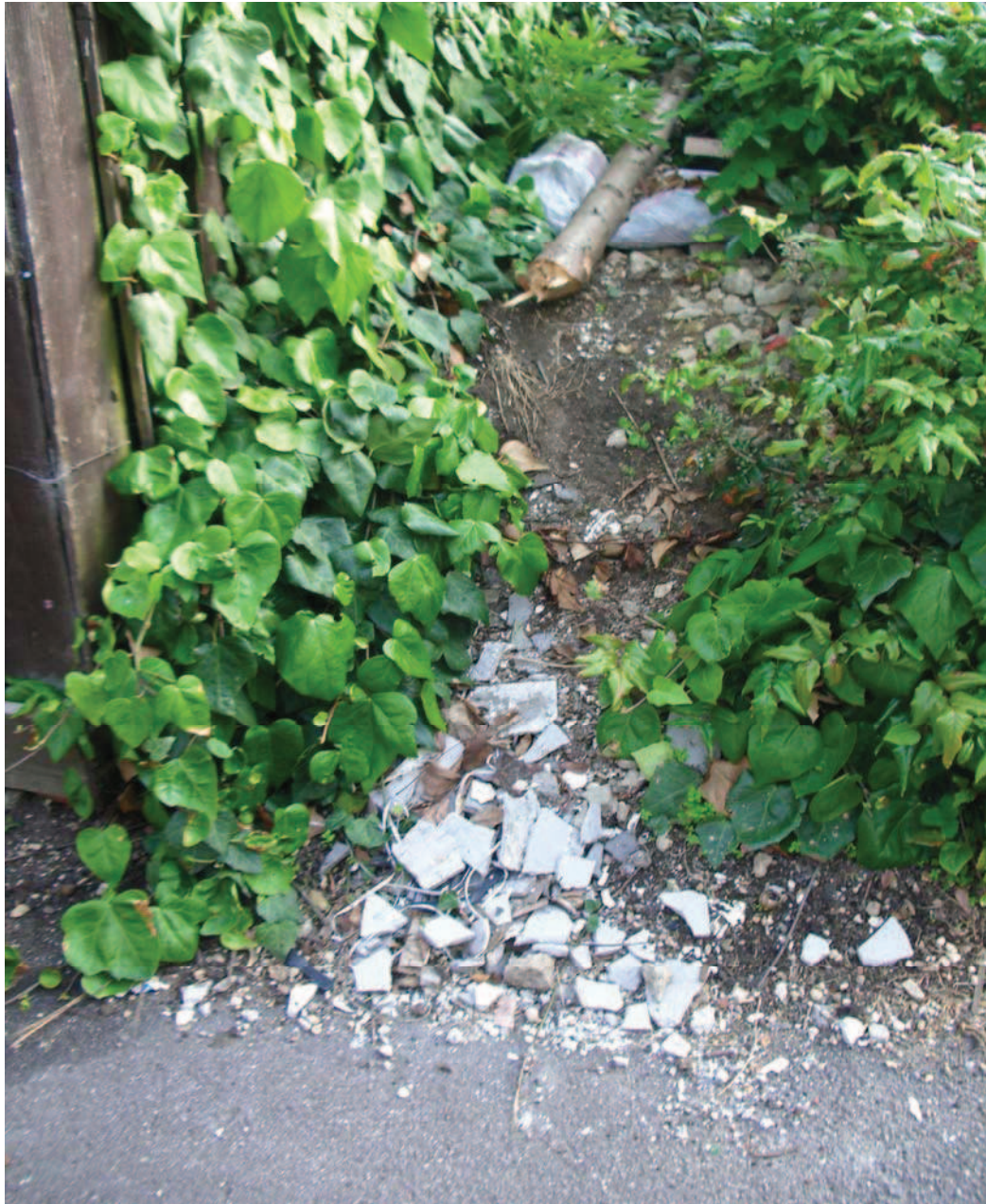
In general public areas, roads and pathways appeared to be largely free from litter.

Stalwart Place flats had clear problems with rubbish disposal and bin storage. During the visit members witnessed 1 resident throw a bin bag from the top floor into an already overflowing bin (see picture below). There was only 1 large bin for 24 flats to share and the chutes from the top floor were blocked. Residents told us that the bin was emptied once per week and that during the time of the Cleaner Greener Campaign, bins were emptied more frequently. Properties on the ground floor had been allocated a recycling bin of their own. This received positive feedback from residents.

