

Agenda

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Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 27 November 2012**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

For any further information please contact:

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: 01865 252191

Email: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Membership

| | | |
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| Chair | Councillor Mark Mills | Holywell; |
| Vice-Chair | Councillor Mike Rowley | Barton and Sandhills; |
| | Councillor Mohammed Abbasi | Cowley Marsh; |
| | Councillor Anne-Marie Canning | Carfax; |
| | Councillor Jean Fooks | Summertown; |
| | Councillor James Fry | North; |
| | Councillor Michael Gotch | Wolvercote; |
| | Councillor Mick Haines | Marston; |
| | Councillor Pat Kennedy | Lye Valley; |
| | Councillor Sajjad Malik | Cowley Marsh; |
| | Councillor Stuart McCready | Summertown; |
| | Councillor Craig Simmons | St. Mary's; |
| | Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen | Hinksey Park; |

HOW TO OBTAIN AGENDA

In order to reduce the use of resources, our carbon footprint and our costs we will no longer produce paper copies of agenda over and above our minimum internal and Council member requirement. Paper copies may be looked at the Town Hall Reception and at Customer Services, St Aldate's and at the Westgate Library

A copy of the agenda may be:-

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- Downloaded from our website
- Subscribed to electronically by registering online at mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk
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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

The Quorum for this Committee is four and substitutes are allowed.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 STANDING ITEM: WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

1 - 24

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

Mathew Metcalfe, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer, Tel:
(01865) 252214, Email: mmetcalfe@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background information |
| The work programme needs to reflect the wishes and interests of the Committee. It is presented here and at every meeting to allow members to lead and shape their work. |
| Why is the item on the agenda? |
| To agree the lines of inquiry for forthcoming meetings and to take an overview of progress |
| Who has been invited to comment? |
| The Principal Scrutiny Officer, will present the work programme and answer questions from the Committee. |
| 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 STANDING ITEM: REPORT BACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE

25 - 44

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

Mathew Metcalfe, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Tel: (01865) 252214, email: mmetcalfe@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background information |
| This Committee has made a number of recommendations to City Executive Board and officers. This item reports on the outcomes from these. |
| Why is the item on the agenda? |
| To present to the committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The table of responses to all their recommendations to date: • The full text of reports made since the last meeting, approved by the Chair and other Lead Members of the committee, and the results of these. <p>Two reports has been produced since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fusion Leisure Contract 2011 – 2012 • Parking in Parks – signage and monitoring <p>The full text of the report and response is presented.</p> |
| Who has been invited to comment? |
| Officers will go through the outcomes and answer questions. |
| What will happen after the meeting? |
| Any further follow up will be pursued within the work programme. |

5 COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT CHANGES - UPDATE

45 - 90

Contact Officer: Helen Bishop, Head of Customer Services
Tel: 01865 252233, email: hbishop@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background Information |
| The Value and Performance Committee at it meeting on 19 th September 2012, received an update on the soon to be introduced Council Tax Benefit changes and requested further information from Officers. |
| Why is it on the agenda? |
| The Committee requested further information on the modelling used to structure the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the exemptions offered by other local authorities in Oxfordshire. Full Council at its meeting on 17 th December will receive a report from the City Executive Board seeking approval for the introduction of the scheme following the outcome of previous consultations and this is attached to this agenda. |

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| Who has been invited to comment? |
| Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member, Finance and Efficiency, the Head of Customer Services, Helen Bishop and the Head of Finance, Nigel Kennedy. |
| What will happen after the meeting? |
| Comments from the Committee will be passed to the Full Council meeting on 17 th December 2012, to be considered during the debate. |

6 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) LICENSING - UPDATE

91 - 98

Contact Officer: Ian Wright
 Tel: 01865 252553, email: iwright@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background Information |
| The mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs was introduced by the Housing Act 2004. The first stage in Oxford commenced on the 24th January 2011 and required the licensing of all three or more storey HMO properties and the larger two storey HMO properties that contained five or more tenants. The second stage commenced on the 30 th January 2012 and required all remaining HMO properties in the City to obtain a licence. Until very recently Oxford was the only local authority in the UK to require every HMO throughout its area to be licensed. |
| Why is it on the agenda? |
| This report has been produced in response to the Committees lines of inquiry which are: The progress on the implementation of the licensing scheme, and in particular: - Any effects on the availability or cost of rented accommodation. -Improvements within the privately rented stock. The landlord survey mentioned in the report will have been completed by the time of the meeting but the results have not been analysed. |
| Who has been invited to comment? |
| Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member Finance and Efficiency and Ian Wright, Environmental Development. |
| What will happen after the meeting? |
| Any comments made by the committee will be reported to the City Executive and any requirements for further reporting will be reflected in the Committees work programme. |

7 COVERED MARKET SCRUTINY REVIEW: NEXT STEPS

99 - 116

Contact Officer: Sarah Claridge, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Tel: 01865 252402, email: sclaridge@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background Information |
| The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee decided to hold a Select Committee debate on the economic health of the Covered Market and to establish a Panel to progress the preparation for the Select Committee debate. |
| Why is it on the agenda? |
| This briefing paper has been produced in response to the Committee's lines of inquiry and to support the debate. The committee is asked how it wishes to progress these inquiries. |
| Who has been invited to comment? |
| Members of the Covered Market Review Panel. |
| What will happen after the meeting? |
| Further meetings of the Review Panel will take place with a progress report to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee in January 2013 with a full report at the end of the programme. |

8 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2013-2016

117 - 140

Contact Officer: Nicky Atkin, Commercial Manager
Tel: 01865 252778, email: natkin@oxford.gov.uk

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| Background Information |
| The Council's second Procurement Strategy was approved in 2010 and sought to define how procurement would support the Council in achieving ambitious efficiency targets. The proposed new strategy builds on the good work to date and focuses on delivering new efficiencies and benefits to the community and economy, builds in new legislative requirements and supports carbon reduction and delivering affordable housing. The Committee asked to see proposals for the new strategy at their last meeting. |
| Why is it on the agenda? |
| To allow the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's Procurement Strategy and its outcomes for spending with local companies. |
| Who has been invited to comment? |
| Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member, Finance and Efficiency and |

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| Jane Lubbock, Head of Business Improvement and Technology. |
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| What will happen after the meeting? |
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| Comments from the Committee will be passed to the City Executive Board at its meeting on 5 th December 2012. |
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9 MINUTES

141 - 156

Minutes of the meetings held on 19th September and 5th November 2012.

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee will meet at the Town Hall at 6.00pm on the following dates unless otherwise specified:

Monday 28th January 2013

Wednesday 3rd April 2013

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

Declaring an interest

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

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

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

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Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny

Work programme debate outcomes for 2012/2013

General Principles

After consultation with councillors the committee has agreed its programme. Topics will be considered both inside and outside of “formal committee” meetings and each topic will be led by a small group of councillors.

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

A Finance and Performance Panel has been set to bring together and encourage focus and expertise within the member group.

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

The information that follows shows the programme divided between:

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

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

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2012/2013

Standing Panels

| Topic | Area(s) for focus | Progress | Nominated councillors |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Finance and Performance Panel | Corporate performance against target Service performance against target Budget spending and achievement of savings Medium Term Financial Strategy Treasury Management – strategy and delivery Business rate changes The Panel will become the budget Review Group | Agreed meeting dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28th August at 6.00pm • 26th. November at 6.00pm • 31st. January at 6.00pm | No substitutions allowed. Cllrs. Mills, Rowley, Simmons and Kennedy. |

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Short Term Panels

| Topic | Area(s) for focus | Progress | Nominated councillors |
|---------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| Investment in | To consider the City's investment in youth services: | Panel to meet to agree their focus within | No substitutions |

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| Youth Services – focus and outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending plans • Opportunities to increase investment through grants and partnership working • Targeted groups, areas and outcomes. • Measures and performance against these | <p>the guide given by the committee.</p> <p>Panel report to CEB 12th. September on the programme start up proposals. Recommendations agreed.</p> <p>Panel need to meet to decide if they wish to take the scrutiny work further.</p> | <p>allowed.</p> <p>Cllrs. Mills, Rowley and Canning</p> |
| ω Recycling rates - ambition | <p>The Council’s ambition is to increase recycling rates to 52% by 2015/16. Is this ambitious enough. What would be needed to improve on this.</p> | <p>Look at rates and services in other urban authorities and decide if our ambition is the right one for a “great Council”.</p> <p>Panel to meet on the 23rd. November to consider proposed policy changes.</p> | <p>No substitutions allowed.</p> <p>Councillors Fry, Simmons and Jones.</p> |

Detailed Review Topic

| Topic | Area(s) for focus | Progress | Nominated councillors |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| Budget Review | <p>To review the proposals and principles within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget for robustness and deliverability.</p> | <p>Review to begin in December.</p> <p>Officer and Board Member interview dates set as:</p> | <p>No substitutions allowed.</p> <p>All members of the</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9th. January 6.00pm • 14th. January 6.00pm • 15th. January 6.00pm <p>Consultation budget will not be available until a special meeting of CEB on 19th. December CEB. The interview dates may have to be changed.</p> | Finance and Performance Panel plus Cllr. Fry. |
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Committee Inquires

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| Topic | Area(s) for focus | Progress | Nominated councillors |
|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| Transition to Universal Credit | <p>Transition begins in October 2013.</p> <p>How are we planning for this in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working assumptions and current plans. • Funding draw down and budgetary affects. • Customer Service provision – face to face inquiries and “sign posting”. • Partnerships with City Advice Agencies | <p>September meeting initial discussion.</p> <p>Information on the effect on rent arrears and tenancy management requested for the January meeting.</p> | All committee |

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| Council Tax Benefit scheme development | <p>What will our local scheme look like. Who are the winners and losers. What effects will this have on our budgets and what are the administration costs likely to be. What are our neighbours proposals.</p> | <p>September meeting initial discussion.</p> <p>Financial modelling for exemptions and information from other authorities on the agenda for the November the November meeting.</p> | All committee |
| Covered Market – economic health and development | <p>Select committee debate. To consider the “economic health” of the covered market and in particular the effects of rents on the diversity of traders.</p> | <p>Select committee scheduled for January meeting.</p> <p>Panel briefing paper on the agenda for the November meeting.</p> | Cllrs. Fookes and Van Nooijen to prepare and lead select committee debate. |
| HMO registration progress. Effects of the scheme on the supply of rented accommodation | <p>Progress on the implementation of the licensing scheme. Committee are particularly interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any effects on the availability or cost of rented accommodation. • Improvements within the privately rented stock. | <p>Report available for the November meeting.</p> | All committee |
| City Council's procurement process and their effects locally | <p>To consider the Council's Procurement Strategy and its outcomes for spending with local companies.</p> | <p>September meeting initial discussion.</p> <p>Report available for the November meeting.</p> | All committee |
| Work force | <p>How representative is our work force across the equality strands and as a match to the local population.</p> | <p>Scheduled for the November meeting.</p> | All committee |

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| | <p>How do we train and promote employees across the equality strands.</p> <p>The committee is particularly interested in the current position, areas for improvement and plans to produce better outcomes.</p> | | |
| Complaints monitoring report | Called from the Forward Plan by the Chair for pre-scrutiny | Scheduled for the January meeting. | All committee |
| Parking in Parking Areas Adjacent to Parks | <p>Call in of decision at 12th. September CEB</p> <p>Reasons given for call in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact on neighbouring areas • The balance between revenue from charges and penalties • Whether there are other factors in play which might be distorting the comparison of user numbers | <p>Additional meeting 5th. November.</p> <p>Call in not supported but related recommendation to CEB on the 5th. December.</p> | All committee |

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee Agenda Schedules

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

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

| Dates | Slots and Items |
|---|--|
| 19 th . September 2012 | 1. Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme development. 2. Transition to Universal Credit. 3. Procurement policies and practices and the effects on the local economy. Meeting full |
| 5 th . November 2012 | 1. Parking in parking areas adjacent to parks – call in |
| 27 th . November 2012 | 1. HMO registration and effects 2. Procurement Strategy. 3. Covered Market Briefing Paper. 4. Financial Modelling for Council Tax exemptions including what other authorities are doing. Meeting full |
| 28 th . January 2012 | 1. Finance and Performance Panel Budget Review Report. 2. Covered Market – Select Committee debate. 3. Progress on Direct Payment pilot project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect on rent arrears and tenancy management • Support and Debt Advice 4. Workforce data and representation. 5. Pre-Scrutiny of the Complaints Monitoring Report Meeting full |
| 3 rd . April 2012 | 1. Panel Report – Investment in Youth Services 2. Recycling ambitions 3. Vacant slot |

Finance and Performance Panel Agenda Schedules

| Dates | Slots and Items |
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| 28 th . August 2012 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qtr. 1 Performance against Service Targets. 2. Qtr. 1 Performance against Corporate Targets. 3. Qtr. 1 Treasury Management Performance. 4. Qtr. 1 Spending and savings 5. Business Rate Changes – likely budgetary effects |
| 26 th . November 2012 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Combined Qtr. 2 Performance, Risk and spending report. 2. Qtr. 2 Treasury Management Performance. 3. Corporate Measures 2013/2014 4. Budget Review Planning |
| 31 st January 2013 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Combined Qtr. 3 Performance, Risk and spending report.. 2. Qtr. 3 Treasury Management Performance. 3. Draft Treasury Management Strategy 13/14. 4. Final CEB budget proposals – consultation result. |

FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2012 – MARCH 2013

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

Key decisions

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

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

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

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

Private meetings

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

Making representations on matters or objections to taking matters in private

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

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

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

Inspection of documents

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

The Council's decision-making process

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

CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

DECEMBER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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| Consultation: | |
| Scrutiny Committee Responsibility: | Value and Performance |

MARCH

BEYOND THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN

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

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

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

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

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Agenda Item 4

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Results of recommendations made between June and November 2012

| Financial Out turn 2011/2012 | | | |
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| Recommendations from the committee meeting – 25th. June | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| All carry forward requests are supported noting the comments in paragraph 4 of the report. | Noted | City Executive Board | 4 th . July |
| To request that the £0.5m surplus is placed in reserves and its use considered during the up and coming budgetary process rather than earmarking it at this stage for capital. | Agreed with amendment. This money will be placed in an earmarked capital reserve. All reserves are reviewed as part of the yearly budgeting process. | City Executive Board | 4 th . July |
| To ask Board Members and Senior Officers to consider the effects of delays in recruitment on services and plans and allow for any “catch up” required within future planning. | Agreed with amendment All service pressures have been considered. The effects of delayed recruitment are being considered as part of workforce planning. | City Executive Board | 4 th . July |
| Treasury Management Performance 2011/2012 | | | |
| Recommendations from the committee meeting – 25th. June | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| The Committee agree with the proposed changes to the | Noted | City Executive Board | 4 th . July |