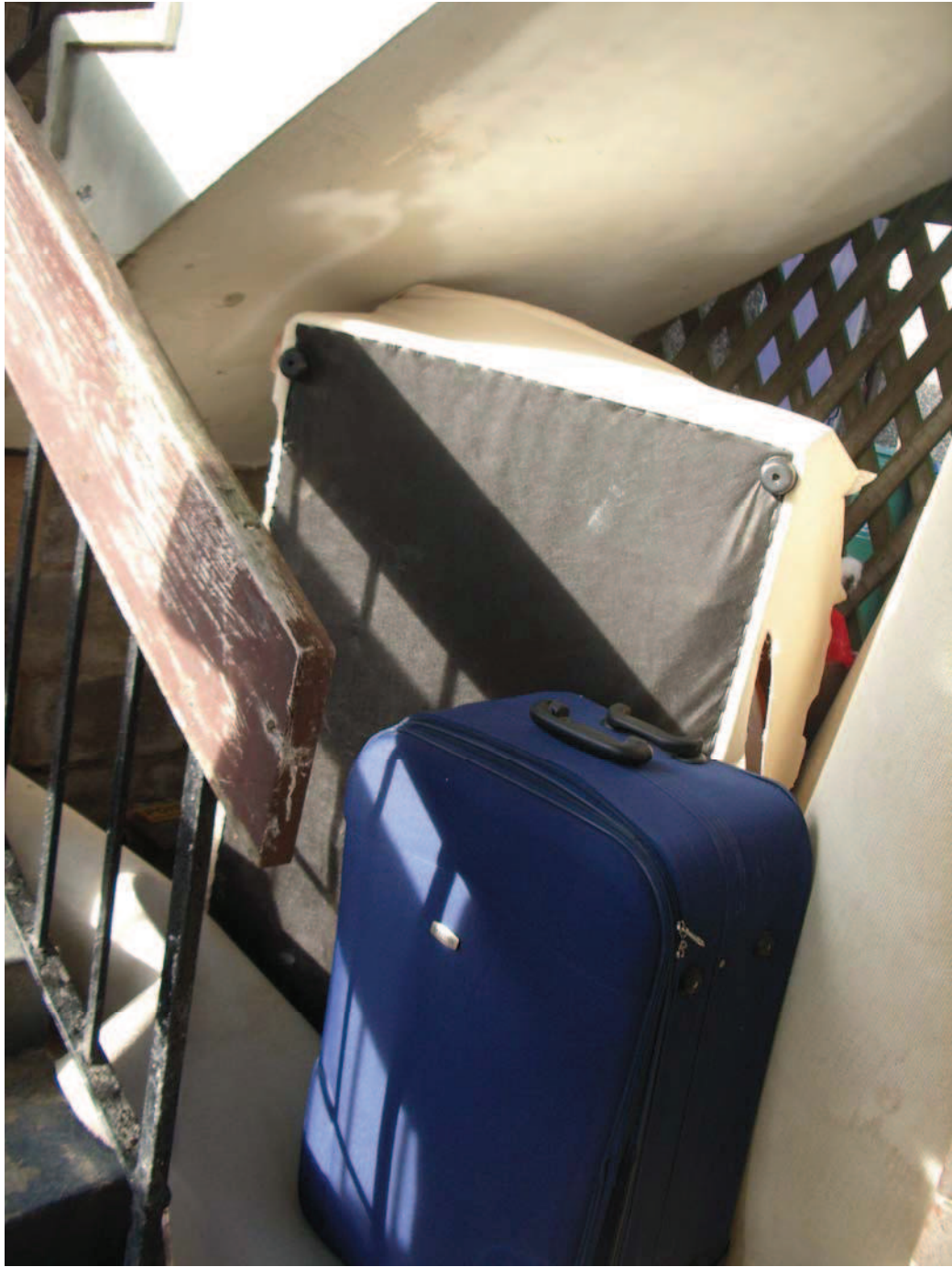


In the “square blocks” of flats at the other end of the road a better arrangement for bin storage appeared to be in place. A fenced off area had been constructed for bin storage.

In Ashmole Place a fenced area for bins also seemed to be working well although all bins were full to overflowing. Members witnessed a pile of builder’s rubble dumped at the entrance to a footpath (see below).