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| Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/2013 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the limit invested in MMFs to £20m. • Add Police Authorities to the counterparty list. | | | |
| For the City Executive Board to keep under active review the effects of “Right to Buy” within the HRA Business Plan. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income streams. • Our ability to be flexible within the funding of the capital programme to allow us to use all capital receipts from sales. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 4 th . July |
| <p>Fusion Leisure Contract – 2011/2012 Performance against target</p> <p>Recommendations from the committee meeting – 25th. June</p> <p>Full report and full response at Appendix 1</p> | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| To seek confirmation via the Partnership Board that the living wage is being paid to staff and confirmation when it will also be paid to any sub-contractors working in Fusions run sites in Oxford. | Confirmation received. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To see the subsidy position for each leisure centre including capital investments made. | Not agreed. See full response. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To seek clarification of what share of the £1.3m surplus made by Fusion would be re-invested in the Oxford City Contract and how this would be used within leisure centres and/or services. | Not provided. See full response. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To see the ideas and proposals | Provided in the | Board Member | 24 th |

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| from the Partnership Board to further increase participation with a particular emphasis on outreach work within target groups. | Annual Service Plan. | for Leisure | October |
| To see Fusion's suggestions on encouraging better utilisation of our centres. | Provided in the Annual Service Plan. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To request that for the future participation is also shown as a percentage of the population in each postcode area and if possible to include all visitors to allow for a more meaningful comparison of the figures. | Agreed. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To provide information on the various outreach projects across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost • Objectives • Targets • Outcomes | Agreed. Available at the yearly review by scrutiny. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To request further information on the methodology used for measuring satisfaction and the process for auditing and checking the quality of the results. | Agreed with amendment. Under review at present. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| To raise the issue of repairs and maintenance at the Partnership Board and for standards to be monitored. To report back on how monitoring is to happen. | Agreed. See response in full text. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| Request that the Board Member respond to the local Ward Member for Marston on what the Council's leisure offer for residents in his ward. | Agreed. | Board Member for Leisure | 24 th October |
| <p>Changes to Business Rates</p> <p>Recommendations from the Finance and Performance Panel – 28th. August</p> | | | |

| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
|--|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| The Finance and Performance Panel of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee felt that the levy being 82% was too high and noted that this would form part of the City Council's response to the current Government consultation. | Noted | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| April to June 2012/13 – Quarter 1 Corporate Plan Performance | | | |
| Recommendations from the Finance and Performance Panel – 28th. August | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| To request that the indicators for a Vibrant and Sustainable economy be reviewed as the Panel felt that it was not clear if the Council's policies were sufficient enough to fully capture a vibrant and sustainable economy as it felt that only have 3 indicators were not sufficient. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Asset Management Plan | | | |
| Recommendations from the Asset Panel – 24th. August | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| Welcomed the inclusion of most of the recommendations highlighted to the Deputy Leader in March 2012 and that the latest version was clearer due to improved formatting. However it was felt that some sections did not require the amount of detail included; | Noted | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |

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| at it was not necessary to detail all of the previous achievements going back to 2009; | Refused. This was included as a response to a scrutiny recommendation and has merit as it is to show the journey taken. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| A list highlighting the changes made following the end of the consultation would be beneficial; | This is included as a list. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| The design of the document allowed for improved navigation and was presented in a professional way. | Noted | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Foreward – Page 5, final paragraph – Clarification is required on the delivery of the 112 affordable homes, how these homes will be funded and the numbers to be delivered for each of the next three years; | Agreed with amendment. Clarification on wording given. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 1 – Review of 2009 Asset Management Plan, Pages 8, 9 and 10 – These are not necessary and should be removed as these relate to the previous plan; | Refused. This was included as a response to a scrutiny recommendation and has merit as it is to show the journey taken. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 2 – Portfolio Objectives and Overview, Page 11 – Objective 2 – The wording is unclear and would read better as “We want all our property to be efficiently managed”; | Agreed with amendment Clarification on wording given. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 2, pages 11 and 12 – The tables showing Operational assets ranked by condition do not make sense and so should be removed; | Refused This is required for benchmarking | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 4 – Asset Strategy – A separate asset class is required to cover ‘countryside’ assets, | Agreed with amendment | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |

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| including Port Meadow, the other SSSI's and parks which should also be included. There is no mention of these assets in either class 4.1 or 4.10; | No change now but will consider as part on a coming asst class review. | | |
| Section 4 – Asset Strategy – 4.2 Allotments – The first paragraph should be amended to include at the end ' <i>and further details will be found in the emerging Green Space Strategy</i> '; the second paragraph should be deleted as the Green Space Strategy has not been agreed; | Agreed with amendment. Clarification provided. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 4 – Asset Strategy – 4.5 Community Centres – Amend the fifth paragraph to read ' <i>The Council will establish occupational leases with community groups to formalise responsibilities. These leases will typically be between one and three years, noting that none size will not fit all and the Council will consider granting Community Association long-leasehold interests (or asset transfers) where the following criteria are met:</i> ' | Refused | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Section 6 – Capital Programme, Page 31 – further clarification is required with regard to the paragraph titled 'Homes and Communities Agency Affordable Homes Programme' and S106 Planning Obligations requirement to contribute to affordable housing as this is in the process of being changed; | Agreed with amendment. Slight clarification provided. | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Appendix 3, point 17.2 – should be amended to read ' <i>Where the Council implements rent reviews and lease renewals, it will seek to establish the highest market rental value supported by comparable evidence, to preserve the capital value and</i> | Refused | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |

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| <i>income flow of the portfolio subject to other relevant requirements of the Asset Management Strategy such as maintaining the agreed balance of uses of the Covered Market’;</i> | | | |
| Appendix 3, point 19, page 51 - Tenant Associations – This should be deleted in its entirety as the meaning of the section is unclear and appears to cut across the responsibilities of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Team; | Agreed with amendment. Clarification provided on the direction of this point to Commercial Tenants | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| The following typographical errors require correcting: (i) Section 6, page 32 – last line of the second paragraph, delete ‘a’ and insert ‘an’ before the word amount and delete the full stop at the end of the final bullet point; (ii) Section 7, page 33, point 7.1 – In the final line the word ‘city’ needs correcting to ‘City’; (iii) Appendix 1, page 38 – too many m’s in Emissions. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Youth Ambition Programme | | | |
| Recommendations from the Youth Ambition Panel meeting 10th. September | | | |
| Scrutiny Recommendation | Response | Considered by | Date |
| That a clear outcome framework for this programme is set now. This should include long term aims and short term measures and targets towards those aims. This framework should provide for links to each investment made through both expectations | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |

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| for the individuals involved and overall. | | | |
| That the steering arrangements for the project are concluded as a matter of urgency to allow for clear focus. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| A minimum of a three year programme is set that has a mixture of sustainable provision and space for one off activities linked to clear need and outcomes. These principles should be pass ported into the consideration of all matched or grant funded activities that are commissioned. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| To have robust and clear commissioning processes that ensure programme providers share our ambitions, have the skills to deliver and can demonstrate they have the pathways and trust of the communities and individuals we want them to work with. | Agreed | City Executive Board | 12 th . September |
| Parking in Parks – Signage and Monitoring | | | |
| (1) Allocate additional funding to allow for improved signage at the car parks adjacent to parks, better explaining the charges: (2) Continue to monitor the charges and to undertake a review within the next six months. | | City Executive Board | 5 th December |

**Report of: The Value and Performance Committee - 25th June 2012
To: Councillor Van Coulter, Board Member for Leisure**

Fusion Leisure Contract – 2011/2012 Performance against target

The Committee would like to thank Councillor Coulter for attending the meeting and presenting an informative and interesting report. The Committee had a full and constructive debate and would like to highlight the following comments and make the following recommendations. The committee requests that Councillor Coulter respond as soon as possible to the committee Chair – Councillor Mills.

Comments and Recommendations

Finance

- (1) Are all Fusion staff and contractors paid the living wage?

RECOMMENDATION: To seek confirmation via the Partnership Board that the living wage is being paid to staff and confirmation when it will also be paid to any sub-contractors working in Fusions run sites in Oxford.

- (2) Subsidy figures shown do not include capital costs. The committee were interested to know what the outcome for subsidy would be if they were. Views were expressed that the savings in revenue may be taken and replaced by increases in the capital expenditure as required as part of the contract.

RECOMMENDATION: To see the subsidy position for each leisure centre including capital investments made.

- (3) The issue of Fusion's charitable status and its profits were discussed at the meeting along with how any surpluses were ploughed back into the business.

RECOMMENDATION: To seek clarification of what share of the £1.3m surplus made by Fusion would be re-invested in the Oxford City Contract and how this would be used within leisure centres and/or services.

Participation, utilisation and satisfaction of facilities

- (4) Increases in visitor numbers seemed to have reached a plateau. What can be done to encourage more users into the leisure centres or have we gone as far as we can?

RECOMMENDATION: To see the ideas and proposals from the Partnership Board to further increase participation with a particular emphasis on outreach work within target groups.

- (5) Utilisation at our leisure centres is not evenly spread. Some centres are crowded whilst others are under used. What can Fusion do to encourage use of under-utilised centres?

RECOMMENDATION: To see Fusion's suggestions on encouraging better utilisation of our centres.

- (6) The pie charts demonstrating participation by area are a good start but don't give a complete picture on either the representation within the population or the total of visitor numbers.

RECOMMENDATION: To request that for the future participation is also shown as a percentage of the population in each postcode area and if possible to include all visitors to allow for a more meaningful comparison of the figures.

- (7) The effects and success of the various outreach work was not clear. Increases in participation were very obvious across target groups but the links between this increase and outreach schemes was not obvious.

RECOMMENDATION: To provide information on the various outreach projects across:

- Cost
- Objectives
- Targets
- Outcomes

- (8) Satisfaction levels are very high at 97%. Views were expressed that this seemed almost impossibly high. Information was requested on the methodology used to measure satisfaction and how results were audited by the Council.

RECOMMENDATION: To request further information on the methodology used for measuring satisfaction and the process for auditing and checking the quality of the results.

- (9) The majority of repairs and maintenance is delivered by Fusion within the contract. Views were expressed that these are not always done well or in a timely way.

RECOMMENDATION: To raise the issue of repairs and maintenance at the Partnership Board and for standards to be monitored. To report back on how monitoring is to happen.

(10) The issue of leisure provision in the Marston area was raised.

RECOMMENDATION: Request that the Board Member respond to the local Ward Member for Marston on what the Council's leisure offer for residents in his ward.

Authors: Pat Jones and Mathew Metcalfe on behalf of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

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Value and Performance Scrutiny answers to leisure questions and a background to the contract

Recognising that we have a number of new members this introduction provides some background on the leisure improvement journey to assist members in their scrutiny role.

Pre 2009 the leisure service was performing poorly with high costs (£2.14 subsidy per user), regular unplanned facility closures and significant staffing problems. Following an intense year of service improvement we entered into a leisure contract with Fusion Lifestyle in March 2009 which has been a catalyst for vast improvements in performance and cost savings of £660,000 per year in our leisure centres.

When setting the contract the following key principles were agreed:

1. A social enterprise that mirrored our values
2. A partnership approach
3. Bespoke solution for Oxford
4. High degree of local engagement
5. Improvements and innovation encouraged
6. Significantly lower revenue costs
7. Risk transferred
8. Council retain control of buildings and core pricing

The council were keen to focus upon outcomes and set the contract up to monitor how they were achieved, as opposed to monitoring the inputs.

Progress

The service has embedded a culture of continuous improvement and through QUEST and the National Benchmarking Surveys has thorough external challenge. Additional to this Fusion Lifestyle have an array of systems to monitor and drive improvement.

The transformation in our leisure centre can be seen with:

- 250,000 more visits each year than when the contract started
- Satisfaction is at 96%
- Five leisure centre have achieved QUEST (the industry's quality management system)
- Ferry Leisure Centre – in 2012 received the National Benchmarking Service award for finance and efficiency
- Subsidy per user is now just 65p and reducing – the national average is £1.81 (Association of Public Service Excellence)
- Fusion's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 5% year on year and carbon initiatives to reduce CO2 per visit.

The contract is overseen by the Leisure Partnership Board, which is the guiding body for developing the annual service plan. This board includes senior council and Fusion Lifestyle officers, two councillors, a lead for young people, older people, a user group representative and the primary care trust. The governance of the contract has been externally audited and found to be very robust.

The scrutiny arrangements for the contract were set in 2009 just after the contract had been agreed. As service levels have continually improved it was expected that the level of scrutiny would reduce and a focus would be on areas where the contract was not performing. This has not been the case; the volume and level of information has in fact continued to increase.

The council's Leisure Manager is the sole client officer; the role is to ensure the contract is delivered in accordance with the specification, to encourage new opportunities that support the council's agenda and to be the council's point of contact. This is done through marketing, carbon and client communication meetings, along with site visits. The Leisure Manager is also the service lead officer for performance management and investors in people. The workload to develop the increasing level of data for the scrutiny report is four days for the client officer, plus one and a half days for Fusion Lifestyle.

Scrutiny are asked to think though how they use the officer resource, a few options are:

- Scrutinising the annual service plan; this requires minimal officer time
- Reducing the number of reports to annually from every six months
- Having focus areas where scrutiny believe there is a failing; this could be as and when, six monthly or annually.
- To become involved in user groups and or undertake mystery visits.

By reducing the data collection time demands on officers they will be able to invest this time into driving forward continued improvements in leisure rather than collating significant volumes of data.

Answers to questions from the 25 June 2012, Value and Performance Scrutiny meeting.

To seek confirmation via the Partnership Board that the living wage is being paid to staff and confirmation when it will also be paid to any sub-contractors working in Fusion run sites on Oxford.

Response:

With effect from 1 April 2012 and throughout the remainder of the term of the Principal Contract, Fusion are ensuring that all staff employed or otherwise engaged by Fusion Lifestyle in the delivery of the Oxford Leisure Service are paid on a basis which at least meets the "Oxford Living Wage" specification, as set by the Council from time to time.

To see the subsidy position for each leisure centre including capital investments made.

The reason that the subsidy per user excludes capital is that this is a consistent measure that shows direction of travel and it can also be benchmarked. If for example we build a new facility, or undertake a development then the capital cost would be weighted to a particular year and the data provided would not be meaningful.

APSE data collection guidelines note: *Capital costs are excluded from performance indicator calculations.*

Finance officers are pulling together some figures, but they have concerns about the value of these and the potential for misinterpretation.

To seek clarification of what share of the £1.3m surplus made by Fusion Lifestyle would be re-invested in the Oxford City Contract and how this would be used within leisure centres and/ or services.

Response:

As part of Fusion Lifestyle's risk management strategy a level of reserves are agreed with their Trustees that they hold on their balance sheet.

These reserves underwrite the financial security of the company against the impact of disaster or other unforeseen events. In the short term the £1.3 million surplus from 2011 will support Fusion Lifestyle's reserves targets.

As they go through each year Fusion Lifestyle review with their client's, investment opportunities in the particular contract. If it is agreed to proceed with a particular opportunity, Fusion Lifestyle then discuss the best source of funds with the client which in turn could be from their own reserves.