Druce Way was the area of most concern. The blocks of flats all had bins full to overflowing with chutes from the higher floors all blocked. Storage areas through the flats complex were used as dumping grounds for large items such as boxes, suitcases and beds (pictured below)





During the campaign brightly coloured plastic recycling containers were installed. These appeared to be in a poor state with rubbish dumped around the area.

Alleyways in the **Druce Way** area were littered with fly tipped assorted rubbish (below)



From the observations made and brief conversations with residents during the walkabout it was clear that the main area of concern continues to be the arrangements for collection, storage and disposal of household waste and recycling from flats and maisonettes in the area. This view was supported by the views of local members.

Conclusions

9. As the public survey was not able to reveal any meaningful picture of the perception of cleanliness in Blackbird Leys it would make sense to focus the conclusions on the Panel and local member's work in the

area. This reveals clear issues for resolution on the storage, disposal and recycling of waste in flats.

10. When returning to the original brief from the Committee which was to “take opinions from a broad section of the community in Blackbird Leys on the success and sustainability of the Cleaner Greener Campaign in their area”, to date there has been insufficient evidence gathered to come to a firm conclusion on whether or not the campaign has been a success overall. Further work would be needed to establish conclusions.

City Works

10. Druce Way has been a focus for attention by the service and the following measures were implemented in the summer:
 - The replacement of 2 wooden doors at both ends of the main block of flats with metal gates to make way for four large recycling containers. Access is secured for the exclusive use of residents.
 - Current bin store areas re-secured and emptied more regularly
 - Bins outside of the unsecured storage areas have been removed to prevent non-residents dumping rubbish
 - It was planned to install CCTV to monitor the site
 - There were plans in place to carryout proactive field officer visits for a period of 4 weeks following implementation of the measure as well as letter drops to all residents. Officers from Environmental Development were also to be contacted to request assistance with monitoring the cleanliness of the site.
11. During preliminary discussions with officers it was suggested that further capital money to improve environments and revenue money to improve services for flats was linked to business planning within the reform of council housing finance. Further information on the priority given to this type of work within the HRA business plan is needed in order for the Panel to progress their work and make more useful recommendations. This is not likely to be available until early 2012
12. Committee is asked to consider the following recommendations suggested by the Panel:

Recommendation 1

As only 1 of the committee’s members is currently involved in this Panel to decide if it wishes to pursue the issues further and if so nominate members

Assuming a positive response:

Recommendation 2

To ask City Works, Environmental Development and Communities and Neighbourhoods to work with voluntary sector partners (in particular Oxclean) to encourage communities to take part in the Annual Clean up as a way of encouraging and sustaining community ownership.

Recommendation 3

To consider asking Area Forums to take an active part in gauging community opinions on the state of cleanliness of their neighbourhoods This will complement the existing survey work being carried out by the Council in performance measure DS010 which surveys residents' opinions via the talkback panel.

Recommendation 4

For the Panel to pursue the environmental and service issues around flats within the developing HRA Business Plan and report back to either this committee or the Housing Panel

Recommendation 5

To evaluate the measures taken in Druce Way and report back to the committee in the New Year.

Name and contact details of author: Alec Dubberley, Law and Governance Ext 2402

Background papers: None identified

Version number: 1.2

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To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17th. October 2011

Report of: Young Peoples Engagement – Scrutiny Panel

Title of Report: Progress report on the Young Peoples Engagement project

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To update the committee on the progress of this project

Scrutiny lead members: Councillors Campbell, Sinclair and Sanders

Policy Framework: Strong and Active Communities

Recommendation(s):

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on progress within this project. To remind members the previous committee set a Panel to work on a youth engagement project the members are Councillors Campbell, Sinclair and Sanders. The full scope of the project is attached at **Appendix 1** but in brief it is a 4 step programme delivered by the Positive Futures Team working with young people from challenging backgrounds. There are 3 overriding aims:
 - To work with and support young people who are disadvantaged
 - To provide lasting skills for the young people involved
 - To encourage and launch a group of young people to form the first “Positive Futures Youth Forum” and do all possible to sustain this as a positive engagement, listening and involvement group for the Council and its partners
2. It is important at this point to “set the scene” for this work so that when members are judging progress they can do so based on the starting point for the young people we are focusing on. The Positive Futures Team works with around 100 referred young people each year who live in the City. Young people are referred for a number of reasons; offending or risk of offending behaviour, drugs misuse and other issues that make them “high risk”. Referrals come via an established process

and many are the subject of a contract of some sort to change behaviour and/or are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The main objectives of the programme are to support young people to:

- Improve their life skills
- Access education, training and employment
- Access activities
- Address their offending behaviour
- Challenge issues of drugs misuse and sexual health through support and education

The many complex issues and needs presented by these young people mean that what may seem like small life style changes, such as being somewhere on time on a regular basis, are in fact huge achievements in what are often chaotic lives.

What has happened so far

3. Over the past 5 months Positive Futures staff have identified and worked with 11 young people selected from the wider engagement work undertaken within the service. This work represents stages 1 and 2 – Engage and Communicate - within this project. Young people are being provided with a range of support and skills essential to improvement and to allow them to engage further within the programme. This work represents stage 3 – Training/Education - within this project. The detailed data describing the project is attached at **appendix 2**.

The work with young people is at various stages. Some young people are more able or keen to engage than others and the work to move them forward requires patience, perseverance and skill. We cannot hope to be successful with all but any input has a positive affect on the lives of the individuals engaged. The hope is that we will have about 5 young people to form a Positive Futures Youth Forum. The Panel is still hopeful of this outcome and we continue to support and encourage within the programme.

Examples of Engagement Activities

4. Four of the young people have successfully completed a 1 week coaching course to earn their Football Association Level 1 Coaching Certificate, they are now organising a football tournament in their communities and through this demonstrating confidence, independence as well as organisational skills.
5. The group are meeting monthly to talk collectively and monitor their progress. In addition each person has a weekly 121 with someone from the Positive Futures Team to discuss individual progress and personal issues.

6. Overall engagement is good but as discussed earlier in the report young people are at various stages and so vary in their abilities and willingness to engage to the level we expect of them. There are in particular regular attendance and contribution difficulties. The Positive Futures Team are considering new and innovative ways to improve this engagement by providing activities and challenges that are appealing to the group.

Next Steps

7. One of the major focuses is to launch the concept of a Positive Futures Youth Forum using young people identified within the programme. The intention is to support a small group to make a film. The subject matter will be of their choice but the aim set for them is to present a positive and realistic impression of themselves and what they have to offer. This piece of work will allow the young people to gain skills, use their own voices, become more confident and through this begin to provide the opportunities for The Council to have an insight into a group who are generally “hard to reach” within community development.
8. To make this a worthwhile experience that can provide a sound foundation and give a positive launch, we are looking for support and will be making approaches to institutions such as Oxford Brookes. We are also talking to Jack FM, a local radio station, about a media project around the same theme.
9. We of course continue to support and encourage.

Name and contact details of author:-

Pat Jones and Neil Holman Law and Governance and Community Safety
--

Tel: 01865 252191 e-mail: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: None

Version number: 3

Appendix 1 Young Peoples Engagement

A partnership project between the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee and the Positive Futures Team

Aims

Our overriding aims in delivering this work are:

For a group of young people to be given:

- Lasting skills that they can use and develop for their own and/or the community they live in.
- Increased confidence and improved reputation with their peers and local community.
- A stake in their communities
- An opportunity to be involved and make a difference
- A broader understanding and engagement with those people who help to shape where they live

For the Council:

- A group of skilled young people who are able to play a meaningful and supportive role in regeneration
- Lasting skills in the community
- A community based insight into communication and engagement
- To learn in partnership with communities
- The possibility of a Positive Futures Youth Engagement Forum

Method

Young people are key to successful regeneration. Their opportunities, attitudes, skills, education and contributions are pointers along the path to sustained improvement in outcomes. They must be involved in a meaningful way but for some this is easier than others. The life skills gained to date by some of our young people make them ill equipped and often unwilling to contribute to the development of their communities in a positive way. They find themselves suspicious of those in authority, lacking in confidence and respect and therefore un-accepting of the view that they can make a difference or have anything to say that will be listened to. It is this group of young people we want to work with.

We will build a programme around 4 principle stages:

- **Engage**
- **Communicate**
- **Training/Education**

- **Have your say**

Engage

A direct approach to young people with little confidence or trust that asks them to engage and contribute within the development of their communities will be unsuccessful. They will not see the point or have the interest in getting involved. We need to begin building trust and relationships and get to know each other. The hook for this is to engage a number of groups in activities they like...football, dance, music etc. Through this we can identify young people who can succeed, with support, through our programme

Communicate

Within smaller groups to begin to talk individually to young people about the project, what is in it for them and us and what skills they may need to play an equal part. The skills needed are likely to vary and could be anything from improved reading and other practical mainstream educational skills to team building and personal adult developments skills. It is important that we don't set youngster up to fail so this is an important gateway within the project; both the young person and we need to show and see some practical interest in their development and this project

Training/Education

To work with about 10 young people to improve their skills and further engage and interest them in this project. We cannot second guess the menu of skills so trainers and development workers will be commissioned as needs arise. To begin to introduce concepts such as

Have your say

- What does community mean for you
- What do you want to say about where you live and the opportunities available to you
- How can young people make a difference in Oxford
- Young Peoples engagement forums – what sort of animal should they be

For those remaining young people to support them in presenting the views they want the Council and others to hear through the media of their choice and guarantee them a response. We will have at this point the starting point for the Positive Futures Youth Engagement Panel which will need development and support.....that is another project

Timescale

It is difficult to put a timescale on this development work, the variables are many! It is hoped that we can complete the programme with 5 young people from our target group within 12 months.

Pat Jones/Neil Holman
March 2011

Appendix 2

Data Analysis

Overall numbers

Period	No of newcomers	No of YP actively engaged	No of YP that dropped out	Total
May & June	11	5	0	11
July – Sept	0	5	0	11

Background Data

Disability

Total Number	% of total cohort
1	9.1%

Age Group

Age	% of cohort
< 10	
10 - 12	18%
13-15	73%
16-18	
19+	9%

Gender & Ethnicity

Gender	% of cohort
Male	82%
Female	18%

Ethnicity	% of cohort
White British	82%
Mixed	18%

Referral Point –

Organisation	Number
Schools	8
YOS	3

Engagement Activity:

Activity	Male	Female
Football	5	0
Bowling	3	0

3 young people yet to engage in activity

Training/Skills Support

	Number
FA Level 1	4
Leadership	
Literacy/Numeracy	
College	
Confidence building	11
General Life Skills	5

Location

Area	Number
North East	2
South East	7
Cowley	2

Agenda Item 7

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 6 June 2011

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Altaf-Khan, Baxter, Campbell, Clarkson, Hazell, Khan, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Sanders, Sinclair, Wilkinson and Mills.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lois Stock (Democratic Services Officer), Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), David Edwards (Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing), Graham Stratford (Head of Housing and Communities) and Angela Cristofoli (Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR COUNCIL YEAR 2011/2012

Resolved to elect Councillor Jim Campbell as Chair for the Council Year 2011/2012

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR COUNCIL YEAR 2011/2012

Resolved to elect Councillor Dee Sinclair as Vice Chair for the Council Year 2011/2012

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jones (Councillor Mills substituted).

The Chair welcomed Barrie Finch and Anita Fisher from the Involvement Monitoring Panel (IMP). They were present as co-opted members from the last council year. The Committee would be examining the role of co-optees at its informal scrutiny meeting in July.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None made.

5. CHANGES TO GUIDANCE ON "CREATING SAFE, STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMITTEES"

The Committee welcomed Alison Baxter (OCVA - Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action) to the meeting. The Chair explained that she had been invited to give the Committee an insight into how the voluntary sector was coping in the current financial climate, and how it was likely to cope in the next six months. Ms

Baxter would also make some suggestions concerning help that the City Council and Councillors could offer to voluntary and community groups.

Introduction

Alison Baxter explained that she did not believe that the Government's plan to introduce a minimal Best Value Statutory Guidance for community and voluntary groups, as explained in the agenda, would have a huge impact. She felt that the maintenance of the current "Oxfordshire Compact" was of more importance. All local authorities wanted this to continue, however it may be reviewed and refreshed as it was important to remind people of the principles agreed between voluntary groups.