To see the ideas and proposals from the Partnership Board to further increase participation with a particular emphasis on out reach work within target groups.

Response:

The annual service plan sets out Fusion Lifestyle's aims and objectives in respect of the delivery of leisure services on behalf of the Council. The plan describes underpinning strategic objectives and sets out action plans in respect of those strategic objectives.

The contents of the plan, once agreed with the Partnership Board, are submitted to the Council's Executive Board and then communicated to staff, customers and other stakeholders.

Nine strategic objectives are identified in respect of participation; this includes increase in participation by target groups (i.e. those under 17 and over sixty years of age, disabled users, women and girls, users from BME groups and those residents in the most deprived wards in the City).

Six strategic objectives are identified in respect of sports and community development.

The ongoing review and monitoring process incorporates management scrutiny, monthly update reports, monthly meetings between key representatives of the Council and Fusion Lifestyle, quarterly Partnership Board and Leisure Steering Group meetings, with a formal review in advance of the annual service planning process.

The 2013/14 planning process has commenced, with the Partnership Board requesting additional strategic objectives to be considered. These include:

- Educational attainment
- Employability
- Youth ambition.

To see Fusion Lifestyle's suggestions on encouraging better utilisation of our centres.

Response:

The above text explaining the annual service plan process applies to the question. Utilisation has increased by 250,000 visits since the contract began and getting more people active is the primary focus of the contract. This ranges from continually improving programming and improving the services offered.

To request that for future, participation is also shown as a percentage in each postcode area and if possible all visitors to allow for a more meaningful comparison of the figures.

Response:

Working with the Council's Social Research Officer it is possible to provide this information; it would though take up additional officer's time to do so.

It would be better to use the 2011 Census data to do this, which is due to be published by the end of November 2012.

Postcode data is obtained from Fusion Lifestyle's membership/ loyalty card database. Membership uptake equates for around 70% of users in our leisure facilities, and continues to grow. The vision is for all users to hold a form of membership or loyalty card.

It is not feasible to consistently obtain non-member postcode for each visit made to facilities. It is possible to demonstrate the percentage of visits by members and non-members.

To provide information on the various outreach projects.

This detail is provided in the six monthly performance reports to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee, the most recent report being 25 June 2012.

Fusion Lifestyle are working through the data (cost, objectives, targets and outcomes) from outreach projects and we expect this to be included in the Client performance report that we will receive in November 2012. In short the objectives are all to try to get more people active, with particular focuses on the targets in the Annual Service Plan e.g. getting more young people active, reducing health inequalities.

A summary of some of the outreach projects:

- Hosting of a General Practitioner exercise on referral instructor course; resulting in new Oxford Fusion Lifestyle employees becoming qualified in delivering the gym based health and well being offer.
- Fusion Lifestyle secured funding from the 'Fit as a Fiddle' initiative resulting in additional 50 plus sessions being introduced in Badminton, Zumba Gold dance, seated activities and learn to swim activities. 'Fit as a Fiddle' is a nationwide programme, supporting people aged of 50 plus with physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being.
- In partnership with Oxford United Football Club and MIND, Fusion Lifestyle is running a mental health awareness and fitness project in the local community. MIND is the leading mental health charity for England and Wales that promotes and protects good mental health for all.
- Fusion Lifestyle supports National Obesity Week in partnership with Oxfordshire Primary Care trust and the Oxfordshire Weight Loss service (OWLS), and hosted OWLS at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
- Fusion Lifestyle has secured funding to employ an Oxford City Active Women coordinator. Active Women is a new three year project being driven by Sport England to get more women from disadvantaged

communities, and more women caring for children, playing sport. The sessions are specifically designed for local women and aim to make it as easy as possible to participate.

- Sportivate is a lottery funded programme that gives 14 to 25 years olds access to six-week courses in a range of sports. The programme is aimed at those not currently choosing to take part in sport in their own time, or is doing so for a very limited amount of time, and will support them to continue to playing sport in their community. Sportivate is fully inclusive and targets participants across this age group, including young people who have a disability, males and females and people from BME groups.
- Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre is one of two Oxfordshire leisure facilities to be selected to run a pilot scheme to increase participation for social users, with the scope of the project being to increase the usage, quality and consistency of the experience of leisure facilities by social care users. A multi agency steering group has been established to drive this project with partners including Oxford City Council, Fusion Lifestyle, Oxfordshire County Council – Adult Social Care, West Oxfordshire District Council and The Oxfordshire Sports Partnership.

To request further information on the methodology used for measuring satisfaction and the process for auditing and checking the quality of results.

Overall customer satisfaction is measured by means of Fusion Lifestyle's 'Please Tell Us What You Think' customer feedback scheme; using the percentage of excellent/ good/ satisfactory responses received against nine performance headings.

Fusion Lifestyle are developing broader ways to measure satisfaction and next year will be returning to the Council a proposal to make understanding satisfaction more relative.

Current satisfaction across Fusion Lifestyle's portfolio of contracts is 94%, for Oxford facilities it is 96%.

To raise the issue of repairs and maintenance at the Partnership Board and for standards to be monitored. To report back on how monitoring is to happen.

The Executive member raised the issue of repairs and maintenance at the Partnership Board in June 2012.

The Council and Fusion Lifestyle have agreed a level of performance standards detailed in the 'Table of Standards'. These demonstrate the requirements and any rectification period required where performance may not be achieved. Failure to rectify may result in a default with deductions on a sliding scale made from the management fee paid to Fusion Lifestyle.

The Council has on-line access to Fusion Lifestyle's facility management system 'Basecamp'. This is a twice daily mechanism of facility inspections completed by staff to ensure standards are maintained and where not, requirements for action are reported.

Council Officers complete planned and unplanned visits across the seven leisure facilities, measuring against the agreed 'Table of Standards'.

Monthly client performance reports are received from Fusion Lifestyle and reviewed at monthly meetings between Council and Fusion Lifestyle Officers. The Facility management strand of the report includes the percentage:

- compliance for Basecamp inspections completed
- of scheduled cleaning tasks completed
- Scheduled Planned Preventative Maintenance completed.

Commentary is provided in the reports to demonstrate reasons for non-compliance and the rectification action being completed.

Additionally, facility management is reported at the quarterly Partnership Board meetings.

Request that the Board Member respond to the local ward Member for Marston on what the Council's leisure offer for residents in his ward.

In summary the leisure offer for residents in the ward include:

- Free to use multi-sport outdoor venue called 'adiZone'.
- The Community Arena boasts an artificial turf pitch with floodlights, offering a year round, all weather facility for football. In addition to the 3G pitch, 6 netball courts are available on site, which provides the city with its first very own dedicated netball courts.
- StreetSports programmes are delivered at Northway.
- Multi Use Games areas are provided at Croft Road and Northway.
- Children's Play Area.
- Women's exercise class with free crèche provision.
- Sports pitches.
- Fifty hours of free swimming to those aged under 17 years of age and living in the City.
- Targeted free swimming lessons (during and out side of school hours).
- Leisure membership offer including an affordable Bonus Concessionary offer to those in receipt of eligible benefits.

To: Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27th November 2012

Report of: Head of Law and Governance

Title of Report: PARKING IN PARKS – SIGNAGE AND MONITORING

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To allow the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee to note its recommendations prior to these being submitted to the City Executive Board on 5th December 2012.

Key decision? No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills

Executive lead member: Councillor Colin Cook

Recommendation(s):

The Scrutiny Committee is asked

- (a) To note its decision to disagree with the call-in:
- (b) To recommend the City Executive Board to:
 - (1) Allocate additional funding to allow for improved signage at the car parks adjacent to parks, better explaining the charges:
 - (2) Continue to monitor the charges and to undertake a review within the next six months.

Introduction

1. The Chair of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee called-in the decision of the City Executive Board on 12th September 2012 made following a review of charging for parking in parking areas adjacent to parks.
2. The reason for the call-in was that in making the decision consideration should have been given to:-
 - (i) The impact on neighbouring areas.

- (ii) The balance between revenue from charges and penalties.
 - (iii) Whether there are other factors in play which might be distorting the comparison of user numbers.
3. Following a debate during which the Committee heard from local residents who lived close by parks car parks, the Committee agreed to disagree with the call-in, but to make two recommendations to the City Executive Board on funding for better signage and for continued monitoring.

Name and contact details of author:-

Mathew Metcalfe on behalf of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee
Democratic and Electoral Services Officer
Law and Governance
Tel: 01865 252214 e-mail: mmetcalfe@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

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To: City Executive Board

Date: 23rd November 2012

Report of: Head of Customer Services

Title of Report: Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To consider the feedback from the recent consultation on the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme, to agree the principles of the new scheme to be drawn up for approval by Council on 17th December 2012, and to agree the Council Tax Discount and Exemption proposals for inclusion in the budget setting consultation.

Key decision? Yes

Executive lead members: Councillor Val Smith and Councillor Ed Turner

Policy Framework:

Recommendation(s): The Executive Board Member is recommended to:

1. Note the outcome of the consultation on the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
2. Instruct officers to draft the details of the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14 replicating the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme and submit the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme to Council for approval at its meeting on the 17th December 2012.
3. Agree the Council Tax Discount and Exemption amendments as set out in paragraph 20 for inclusion in the budget setting consultation.

Appendix Numbers

- 1 – Local Council Tax Support Survey
- 2 – Oxfordshire Districts Consultation Results
- 3 – Financial Impact of Local Council Tax Support Scheme and Changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions
- 4 – Risk Register
- 5 – Equalities Impact Assessment

The administration has a clear commitment to the approach that should be taken in formulating a revised Local Council Tax Benefit Support Scheme. It is concerned to avoid any increase in poverty amongst claimants, many of whom are in low-paid work. It also believes that disproportionate amounts of taxpayers' money would be spent chasing small debts if the cut in benefit were passed on. It therefore asked officers to bring forward a scheme which avoids passing on the cut in benefit.

Introduction

1. From April 2013 Local Authorities are required to implement and administer their own Council Tax Support schemes which will replace Council Tax Benefit. The cost of providing this support will continue to be provided by Central Government, but reduced by 10% based on a prediction of Council Tax Support spending for next year.
2. In designing our own scheme the City Council will either need to cover our share of the 10% reduction and any increase in caseload within our own budget, or reduce the amount of support provided to customers. It is important to remember that the council tax we collect is made up of the County Council and Thames Valley Police precepts as well as our own charge. In percentage terms the City Council's precept constitutes 17% of the total council tax charged, whilst the County Council accounts for 73% and Thames Valley Police 10%. Regulations provide that people of pensionable age must receive the same level of support as currently. As such any reduction would fall wholly on working age customers.
3. Officers across all of the Oxfordshire Districts, the County Council and Thames Valley Police Authority have been working together to adopt a common scheme County-wide. The proposal is to replicate the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme for 2013/14. This avoids any adverse equalities impacts which might otherwise occur.
4. As a result, a Single Member Decision was taken on 16th August 2012, agreeing to:
 - Replicate the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme and adopt them as the City Council's draft Local Council Tax Support Scheme for consultation; and
 - Work in partnership with the County Council and other Oxfordshire districts to issue joint advertising and consultation on the proposed scheme for a period of 6 weeks between 27th August and 5th October 2012.
5. This report analyses the consultation feedback and proposes the principles of the new scheme to be drawn up for approval by Council on 17th December 2012.

Transitional Grant

6. It has recently been announced that the Department for Communities and Local Government is making available an additional £100 million for one year to support local authorities in developing well-designed council tax support schemes and to maintain positive incentives to work.
7. The grant will be payable in March 2013 to those authorities who adopt schemes that comply with criteria set by Government to ensure that low income households do not face an extensive increase in their council tax liability in 2013-14. This funding seeks to enable councils to explore more sustainable approaches to managing the funding reduction in order to minimise the impact on vulnerable taxpayers.
8. To apply for a grant from the transitional fund, billing authorities must adopt schemes which ensure that:
 - Those who are currently entitled to 100% support under council tax benefit arrangements pay between zero and no more than 8.5% of their net council tax liability;
 - The taper rate does not increase above 25%;
 - There is no sharp reduction in support for those entering work; and
 - The taper continues to operate as under current council tax benefit regulations - that is, to be applied to excess income and in relation to the claimant's maximum eligible council tax reduction. Where an authority has decided to adopt a scheme in which the maximum reduction is lower than 100% of liability, the taper will apply to the lower figure.

Although not one of the eligibility criteria, the Government do not expect local authorities to impose large additional increases in non-dependant deductions.

9. Funding will be payable to billing authorities whose schemes satisfy the criteria and their major precepting authorities, as an “un-ring fenced” specific grant.

Applications can only be made after the deadline for adopting schemes on 31 January 2013.

10. To provide certainty on the funding position in advance, a schedule stating the award amounts to each local authority has been published, this shows that if eligible Oxford City Council will receive £42,148.
11. The draft Local Council Tax Support Scheme that the City Council has consulted on appears to be eligible for the transitional grant. It is therefore recommended that the Council applies for the Transitional Grant in due course.

Oxford City Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation Results

13. Each District carried out a postal survey with a representative sample of 500 of its council tax payers. The survey was also made available on-line for a range of stakeholders who were invited to participate as well as other residents who responded to the media advertising.
14. A copy of the survey can be found at Appendix 1.
15. Oxford City Council received 152 responses to the consultation and our results as well as those of the other Oxfordshire Districts can be found in full at Appendix 2. The summary results for the City Council are as follows:
- 73% of respondents were not in receipt of benefit.
 - 97% of respondents were speaking on their own behalf.
 - 95% of respondents live within the City's administrative area.
 - 51% of respondents either agree or strongly agree with the proposed scheme. 5% either disagree or strongly disagree with the proposed scheme, whilst 44% neither agree, disagree or simply don't know. In the free text section most people commented that the scheme should be maintained in order to help those on lower incomes especially in the current financial climate.
 - In terms of alternative ways of reducing the scheme, the results were as follows:
 - Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The Current limit is £16,000 savings. 37% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst 35% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band, e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum band D property. 44% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst 26% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage. 39% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst 28% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners). 67% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, whilst 15% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Consultation feedback from the other Oxfordshire Districts

16. Across the other Oxfordshire Districts there was broad consensus to the proposed scheme as follows:

| | Agree | Disagree |
|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Cherwell | 50% | 14% |
| Oxford City | 51% | 5% |
| South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse | 64% | 9% |
| West Oxfordshire | 45% | 23% |

When asked for views on how the costs of the scheme could be reduced, the options in order of preference can be found in the table below with 1 being the preferred option and 4 being the least preferred option.

| Oxfordshire District's Preferences for Alternative Council Tax Support Schemes | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | Cherwell | Oxford City | South & Vale | West |
| Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The current limit is £16,000 savings | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band.e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum of a band D property. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Consultation Conclusions

17. The consultation has shown that on balance there appears to be more support for replicating the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme and adopting them as the City Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14.