The impact of the Localism Bill was not known, since it was not in force yet. What the voluntary sector was currently experiencing was a big change in the way public services were delivered, including a move towards personal budgets for adult social care, and Locality Boards carrying out service commissioning from September 2011. Oxfordshire County Council now had an approved providers list, which was a help to voluntary organisations, but this was causing disquiet in some quarters. There were also issues around the provision of services to people with physical disabilities. It was intended that there would be 8 Health and Wellbeing Centres, each to be given funding of £50,000 to begin with, and then expected to source additional income to fulfil needs beyond this. These Centres would be the core part of service delivery. Children's' Services would be provided through early intervention hubs. The deadline for all of this was very tight, since the aim was to have everything up and running by September 2011.

Voluntary organisations would need to forge new relationships – schools and GP surgeries would have their own budgets, for example, and it would be difficult for the voluntary sector to decide where it should focus its relationship-building efforts.

Despite all the uncertainty, there was some good news. The Stronger Communities Alliance had awarded a large chunk of its funding to groups within the City. The County Council also had some "Big Society" funding; however, it should be noted that this had received far more bids than there was money available.

In answer to the question "What can the City Council do? Ms Baxter suggested that Councillors, as individuals, could offer their skills and expertise to voluntary groups, which would gladly receive any help and advice that was offered. There was also a new initiative with the City council's procurement team that allowed voluntary groups to access providers at favourable rates, and this had been welcomed. But if groups could not obtain funding, the fact remained that they would struggle to survive and have an impact.

Members of the Committee considered this issue and identified the following key concerns:-

Access to funding

There was concern that smaller groups might find it difficult, on their own, to access funding, and that they might be crowded out by larger groups. It would

be helpful if a consortium of small groups with similar interests and aims could apply for funding together, in order to maximise their chance of success. Alison Baxter confirmed that where funds could be accessed jointly, such a bid was submitted; but not every funding body allowed this.

Alison Baxter was not sure how many City groups had applied for “Big Society” funding, but she could find out. It was noted that more than £1.5 million had been requested in the first round of funding, for a total fund of £800,000.

Capacity building

In answer to a question, Alison Baxter explained that OCVA had exceeded its own targets for capacity building, and that groups associated with OCVA had now raised over £1million in funding. OCVA was about to start an evaluation process as it wished to understand what impact this funding had.

Equalities issues

In answer to a question, Alison Baxter explained that there was no evidence that Oxfordshire County Council was abandoning the equalities aspects of voluntary funding. However, the Committee noted that the Government had made consideration of equalities issues “desirable” rather than “essential”, and that this allowed equalities issues to become less of a priority. The Committee felt that there was a need to monitor this, and asked OCVA to keep it informed of cases where “desirable” rather than “essential” was used.

Volunteering

The Committee noted that some organisations (for example Oxford Brookes University) encouraged staff to undertake volunteering in their community for up to 2 days a year, for which the staff member was allowed paid leave. It agreed that the City Council should be asked to investigate instituting a similar scheme for its own staff, if one was not already in existence.

Timetable of changes

The proposed changes were currently out to consultation, and there was no timetable yet for their introduction.

It was noted that the Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) was likely to change to a forum that met annually.

Voluntary groups working with children and young people

It was noted that some voluntary groups carried out useful work with children and young people through schools. With significant cuts to education funding, there was concern about these groups viability. It could be assumed that some would survive but others would not, depending on their success at fundraising. The Committee noted with interest that the Oxfordshire Community Foundation hoped to launch a “community bond”, with the aim of using investments to fund groups that worked with children and young people – but this was at a very early stage of development.

Councillor involvement

The Committee observed that Councillors would shortly have their own individual budget to spend within their ward. Councillors were well placed to know what the priorities for their area were, and this could be of assistance to voluntary and community groups.

Conclusion

The Committee identified the following issues arising from the discussion:-

- There was a need for more two-way information between OCVA and Councillors. OCVA produced a monthly newsletter which it would be useful for Councillors to receive;
- Councillors should be encouraged to be aware of OCVA and its work, and to promote it to voluntary and community groups within their ward. Councillors were also encouraged to attend the Voluntary Awards Ceremony in October ;
- The Committee would be interested to see how the proposed community bond developed;
- The Committee was pleased to note the scheme to encourage staff volunteering at Oxford Brookes University. It wished to encourage the same at Oxford University, if such a scheme did not exist, and Councillor Campbell was happy to write to the Vice Chancellor on this matter;
- It was felt that the City Council should encourage a higher level of volunteering from its staff, and to give support to those members of staff who wished to participate in it.

Resolved to:

- (1) Ask CEB to encourage volunteering amongst City Council staff, and to support staff members who wished to volunteer;
- (2) Ensure that the OCVA newsletter was made available to all Councillors.

6. HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Head of Housing and Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) giving an update on the Housing Strategy and related issues. Graham Stratford presented this report to the Committee and explained the background. He added that tenants would be involved with the draft Housing Strategy, and then consulted on the resulting draft. It was hoped to include some discussion of the future of Council housing stock.

The Committee considered this issue and identified the following concerns:

Impact of downsizing

Graham Stratford informed the Committee that the Council encouraged people to downsize if they were under-occupying their current property; and there was an incentive scheme to assist with this process

Anita Fisher expressed some concern at the process for moving on in this way. Graham Stratford indicated that he intended to convene a group to look at this process, to which Anita Fisher would be invited.

Flexible tenancies

Graham Stratford confirmed that the current Council policy was for lifetime tenancies for Council housing stock. Where new housing stock was built with grant aid, it was intended to have a proportion of affordable rents. Housing Associations could choose to adopt flexible tenancies if they so wished, and it was possible that some of their new tenants would be on fixed term tenancies. The Council was not aware of any Housing Association intending to adopt 2 year tenancies under the flexible arrangements as most had expressed an interest in having 5 to 10 year periods. This process was known as “churn”. David Edwards added that A2 Housing Association had indicated that they would not churn their properties. Catalyst Housing Association probably would churn, whereas Green Square intended to churn 50% of its voids and invest the money back in the City. Guidance from the Government and the Homes and Communities Agency indicated that 80% market rents and flexible tenancies must be accepted in order to attract grant assistance.

Young people

The Committee expressed concern that young people should not be disadvantaged when it came to their housing needs. It was agreed Oxford had particular housing difficulties, in that it was expensive – house prices were very high while some wages were very low, thus causing an imbalance between supply and affordability. The Council was trying to discover more about the different needs of the City’s different communities, including young people.

It was noted, with concern, that recent bidding for funding from the Homes and Communities Agency had produced no firm bids for new developments in the City for the first two years of the HCA’s programme.

The Committee agreed to note the current position.

7. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE FIGURES - COMMUNITY HOUSING

The Head of Housing and Communities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) concerning the end of year performance figures for Community Housing. Graham Stratford presented the report to the Committee and explained the background to it.

He acknowledged that the figure for rough sleeping was still over target. The Council did what it could to assist people, but a number were drawn to live on the streets of Oxford and it was a slow process to reduce their numbers. Homelessness acceptance figures had missed their target too, for the first time in over 6 years. There was greater difficulty in accessing private sector housing, it was hard to find two bedroom properties, and there had been a larger number of complex presentations in recent times. Nationally, the figure for homelessness acceptance was up. The figure for people in temporary accommodation was on target.

Some good news was that 10 empty homes had recently been put back into use. Allocations were progressing well. A recent legal decision meant that the Council did not have to provide two homes for people who shared the custody of their children. Two Empty dwelling management orders had recently been completed.

At any one time, approximately 1,000 properties were empty within Oxford. These were either voids, between owners, awaiting planning consent or awaiting development. Council properties did not normally stand empty for a long period of time, unless there were serious structural problems that needed to be addressed.

The Chair, Councillor Campbell, suggested that there were several issues that could be taken up by a Housing Panel, should the Committee decide to establish one. In the meantime, he thanked Graham Stratford and his team for their hard work on these complex issues.

Resolved to note the current position.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORT BACK ON COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Pat Jones introduced this item to the Committee. The following items were considered

Work Programme

The Committee agreed to hold an informal meeting on 19th July starting at 6pm, in order to determine the work programme for the forthcoming year.

Time of meetings

The Committee agreed that meetings would start at 6pm for the Council Year 2011/2012.

Report Back – Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy

The Committee noted the contents of a briefing note about Oxfordshire County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy. Lois Stock reported that it had not been possible to obtain information concerning the County Council's response to recommendations made by the scrutiny committee; however she had managed to find information from the County Council's website, to which she had been directed by County officers, and prepared the briefing note from that.