18. In terms of alternatives, most options suggested were not supported with any great significance, apart from reducing benefit entitlement if other adults of working age reside in the household.

Amendments to the Council Tax Discount and Exemption Schemes

19. The Government is introducing regulations to permit Councils to vary the percentage reductions for some discounts and exemptions. This will provide the opportunity to generate additional Council Tax income which could be used to offset the additional cost of providing Council Tax Support to working age customers. The exemptions and discount classes that can be amended are listed below with their current allowances and associated timescales:

- Exemption Class A – Recently built or uninhabitable due to work (current 100% exemption for a time limit 12 months)
- Exemption Class C – Vacant – empty and unfurnished (current 100% exemption for a time limit of 6 months)
- Exemption Class L – Unoccupied where the mortgagee is in possession (current 100% exemption)
- Second Homes Discount – This would include second homes, holiday homes and properties left empty between tenancies. Oxford City Council currently provides a 10% discount on these properties.

20. To mitigate the cost of the new Local Council Tax Support Scheme it is recommended that the City Council consult on the following proposed amendments to discounts and exemptions as part of its budget consultation exercise which is due to commence in December 2012.

- Exemption Class A – Recently built or uninhabitable due to work – 25% exemption for a time limit of 12 months
- Exemption Class C – Vacant – empty and unfurnished – 25% for a time limit of 6 months
- Exemption Class L – Unoccupied where the mortgagee is in possession – 0%
- Second Homes Discount – 0% discount

21. The other Oxfordshire Districts will also be examining their approach to what they charge for these discounts and exemptions.

Financial Implications

22. The table at Appendix 3 shows the estimated financial impact of the proposed Council Tax Benefit Support Scheme and potential extra income from council tax discounts and exemptions if the City Council changes the charging levels to those suggested in paragraph 20 above.

23. To explain the table in detail:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme will reduce the authority's tax base by the value of council tax support equated to the number of Band D equivalent properties. In Oxford City this equates to a reduction of 6,447 band D properties or 14 % of the tax base.
- The reduction in tax base reduces the amount of council tax income, which is estimated to be around £1.722 million per year. Allowing for a 1.5% estimated increase in claimants, this takes the reduction in council tax income to £1.747 million per year. This will be covered in part by grant funding from government, roughly equivalent to last years council tax subsidy less 10% and equates to £1.559 million. We have been notified of this grant, but are aware it will change.
- The difference between grant and loss of council tax income is therefore projected to be circa £188k for Oxford City.
- If the second home discount and exemption for unoccupied properties where the mortgagee is in possession are both reduced to zero, and the Class A and C exemptions are reduced to 25% each, the forecasted extra income generated will leave the City Council with a potential deficit of £43k. This deficit could potentially be covered if the Council is successful in its application for transitional grant (£42k).

Parishes

24. Billing Authorities were advised they would receive a grant in respect of parishes. For the City we have been advised this is provisionally in the region of £24k. In August 2012 the Government consulted on how this additional grant funding would be provided to parishes given the proposed changes to the tax base for council tax support. The government recognised the difficulties that could be experienced by Billing Authorities in deciding how to allocate the grant as well as the fact that there is no statutory duty for them to do so.

25. The Consultation concluded that the tax base for parishes would not be amended for council tax support as will happen with the city wide tax base. The parish tax base will stay the same and hence the parish Band D council tax will stay the same, providing that the parish does not change its precept. Whilst in the consultation it was still indicated that the grant will be paid to Billing Authorities until the Regulations are passed in November the situation remains a little uncertain.

Risk

26. An evaluation of the risks associated with the implementation of this policy has been carried out. A detailed risk register is at Appendix 4.

Climate Change/Environmental Impact

27. None.

Equalities Impact Assessment

28. A Screening exercise has been carried out and is at Appendix 5. As the draft Council Tax Support Scheme is proposed to replicate the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme, it avoids any adverse equalities impacts which might otherwise occur.

Legal Implications

29. Consultation and implementation has been conducted in accordance with the regulation provisions. Schedule 4, Part 2(5) of the Local Government Finance Bill 2012 provides that to adopt a Council Tax Support Scheme, Full Council consent should be obtained by 31st January in the year preceding the financial year that the scheme is due to take effect.

Name and contact details of author:-

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Name | Helen Bishop |
| Job title | Head of Customer Services |
| Service Area | Customer Services |
| Tel: | 01865 252233 e-mail: hbishop@oxford.gov.uk |

List of background papers: None

Version number: 1.3

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SURVEY

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation 2012

Background Information

Council Tax Benefits are funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and supports people on low incomes by reducing the amount of Council Tax they have to pay.

People can claim full Council Tax Benefit if they are on certain benefits. These include income based jobseekers allowance, income support, guarantee credit which is part of state pension credit and income related employment and support allowance. Others receive some Council Tax Benefit based on their income and other factors.

How is the Council Tax Benefit Scheme changing?

From April 2013 the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme will be replaced by a new Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The new scheme will be determined by local District Councils rather than the Department of Work and Pensions. The Government will provide funding but, on average, the amount of funding available to the new scheme will be 10% below that for the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

It is stipulated that pensioners and vulnerable groups should not be disadvantaged by this new scheme and so these groups will receive the same level of support providing their circumstances do not change.

In line with Government guidance, we have a duty to consult on this scheme and give you an opportunity to give us your views on the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Oxfordshire's Councils are working together to take the same approach to setting up their new schemes. By doing this the cost of setting up and maintaining the schemes is reduced and a single countywide consultation process can be carried out, saving both time and money.

In Oxford, 10,420 people currently receive Council Tax Benefit. Oxford City Council will need to find around an additional £200,000 per year to maintain the current level of benefits. Across the county, including all the Oxfordshire Councils and Thames Valley Police, this figure will be approximately £3,300,000.

Will I see a change in my Council Tax Benefit?

Everybody that is currently receiving full Council Tax Benefit would not notice a change providing their circumstances remain the same.

To support the continuation of the scheme in 2013/14, however, District Councils will need to find the funds to make up the 10% shortfall in government funding. It is proposed that funding options for this are considered later in 2012 as part of the normal District Council budget setting and budget consultation processes.

A copy of the draft Council Tax Reduction Scheme is available for your information.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided or to the following address (no stamp needed): FREEPOST, PO Box 10, Oxford, OX1 1BR

If you need copy of this publication in another format, please contact us. T: 01865 249811

www.oxford.gov.uk



Before giving your views about changes to the Council Tax Benefit Scheme you may find it helpful to read the background information provided on the front cover.

Q1 Do you currently receive Council Tax Benefit?

- Yes
- No

Q2 Are you responding to this survey on your own behalf or on behalf of somebody else?

- Own Behalf
- On behalf of somebody else

Q3 If you are responding on behalf of somebody else, please let us know who by selecting one of the options below.

- Carer
- Landlord
- Voluntary Organisation
- Housing Association
- Parish
- Other (please specify)

Q4 Which district do you live in? (Please tick ONE box only)

- Oxford City
- Cherwell
- South Oxfordshire
- Vale of White Horse
- West Oxfordshire

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Oxfordshire Councils are proposing to provide a Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2013-2014 which will cost Oxford City Council £188,000 per year.

Q5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals to maintain a scheme? (Please tick ONE box only)

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q6 Why do you agree or disagree? Please write in below.

Q7 Instead of maintaining Council Tax Reductions as is suggested, councils could consider a range of options to reduce the cost of the scheme from 2013 or in future years. This would apply to all claimants apart from pensioners and other vulnerable groups who the Government says must continue to be protected.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following ways in which the cost of the scheme could be reduced?

A. Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The current limit is £16,000 savings

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

C. Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

B. Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum of a band D property.

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

D. Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners)

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q8 If you have any other comments about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme please write in below.

About You

We are committed to making sure that residents have equal access to services. Please help us to keep track of how successfully we are achieving this by ticking the appropriate question boxes below.

All information is confidential and will only be used to help us monitor whether views differ across the community.

Are you male or female?

- Male Female

How old are you?

- 18-24 25-34 35-44
 45-54 55-64 65+

Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- Yes, limited a lot Yes, limited a little
 No

What is your ethnic group?
(Please tick ONE box only)

White

- English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British
 Irish
 Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 Any other white background (please write in)

Black or Black British

- Caribbean
 African
 Any other Black background (please write in)

Asian or Asian British

- Indian
 Pakistani
 Bangladeshi
 Chinese
 Any other Asian background (please write in)

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups

- White & Black Caribbean
 White & Black African
 White & Asian
 Any other mixed background (please write in)

Other ethnic group

- Arab
 Other ethnic group (please write in)

Can the council contact you again to invite you to take part in any further research about Council Tax benefits? (If yes, please remember to provide your contact details)

- Yes No

Contacting You

We would like to let you know what people have told us and what we are doing in response.

Feedback will be made available on our web pages at www.oxford.gov.uk/counciltax. If you would like us to contact you with the outcomes please give your contact details below.

Title Mr Mrs Miss Ms Dr

Other (please write in)

First name

Surname

Email address

Day time phone (including code)

Address

Thank you for your comments.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided or to the following address (no stamp needed): FREEPOST, PO Box 10, Oxford, OX1 1BR

Oxfordshire Districts Consultation Results

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

From April 2013 the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme will be replaced by a new Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

The new scheme will be determined by local District Councils rather than the Department of Work and Pensions.

The Government will provide funding but, on average, the amount of funding available to the new scheme will be 10% below that for the existing Council Tax Benefit scheme.

Oxfordshire's local authorities each asked residents for their views about how Council Tax benefit is provided by district councils next financial year (2013/4).

Whilst the questionnaire and background materials were agreed jointly, each district carried out its own exercise.

Key Findings:

The profile of those responding was as expected with high levels of older people (aged 60+), women and White British residents taking part.

When asked whether people agreed or disagreed with the proposals to maintain a scheme the responses were as follows:

| | Agree | Disagree |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Cherwell DC | 50% | 14% |
| Oxford City | 51% | 5% |
| South Oxon & Vale | 64% | 9% |
| West | 45% | 23% |

When asked for views on how the costs of the scheme could be reduced, the options in order of preference can be found in the table below with 1 being the preferred option and 4 being the least preferred option.

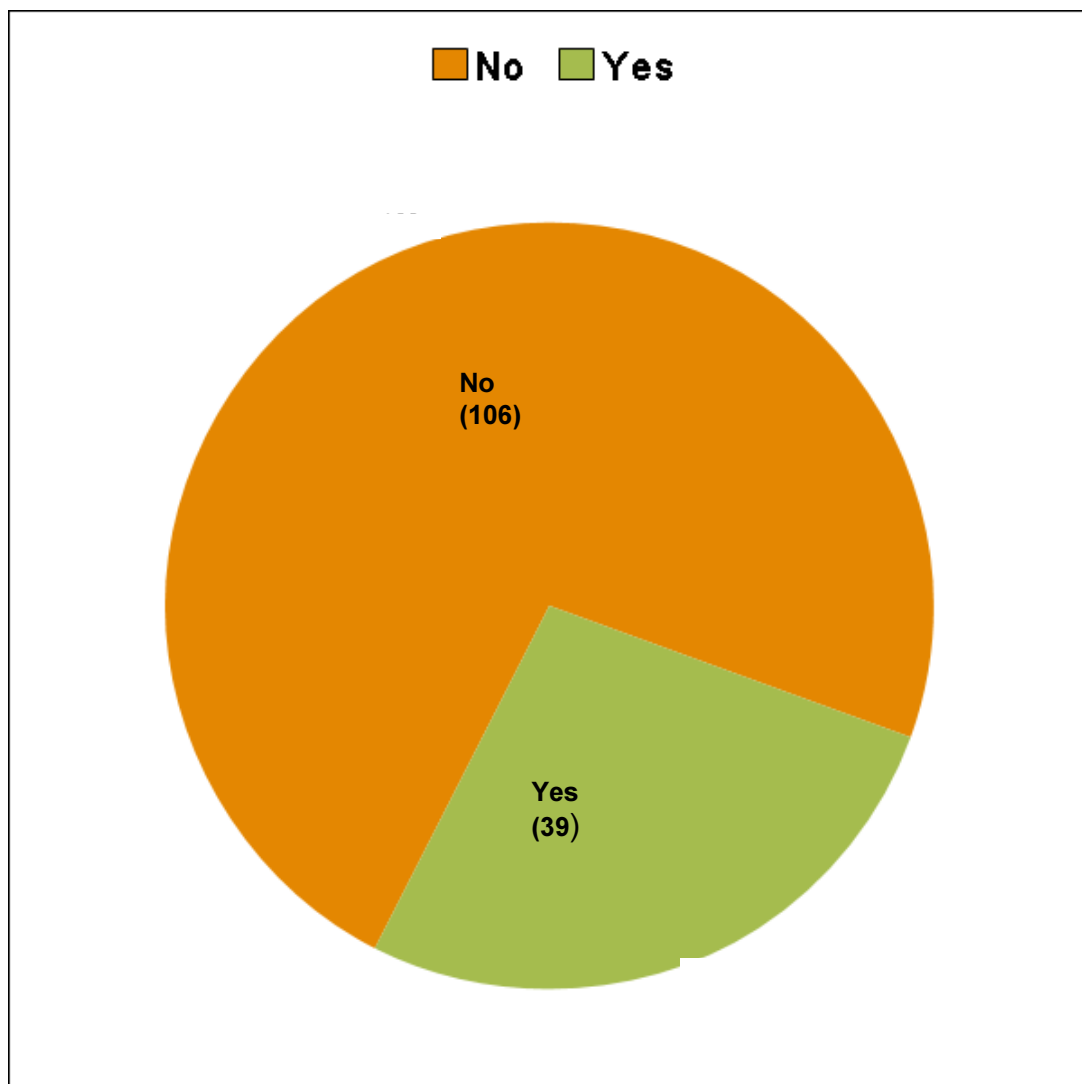
| | CDC | OCC | SO&V | WDC |
|--|------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
| Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The current limit is £16,000 savings | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band.e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum of a band D property. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Oxford City Council Survey Results

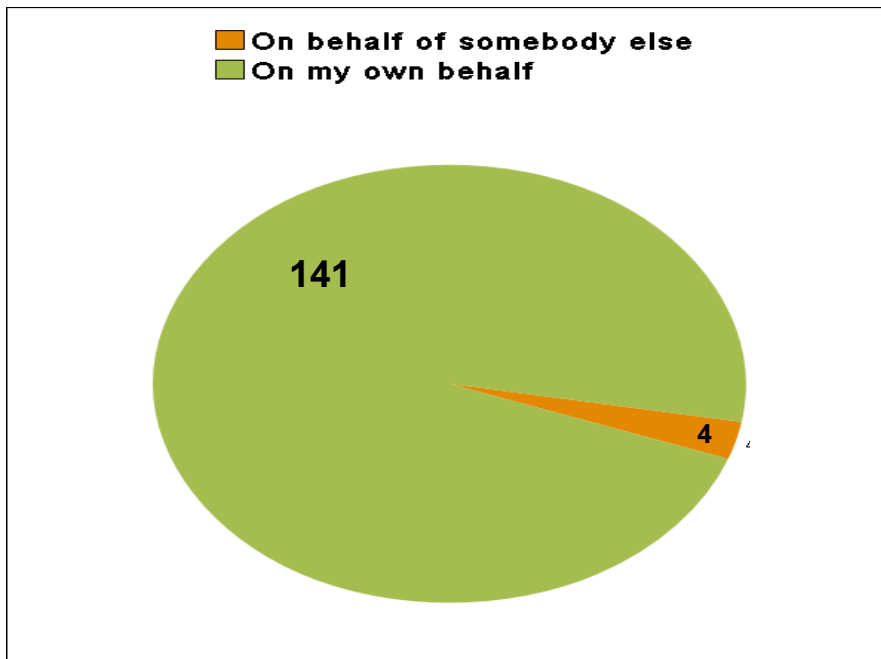
The Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation began on 24th August and ended on 28th September 2012. The survey was mailed out to a random sample of 500 residents across the city and posted on our online consultation system where all members of the public had an opportunity to take part.

We received 152 responses to this consultation and the results can be found below.

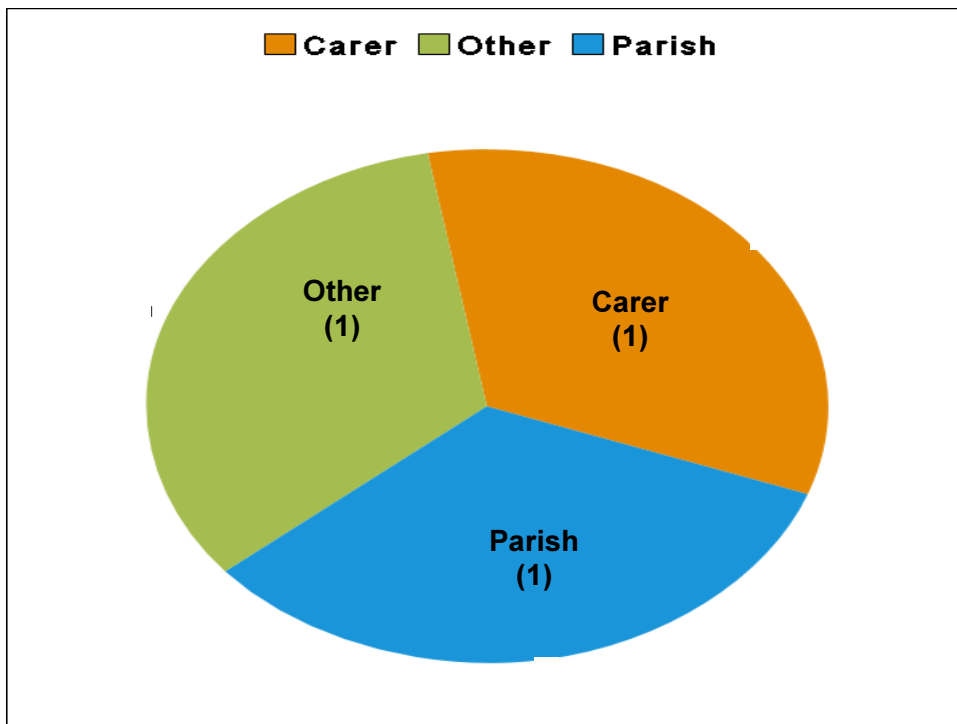
Question 1. Do you currently receive Council Tax Benefit?



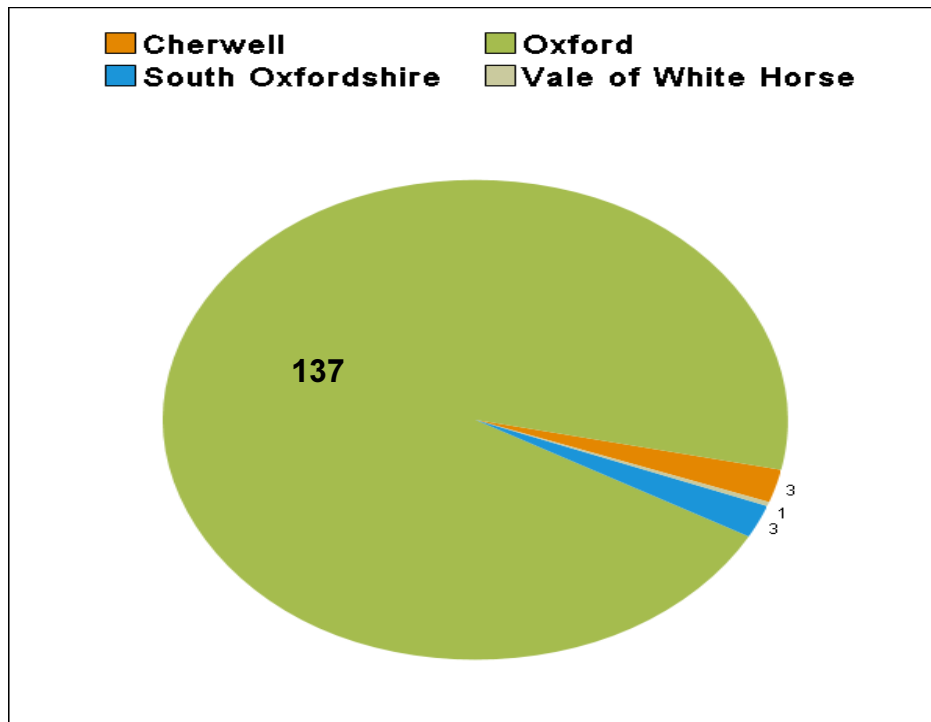
Question 2. Are you responding to this survey on your own behalf or on behalf of somebody else?



Question 3. If you are responding on behalf of somebody else, please let us know who be selecting one of the options below.

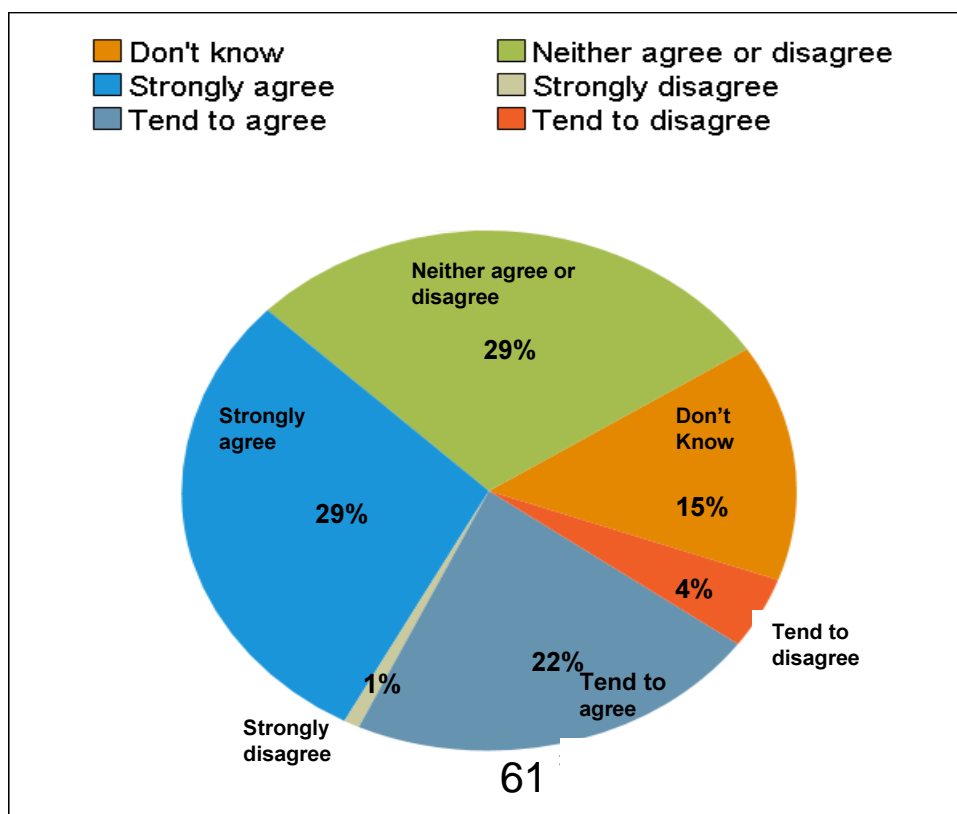


Question 4. Which district do you live in?



Oxfordshire Councils are proposing to provide a Council Tax Reduction scheme in 2013-2014 which will cost Oxford City Council £188,000 per year.

Question 5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals to maintain a scheme?



| | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 29% (40) |
| Tend to agree | 22% (30) |
| Neither agree or disagree | 29% (39) |
| Tend to disagree | 4% (6) |
| Strongly disagree | 1% (1) |
| Don't know | 15% (20) |

Question 6

Why do you agree or disagree?

A total of 59 people responded to this question.

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal included the following views:

- Need to support vulnerable people (such as disabled, pensioners and people on low incomes)
- People should pay Council Tax according to how much they earn.
- People on lower incomes need extra support especially in the current tough financial climate.
- It will help to safeguard the incomes of the most vulnerable

Reasons for disagreeing included:

- State support should be reduced to encourage people to work/contribute more
- People on low incomes should not get help at the expense of others e.g. Council Tax should not go up to pay for this.
- The cost of Council Tax benefit will have to be met by working people

The most common reasons for agreeing Most people that commented on this question agreed that the scheme should be maintained in order to help those on lower incomes especially in the current financial climate.

Question 7

Instead of maintaining Council Tax Reductions as is suggested, councils could consider a range of options to reduce the cost of the scheme from 2013 or in future years. This would apply to all claimants apart from pensioners and other vulnerable groups who the Government says must continue to be protected.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following ways in which the cost of the scheme could be reduced?

'Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The current limit is £16,000 savings'

| Option | Count |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 17% (22) |
| Tend to agree | 20% (27) |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 17% (23) |
| Tend to disagree | 15% (20) |
| Strongly disagree | 20% (26) |
| Don't know | 11% (15) |

'Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band.e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum of a band D property.'

| Option | Count |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 21% (27) |
| Tend to agree | 23% (30) |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 18% (23) |
| Tend to disagree | 13% (17) |
| Strongly disagree | 13% (17) |
| Don't know | 13% (17) |

'Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage'

| Option | Count |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 10% (13) |
| Tend to agree | 29% (38) |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 19% (25) |
| Tend to disagree | 17% (22) |
| Strongly disagree | 11% (14) |
| Don't know | 15% (19) |

'Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners)'

| Option | Count |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 35% (46) |
| Tend to agree | 32% (42) |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 8% (11) |
| Tend to disagree | 9% (12) |
| Strongly disagree | 6% (8) |
| Don't know | 10% (13) |

Question 8

If you have any other comments about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, please write in below.

| |
|---|
| 7D - would depend if other adults are working or not. |
| In order to get a reduction I thought only one person could live in the property. If more adults are living in the property why are they receiving a reduction? Surely this question is irrelevant? |
| I don't know anything about council tax financial arrangements. |
| The government should create funds for council tax reduction. It is unfair to do this to councils which already have their financial problems. |
| I really have no idea of any of these proposals and can't find it's pros and cons. My general view is you should base the calculation/reduction on income. |
| I think that it's unfair that I still have to work and pay for everything just because I have |

| |
|--|
| <p>a daughter at home when neighbours have a son some house but she gets reduction.</p> |
| <p>Serious effort to collect the reduced council tax payments must be made.</p> |
| <p>Sorry - This whole thing is very unclear and I don't feel qualified to express an opinion.</p> |
| <p>Since Q7 apparently means that I shall, as a pensioner, continue to receive this benefits, I do not think I can suggest how others might be affected.</p> |
| <p>We are both pensioners and pay full rent + council tax.</p> |
| <p>We all pay an extortionate amount of council tax in Oxford. I think Oxford City Council and other District Councils should be abolished and just have one Oxfordshire County Council.</p> |
| <p>To help fund the scheme, I believe that students living in HMO's should pay Council Tax. By exempting them from Council Tax we are effectively giving money to their landlords, who set the rent at whatever a group of 4 or 5 students can pay. The Council provides generous services top these students and should receive something in return.</p> |
| <p>If a house is rented and the occupants receive rent allowance they should pay it as private householders in council tax from their income, receiving the same allowances or reductions for disables or elderly relatives living with them.</p> |
| <p>I support the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as outlined.</p> |
| <p>My wife who is disabled and myself are pensioners. Our joint income is just above the limit we can have to claim rent and council tax benefit. So if the new scheme is introduced it should not be at the expense of people like us. Our council tax goes up to pay for the new scheme as it would make it even harder for us to manage than it is now.</p> <p>So our council tax does not go up to pay for this scheme:</p> <p>First - if there are other people of working age who are not in education age 16-65 yrs in the household, then the amount of council tax reduction received should be reduced.</p> <p>Second - if then needed reduce the amount of council tax reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage. Be everyone I mean people of working age who can work.</p> |
| <p>Q7 I feel it would be wrong of me to comment on this as I am a pensioner + it does not affect me.</p> |
| <p>Even those who normally receive benefits should realise that others, including lower paid workers not able to claim, are struggling.</p> |
| <p>Council taxes are the most appropriate tax. It is a burden to working family. Should stop benefiting single parent/mum. Working family are struggling to meet the both ends of income and expenditure. If you abolish council tax it would be a great thing in a family who are working hard to feed their children.</p> |
| <p>Wow! I'm glad I'm not a person in your position.</p> |
| <p>I am told Wiltshire Farm Foods calling once a week is a benefit but I pay them what they ask for myself. I really like having them come but it seems to me I have nothing more to say.</p> |
| <p>Sorry, haven't been a lot of help, but what I've just read on front cover, don't think it's going to work. The problem is, there is not a lot of information to go by.</p> |

For people who have additional personal living in their property (the lodgers, students etc.) extra money should be paid by the tenant.

May I say it is beyond my comprehension how living in a first floor flat, 1 bedroom, no garden, I am paying the same council tax as a person in a 3 bedroom house, garden front and rear.

Sorry but I do feel quite bitter regarding this issue.

I receive a reduction in my Council Tax because I live alone in my flat.

Savings limits should be irrelevant.

People who have worked hard, been prudent, and should not be penalties when in need of money and should not be treated in the same manner as those who squander their help and expect the state to help them.

Any households with multiple amounts should be paying full council tax so long as one is employed. Multiple occupancy households make more use of council services should and should contribute accordingly.

I find the above questions have a loaded out come? Normal working class who are now retired + have payed TAXES should be more family treated, during their retirement.

My strong views about your proposed scheme are in part a reaction to the ridiculously high number of people entitled to council tax reduction in a small city like Oxford.