The Committee expressed disappointment that the County Council's officers had not been willing to respond directly to enquiries from a City officer on this important subject. Councillor Campbell would contact Huw Jones at Oxfordshire County Council to express this disappointment. It was observed that although much information had been unearthed, there was no direct response to the Committee's questions on differential charging and the provision of a temporary site for use whilst Redbridge was closed for refurbishment.

Resolved to:

- (1) Thank Lois Stock for her work on this issue;
- (2) Contact Oxfordshire County Council again and ask for a specific response to the questions about differential charging and the provision of a temporary site whilst Redbridge was closed.

9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AREA FORUMS

The Principal Scrutiny Officer submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) providing an update on the development of the Area Forums. Pat Jones presented this report to the Committee and explained the background.

The Chair, Councillor Campbell, thanked Councillors Wilkinson and Sanders, and Pat Jones, for their hard work on this matter. Councillor Sanders explained that each area had its own ideas about the operation of the Forums. Each has a starting point for what they want to do. Angela Cristofoli (Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager) added that she and her team would review the Forum system at the end of the year. The Scrutiny Committee would work with her on this to avoid duplication of work, or working at odds with each other.

Councillor Wilkinson expressed some surprise at the disparity between the Area Committee areas. She felt that there was a need for member training, especially on community leadership and holding effective meetings. There was also an issue about the resources available for the Forum meetings – how they would be supported, where they would meet, and how success could be measured. Councillor Sanders added that the intention was to produce, at the end of the first six months, a list of issues discussed by each forum and the numbers of people attending. It was important to know how many people the Forums had reached.

The Committee considered this and made the following points:-

- What worked well for one area might not be successful in another. There was a need to be open to an exchange of ideas;
- It was important to look at the impact and influence a Forum had, as well as the number of people attending it;
- It would be useful to know how many “calls for action” actually resulted in an action. What tangible results came from the discussions and decisions made? If results were few, people would not attend. It was important that proposals coming from the community were discussed and received a response. The response of the public towards the Forums was more important than the response of Councillors;
- There was an argument for a two-tier structure – surgery and case work on the ground, and themed meetings dealing with items of concern above this;
- The Council should consider actively canvassing the views of the people with whom engagement is sought after the first six months of operation;

- Meetings and surgeries were a good starting point. There was a need to record the issues coming in;
- There was a need to assess the groups that do not engage with the Council – do they attend Forums? If not, how can we encourage them to attend?
- The items discussed by the Forums were a key part of encouraging people to attend them and join in their work.

Angela Cristofoli gave the following response:-

- The new system would be reviewed after six months, probably by the end of the year;
- The Forums were one strand of community engagement. There were other ways to reach out and engage the local community. The message of engagement went wider than just the Forums;
- Forums could be planned and shaped in advance, but they needed to be shaped with the community, focussing on real issues of concern within an area;
- She welcomed the chance to work with Councillors Sanders and Wilkinson and Pat Jones on this matter.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Recommend that a plan for member training be devised, to include training on the conduct of effective meetings and community leadership;
- (2) Ask for details to be supplied of the budget available for Area Forums and the wider work with communities;
- (3) Ask Councillors Sanders and Wilkinson to continue to work with Pat Jones on this issue, and specifically to draw up some means of evaluating the success of the Forums that can be circulated to the Committee in due course.

10. MINUTES

Resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 30th March 2011, with the following observations:-

- (1) Barrie Finch and Anita Fisher represented the **Involvement** Monitoring Panel for tenants - not Improvement;
- (2) Councillors Smith and Campbell would be touring the litter "hot spots" of Blackbird Leys shortly, as part of the Cleaner Greener panel work;
- (3) Barrie Finch asked to be involved with any work related to older people and housing;
- (4) Barrie Finch also suggested that there should be a 6 monthly review of the HRA figures. Pat Jones explained that this matter would be dealt with by the Finance and Performance Panel, but she would make sure that Mr Finch and Mrs Fisher were involved with that. David Edwards added that a Board would be addressing the issue of HRA figures, and he would consider how tenants could be best involved with this.

Councillor Campbell thanked David Edwards for his attendance at the meeting and his useful input.

11. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Resolved:-

(1) To note the following dates:

19th July (INFORMAL MEETING)
17th October
12th December
7th February 2012
2nd April

(2) That meetings would start at 6pm in future, starting with the informal meeting on 19th July.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 7.12 pm

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