Schemes like this actively encourage some people to remain on benefits and with reduced council staff, I don't see how you can police such a scheme to ensure that those receiving council tax reduction are actually entitled to do so.

I believe that everyone should pay something towards council tax since this is the best way of ensuring that people appreciate the services provided by the Council.

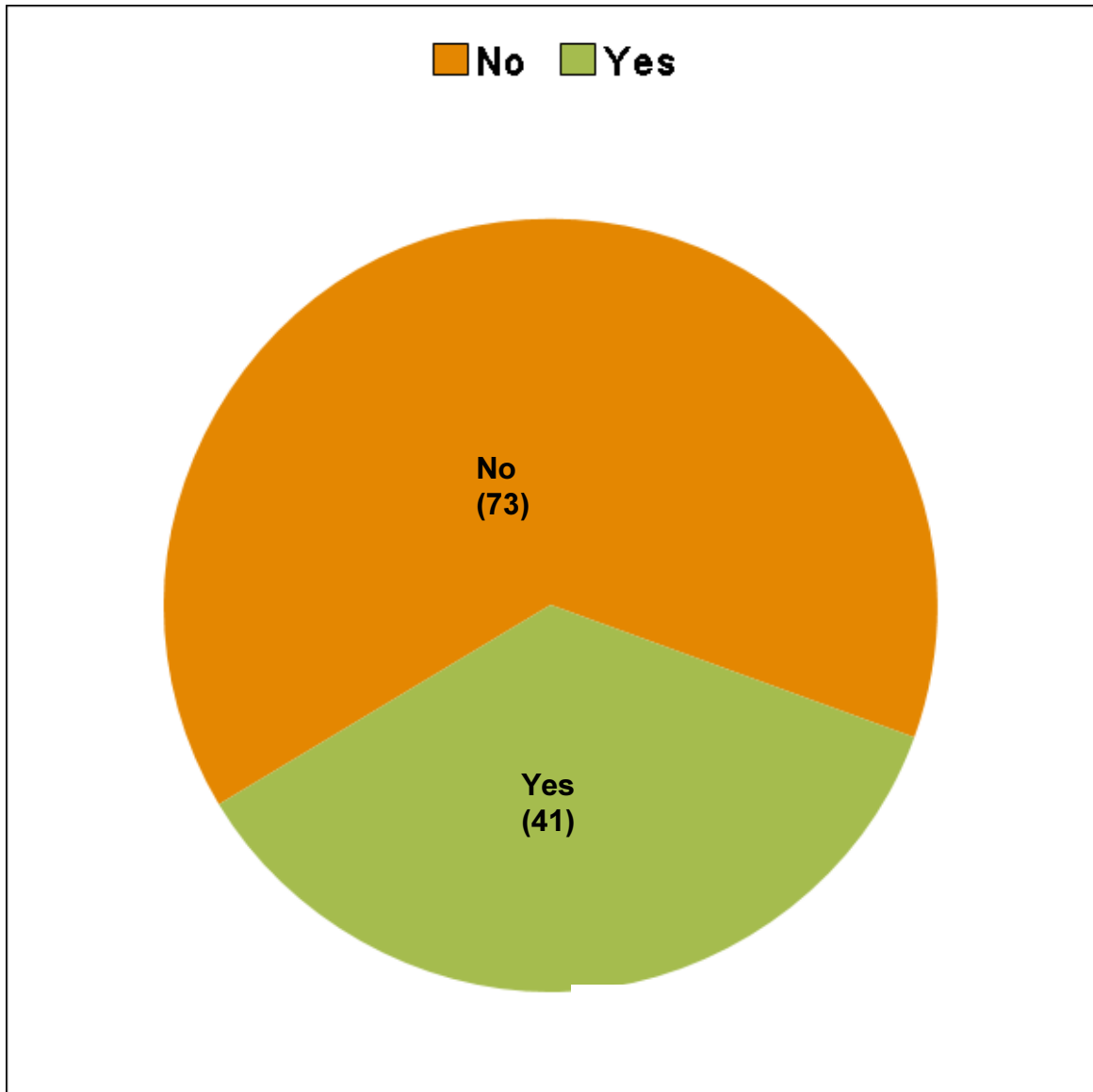
I would prefer to see the £188.000 cost of this scheme go towards, for example, the upkeep of library services which are available to all city residents.

Any reduction in tax and lowering property on any benefits - its good for everyone.

OAPs living alone should pay less.

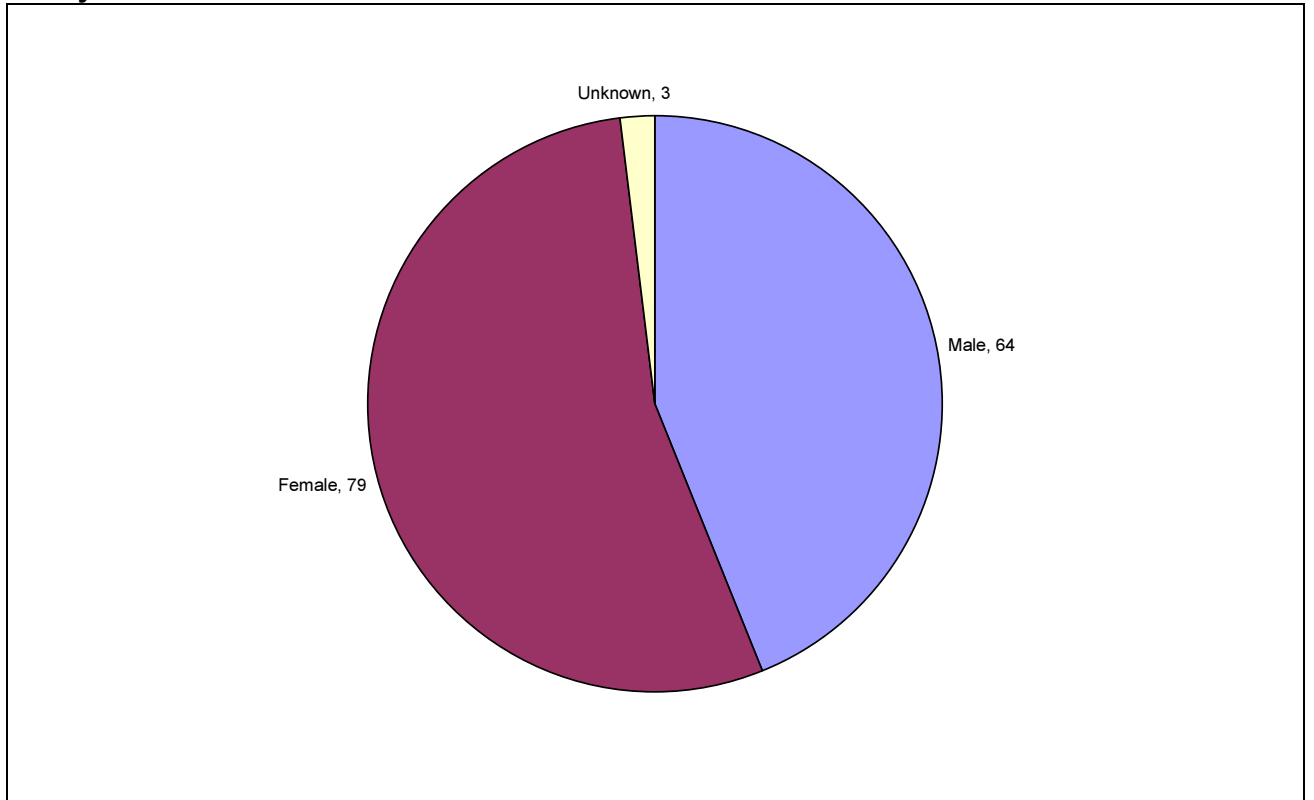
Question 9

Can the council contact you to invite you to take part in any further research about Council Tax benefits?

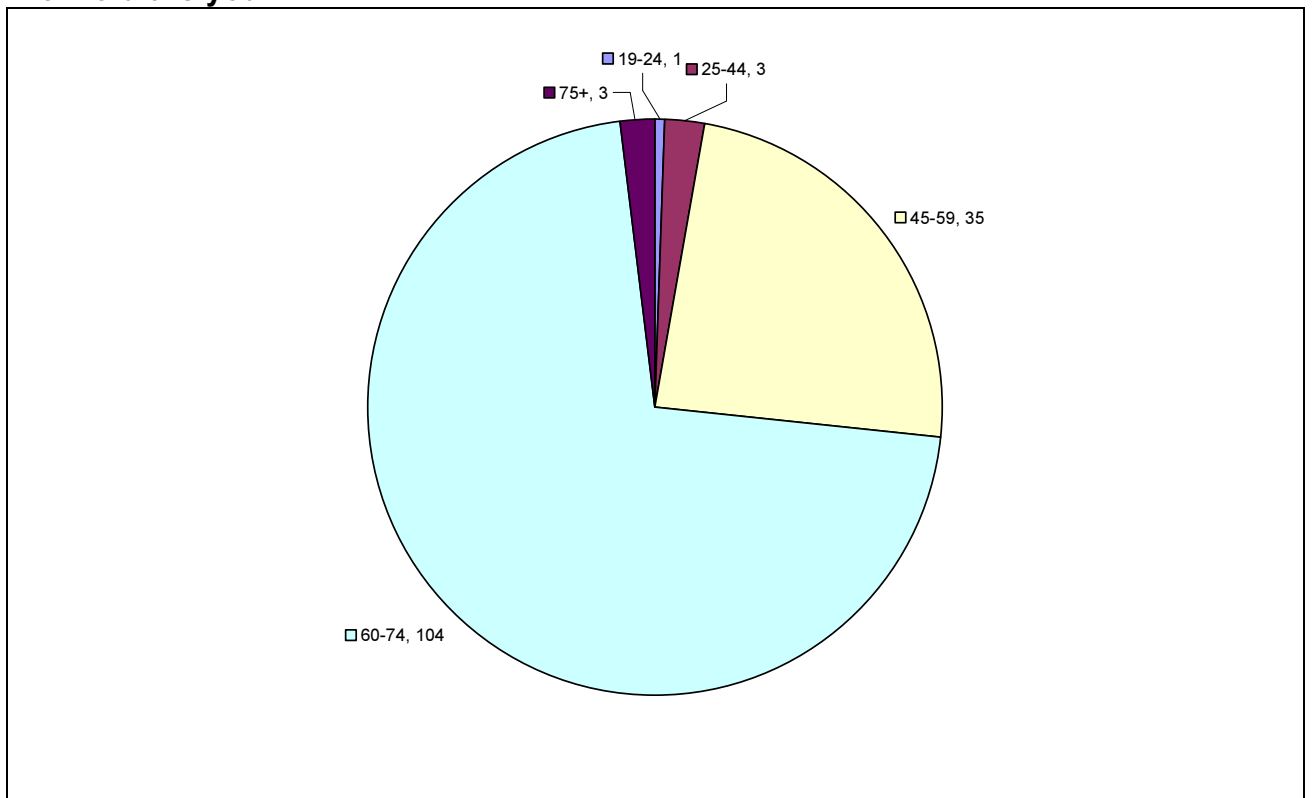


About you.

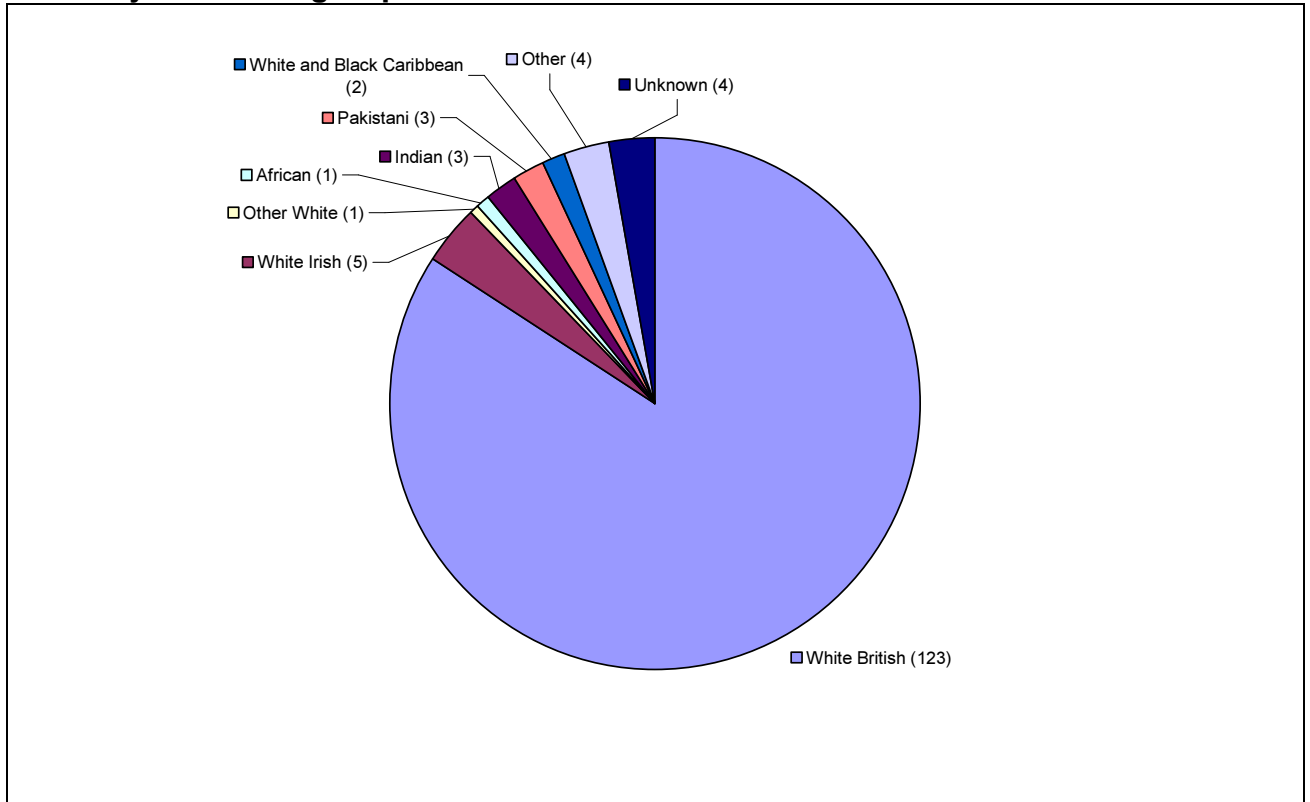
Are you male or female?



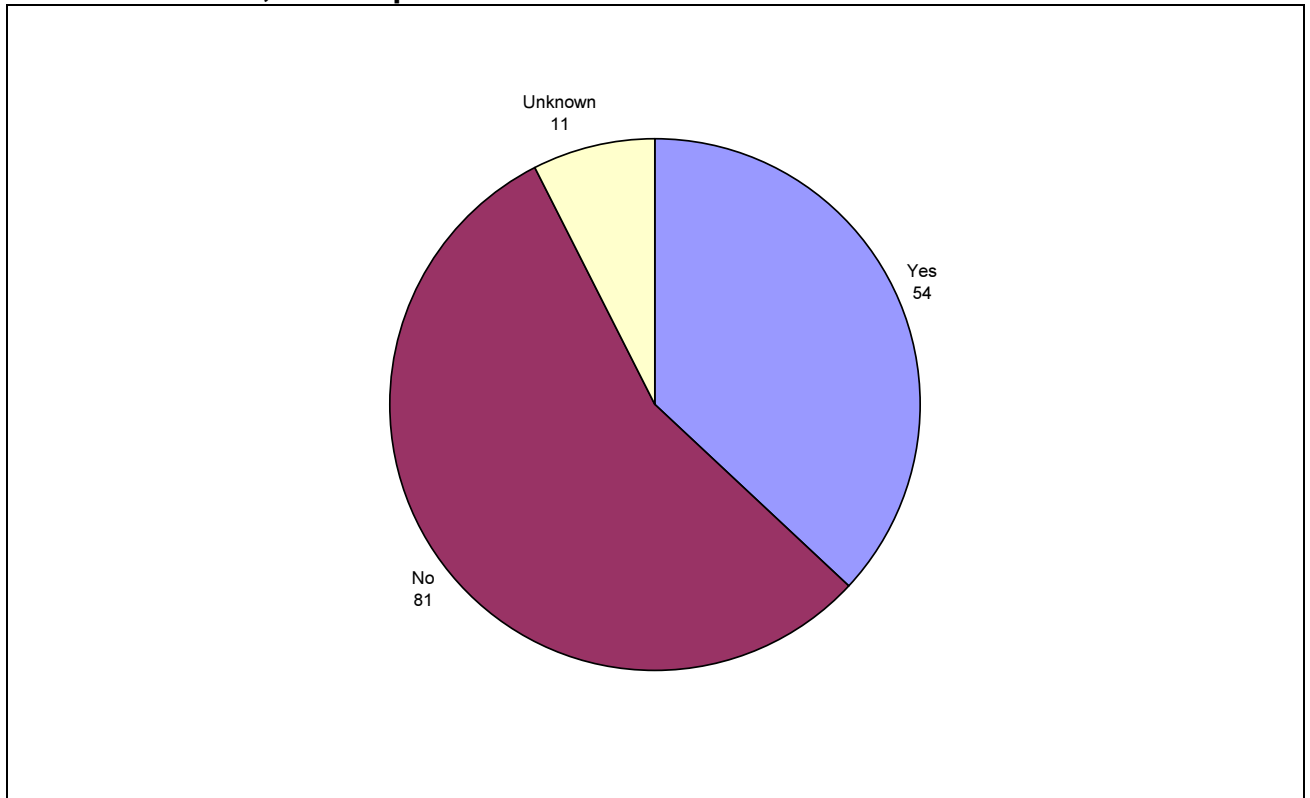
How old are you?



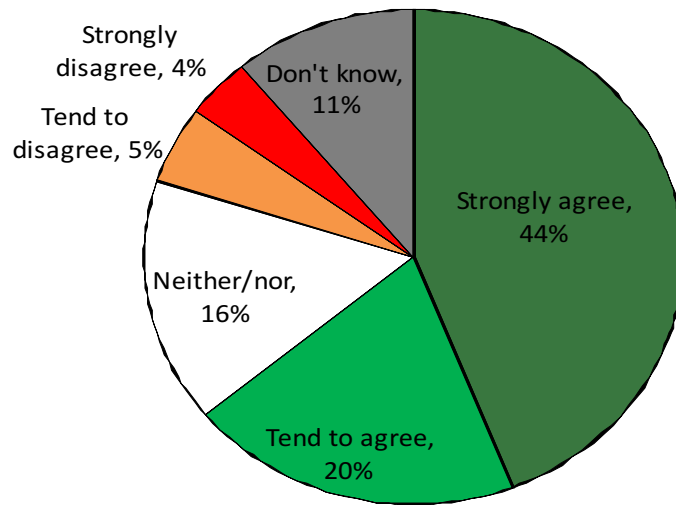
What is your ethnic group?



Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability, which has lasted, or is expected to last more than 12 months?



Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals to maintain a scheme ?



Base: All respondents (225)

Two thirds of those responding (64 per cent) agreed with proposals to maintain the scheme, 44 per cent strongly agreeing. Just under 1 in 10 people disagreed whilst higher proportions (16 and 11 per cent) neither agreed or disagreed or replied 'don't know'.

When comparing results between districts, whether someone received Council Tax benefit and characteristics such as age, gender and disability there were few differences between sub groups. The following differences are based on small sample sizes so should be treated with caution:

- Those who do not receive Council Tax benefit (34 people) may be more likely to agree (71 compared to 63 per cent), more likely to disagree (17 compared to 18 per cent) and less likely to say 'don't know' than those receiving the benefit
- Under 45s (41 people) may be more likely to disagree (17 per cent compared to 7 per cent of over 45s)

Question 6

Reasons for agreeing with the proposal included the following views:

- Need to support vulnerable people (such as disabled, pensioners and people on low incomes)
- Positive personal experience/impact of receiving Council Tax benefit
- Council is protecting local people from national cuts
- People should pay Council Tax in proportion to their ability to pay
- Council Tax is too expensive so people on lower incomes need support

Reasons for disagreeing included:

- Not the Council's role to reduce the impact of national cuts
- State support should be reduced to encourage people to work/contribute more
- The cost of Council Tax benefit will have to be met by working people

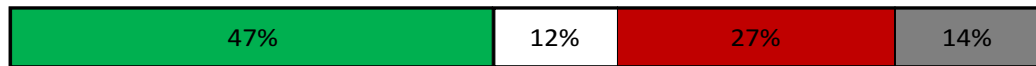
Those taking part were asked to what extent they agreed with options to reduce the cost of the scheme.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following ways in which the cost of the scheme could be reduced ?

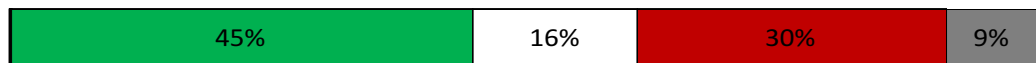
Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household



Reduce the maximum Council Tax reduction award for properties in higher Council Tax bands



Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax reduction



Reduce the amount of Council Tax reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage



■ Agree □ Neither/nor ■ Disagree ■ Don't know

Agreement was lowest with the option of reducing Council Tax support for everyone by a fixed percentage.

Question 8

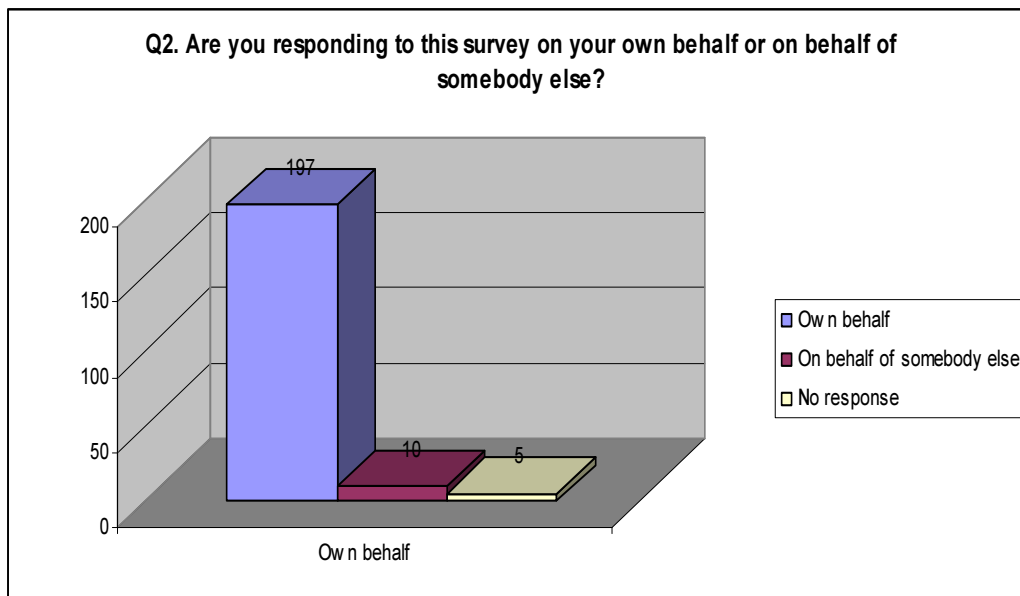
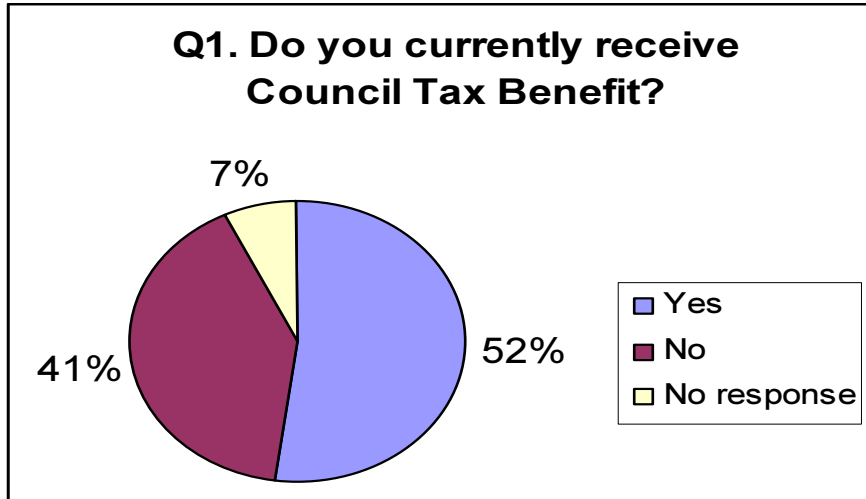
Other views expressed in the survey include:

- Council Tax should be proportional to income not property
- Council Tax paid should reflect the amount of services used, particularly for single-occupants
- Support should be targeted at those who need it based on prior contributions to reduce misuse
- People who have worked hard to save shouldn't be penalised
- Concern about the impact of charging more for properties empty for less than a month on landlords/tenants
- Query whether its practical to get information about other adults in a household
- Where a young person in a household finishes full time education but cannot get work this will already add pressure to household income
- How the Council will fund maintaining the scheme is not clear

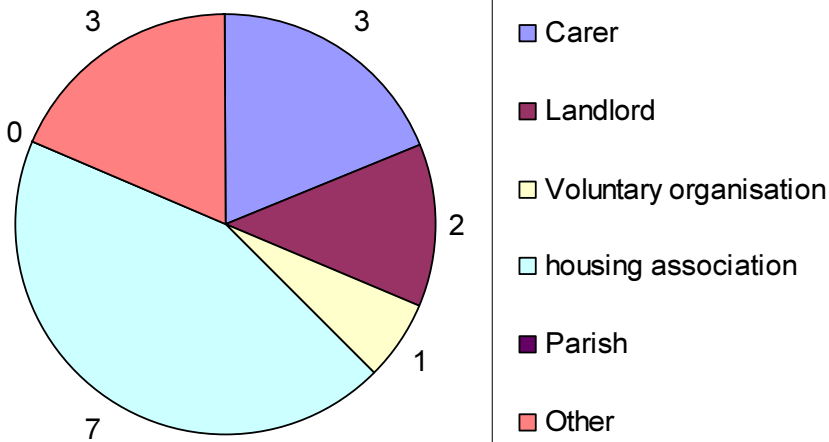
A number of comments and the high proportions of people responding 'don't know' indicate many residents found it difficult to understand the issues or felt they didn't have enough information to comment.

Cherwell District Council Survey Results

Comments were collected via Cherwell District Council website, there was also sample of local residents who received consultation letter and paper copy of the survey. A total of 212 responses were submitted.



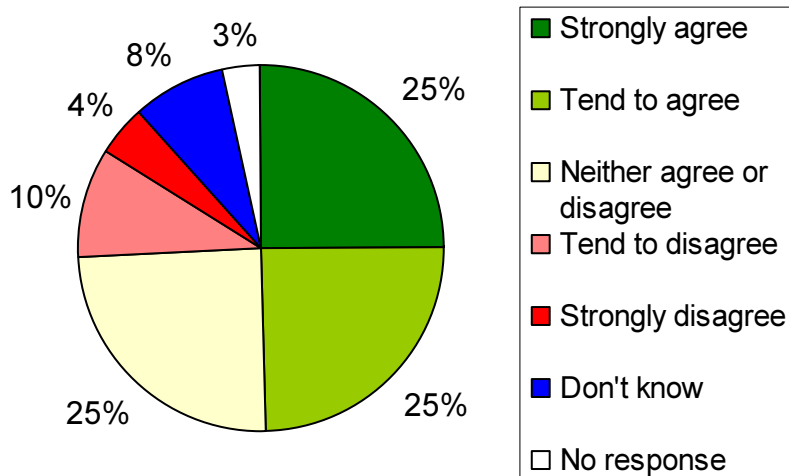
Q3. If you are responding on behalf of somebody else, please let us know who by selecting one of the options below.



Q4. Which district do you live in?

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Oxford City | 0 |
| Cherwell | 206 |
| South Oxfordshire | 0 |
| Vale of the White Horse | 0 |
| West Oxfordshire | 0 |
| No response | 6 |

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals to maintain a scheme?



Q6. Why do you agree or disagree? Please write in below.

Should reduce benefit even more, we give away far too much of taxpayers money.

If you are using services provided by the council then someone somewhere has to pay for them. Why should someone else have to pay extra for those services and subsidise that person? They are already supposedly receiving Benefits that should be assisting them so why extend that assistance further from the council funds?

It is very important that schemes are maintained to support those who can not afford the very high council tax costs in oxfordshire

I agree to the reduction as people who suffer a disability vcannot work and earn an income. Every penny counts to help maintain an average standard of life.

There appears to be an unaacceptable risk of an increase in Council Tax for those not in receipt benefit or cutsin essential services to fund the Â£60,000 required.
it is not clear

I agree as proposals do not appear to affect my situation

Shift of burden from central government to local without the matching funds. Also it is best to gradually reduce individual subsidies to individuals otherwise it can obstruct self help

Need to maintain or homeless situation will worsen
because there should be a benefit system

The benefits bill is too high. people should be made to work to return for JSA etc.
benefits by definition should benefit receipters not make it easier to remain NEET [?]

Because the poor and needy in our society need protection particularly when they are being targetted by welfare reform currently being implemented

people on low incomes especially pensioners need suypport and some relief from paying council tax

I have no comment

unable to manage without CT benefit

Don't know

safeguard all people involved

people in need and/or on low incomes need help

the scheme has to be maintained, because people cannot just be abandoned. All walks of life need to looked after when things go wrong

I agree because many elderly and low income people need help

If the government decided to cut benefits why should they keep at the same level on costs of district council tax payers

as i receive no council tax benefit i can see little point inbeing contacted again

My council tac benefit helps me greatly, if a scheme wasnt maintained. i would struggle to find the extra money to cover my council tax

I do need to know what i pay and have sorted this with the land lord [cant read most of Mr's writing!!!!]

waste of money to change. will the gain be greater than the cost

Number of low income people/families have their council tax bill as a large part of their expenditure, therefore the benefit/reduction scheme is very important to them

I neither agree nor disagree. also find it sad that councils will force people who have a spare room to move as they cant afford the price

Necessary to ensure that poverty is not increased amongst claimants of benefits and those on low incomes. Failure to provide a a schemew ould lead to increasein homelessnesss and personal debt

Really does not matter will happen no matter what people say

Not sure i understand the whole system

council should meet the shortfall and maintain council tax payments

In proportion to the average income of most OAP's - OAP + possibly a small work pension - the current council tax is too high and only sustainable with difficulty

Helps those on low or fixed incomes

a] its not clear to me what your options are from the list below b] i dont believe your maths

This will only result in my tax increasing **74**

I disagree with the statemnet regarding cost to CDC. Firstly, it will cost us not the taxpayer not the council. Secondly, why state per year when actually once the

reductions are in place, they wont be an additional charge. Thirdly, as always, the people who have always paid their way either renting and paying taxes or buying a home and paying taxes, have always contributed, will pay again or should i say have to pinch harder because some are pensioners!! But most have never worked!!!!

Why should householders pay more just because other living there? its going back to poll tax, why? Savings, why people should use their savings just to get by when saved all their lives and would need that money in old age? wish i had savings and what is savings???

cannot agree/disagree until i have further information outlining how an individual or group would be affected

i have friends who really need their council tax benefit and would struggle without it I am a lone parent who acannot afford large amounts of council tax and i am worried changes made will affect my liability to council tax help if any

I agree people in real need [such as pensioners on a fixed income] should have a reduction regardless of any savings or whether they claim benefits. households with several people working age [regardless of whether on benefits] should not get a reduction

every case shpould be looked at on its own merits. particularly when looking at council tax by band, though i agree people should live within their means. it is unfair for someone living in a large house who is made redundant to be expected to move fairer wealth distribution Higher earners should pay more to support their communitiy and infrastructure. there should be assistance for low earners to help them

I am not sure - if this does go ahead how will it affect my housing benefit. i wont lose it will i

additional cost falling on council tax payers

anything which increases costs at the moment must be carefully considered and unless unacceptable should be denied

Pensioners and vulnerable groups should keep the same level as council tax benefit

As i am a pensioner aged 76 with no savingsand a low income i know i could not managewithout the help i get from my council tax benefit

It seems reasonable that a household with only one occupier should receive a discount

The scheme provides essential relief to people who are, on the whole, unable to make the payment of the tax through no fault of their own.

council tax should be linked to ability to pay

Important to aid in peoples lives with difficult economy and low incomes

Because some deserving people and/or those who cannot afford to pay due to unavoidable circumstances deserve a helping hand

As a 95 year old disabled person, i would hope to receive some financial relief instead of watching my carefully go without savings gradually diminish

While i understand that some people need assistancewith paying their council tax, i feel muself that we have always budgetedto pay our council tax even if we have had to go without other things [holidays]. if our tax bill increases again to assist the new scheme something else will have to go.

there are many people on low incomeand they in houses that are expensiveto run. not just the big houses, small flats and small houses. Pensioners have great difficulty with paying all their bills, leave alone any money left for food. they need all the help they can get

1. people need to be encouraged to save - not penalised 2. not everyone is able to move to a lower property band 3. Fairer to reduce the amount of council tax reduction by a fixed percentage to all receiptants 4. reduce the amount someone receives if there are other adults of working age in the property. it is much harder to meet ones living expenses when living alone on one income

dont feel competant to judge so unwilling

council tax is expensive for everyone so anyone on a low income should be able to get a reduction

some council tax reduction can apply to the poorest of us. they just cannot afford to pay the current high level of rents charged

I feel more people may be receiving benefits who really need them. a tighter scheme should be applied to pursue council tax debts from those who can but refuse to pay on

time

The poor or hard up should not be penalised but offered help with council tax

Currently not receiving benefit and unlikely to in future

it will be time and money saving

system seems to work

to agree to a proposal that will benefit the community

to encourage to be accountable

I am on guarantee pension credits and my situation is unchanged. filled out just in case

the reason i am in favour of reduction is that some of the people who get it don't deserve it

Because it seems to me to be something we are going to be forced to do by law

i agree that vulnerable groups and elderly get a lower rate as long as they are identified correctly. However, i would not want this cost passed on to us

I think money could be saved by looking at other things being wasted

I strongly disagree with council tax - that's because the council spend out the money on works that don't even need doing. as all those years ago we didn't pay council tax so why now? it is a total con

i have mental health problems so would need more info on different things to make a vote

I've worked all my life and paid my own way. why should i now help subsidise other people. I'm still working to make sure we can live ok as a family.

need to recognise that some residents require financial support due to their personal circumstances

It seems to me that those groups of people that are truly vulnerable will be protected anyway. it may be hard, but all others should be encouraged to pay their own way like the rest of us

so it makes it easier to pay my rent

I am married with no children. my husband works full time and i am unable to due to my disability i was born with and now on very strong medication. i do not receive benefits for not being able to work, so we have one income coming in and do not use the resources people with families and people on benefits do, both who are in receipt of discounts unlike us. any savings will help us dramatically

people who live alone should get a discount

council tax too onerous for those on very low incomes

Reduce £16,000 to £12,000

we have to work hard to pay our bills and are fed up of subsidising those who will not work

Poor get poor. another benefits cut

not sure if i fully understand the council tax system

People on benefits deserve a break across the board

i think it has already been decided

because there is genuine need

because it tends to help everyone

When free handouts are available, there is little incentive to earn an income to pay one's dues

I think change is good but then the effects on others would be different and i don't know how it would affect me as a single mother

those who are genuinely financially disadvantaged should receive some support

principle of progressive taxation is most equitable and efficient

I think that OAP's and genuine people on benefits should still get the same allowance. But i think any new claimants or people on income support should have theirs revalued

with the current economic climate, i believe people are under enough pressure to keep a roof over their heads

sounds like my council taxes will be increased to cover the shortfall or drastic cuts in services

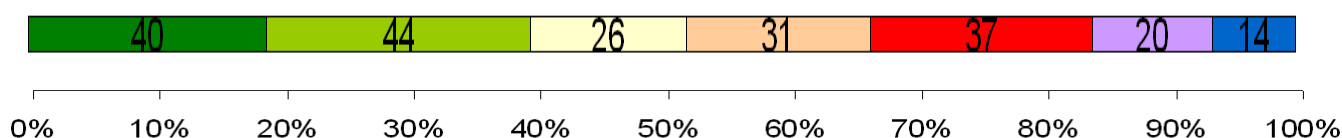
As this is a complicated issue of which i don't have sufficient knowledge to comment on i've ticked the don't know box

Q7. Instead of maintaining Council Tax Reductions as is suggested, councils could consider a range of options to reduce the cost of the scheme from 2013 or in future years. This would apply to all claimants apart from pensioners and other vulnerable groups who the Government says must continue to be protected.

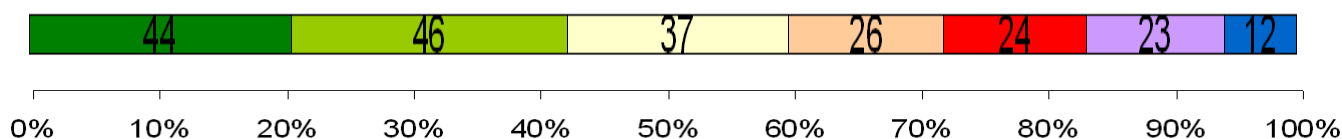
To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following ways in which the cost of the scheme could be reduced?

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Tend to agree
 ■ Neither agree or disagree
 ■ Tend to disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know
 ■ No response

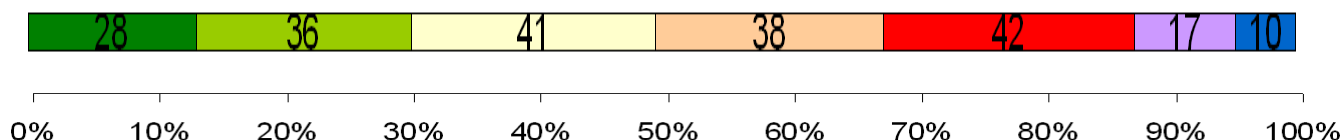
Reduce the amount of savings someone can have and claim Council Tax Reduction. The current limit is £16,000 savings



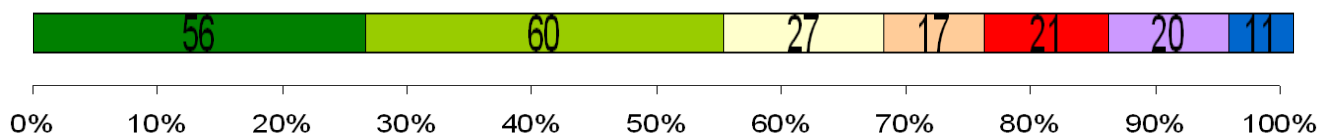
Reduce the maximum Council Tax Reduction award for properties in higher council tax bands to that of a lower property band e.g. anybody in a band E to H property would be awarded a reduction equivalent to a maximum of a band D property.



Reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction that everyone receives by a fixed percentage.



Further reduce the amount of Council Tax Reduction someone gets if there are other adults of working age in the household (not including spouses and partners).



Q8. If you have any other comments about the Council Tax Reduction scheme please write in below.

Sovereign is a major provider of social housing in the south and south west, owning and managing around 34,000 homes in more than 70 local authorities. As a provider of social housing in the Cherwell District, we feel it is important to share our views to support the design of your local Council Tax support scheme. We recognise that local authorities face a big challenge in implementing local council tax benefit schemes while making 10% savings overall from working age households. The overall impact of the Welfare Reform Act will be significant for many low income and vulnerable households and in some cases it will be devastating. Cutting council tax benefit entitlement will inevitably hit poorer households at a time when they need our support the most. It is our view that councils should be doing all that they can when devising their schemes to minimise the amount of council tax benefit that is cut. We feel it would be fairer for local authorities to prioritise savings by reducing, or cutting

completely, some of the existing council tax discounts. Many of these are provided regardless of people's ability to pay. Should these cuts result in individual cases of hardship, we would suggest that it is reasonable to expect that these could be addressed via the local council tax benefit scheme. For instance: Â· Reducing the discounts received by those with a second home and introducing a premium to those owning an home that has been empty for a certain period of time Â· Reviewing the single person discount, including the scope for introducing means testing to target the discount at people on low incomes (we recognise this is not in the power of the local authority but feel it worth stating our support for such a measure) If these approaches do not generate sufficient savings, we would like Cherwell District Council to consider the following options before cutting entitlement: Â· Increased contribution made by other adult members of the household who are in work Â· Removal of second adult rebate Â· Decreasing the Â£16k savings limit for eligibility There are added advantages to reducing discounts rather than cutting entitlement: Â· It will satisfy the government directives of protecting vulnerable households and avoiding disincentives to work. It is likely that any scheme that makes savings by cutting council tax benefit will go against one, if not both, of these directives. Applying a broad brush cut means those previously on full council tax benefit would have to pay a small amount of council tax under a new system presenting the council with an increased administrative burden and potentially affect collection rates.

CTB needs to be more transparent. Most of my clients don't even know what CT is. CT in Cherwell does seem quite high. Reducing overheads and services will reduce the rate of CT anyway.

Need to continue single person discount or there will be significant hardship to many It seems fairer to me to consider earnings levels and house values and multiple occupancy before demands are made on pensioners, disabled and sole occupants [where appropriate] OR lowly paid occupants

To be honest I do not really understand the proposal

I think it should be scrapped. It's not worthy of the efforts and costs to administer it. People need to learn to stand on their own feet. It should be helping to take you out of poverty not a constant hand out that traps you in it.

Can't read Mr's writing!!!

If the money is to be found, why target the people that are in work and living on a budget when really we should be promoting that work pays

With a thriving black economy it is important that local councils regularly verify that any reduction is still appropriate. Currently no incentive to voluntarily give up the reduction

Nothing else to say

More information would have been helpful for a proper consultation

Empty Properties We estimate that, across our business, if all our partner local authorities were to require us to pay full council tax in these circumstances, the cost to Paradigm would be in the region of £120,000. This would need to be paid for ultimately by tenants via rental income, clearly resulting in a reduction in the amount of money available for maintaining property One argument some local authorities are putting forward is to dissuade landlords from keeping property empty. This is not really relevant to us " we already work hard to minimise void turnaround times to increase the supply of property and to minimise our rent loss. If LAs wish to maintain pressure on landlords, they could do this perhaps by introducing charging after an initial 4 week period. Our void turnaround time is 21 days for general needs property" surely it is not cost effective for LAs to collect such small sums of money.

How can it be fair that people with considerable savings qualify for a reduction. Surely savings are for rainy days?

I'm not sure that why I put don't know. My two benefits I get are income support and incapacity benefit

I appreciate any help I can get. My 25% reduction is a manageable figure for me. I would prefer it stay the same but would appreciate anything you can do to maintain it My own concern is that 3 bins over a 2 week period is a severe challenge to someone 85 years old. though I am able to assist some of the time, there are occasions that I cannot. to have to wheel 2 bins to the curb for an 85 year old is a physical problem - do you agree?

Leave things the way they are - let people be happy

I do not have sufficient information to answer questions

I find everything changes which costs more money just yet another idea and so much waste

I find the last Q7 a little strange. I thought that other working persons living at the same address as a benefit recipient were already liable to make a contribution to council tax. if this is not the case it should be!!

some groups have been unable to live in social housing and had to privately rent - the housing benefit is not in line with rental prices across Cherwell and already leaving a shortfall. i think you would need to look at individual reasons for why people are in houses of a higher band and judge them on their own merit rather than penalising the whole group.

how about funding this scheme by cost reductions elsewhere or higher taxes for higher earners

the current council tax is too high in proportion to the pensioner that has just a pension and a small work pension - about the same as one months pension to pay a years council tax. sooner or later the council will kill the golden goose

In the present climate. it is the responsibility of the council to impose restrictions on any form of benefit claim to those in genuine need. dont allow benefit just as a matter of course

I hope you are not considering a reduction in the 25% you give for people living alone
See comment re q6 recovery of council tax who help fund a reduction scheme

People unable to work including pensioners should not be expected to pay the same council tax as those working

Given the current climate that Britain is in, with everyones income being stretched, i think all should be encouraged to budget and pay their own bills/

i think everyone should pay some council tax no matter how low their income is

Hope that 25% reduction for single occupancy will never be reduced

what i would like to know is there any investigation when claimants make their claim for this benefit

those on long term low income ie. basic old age pension or disabled should be protected

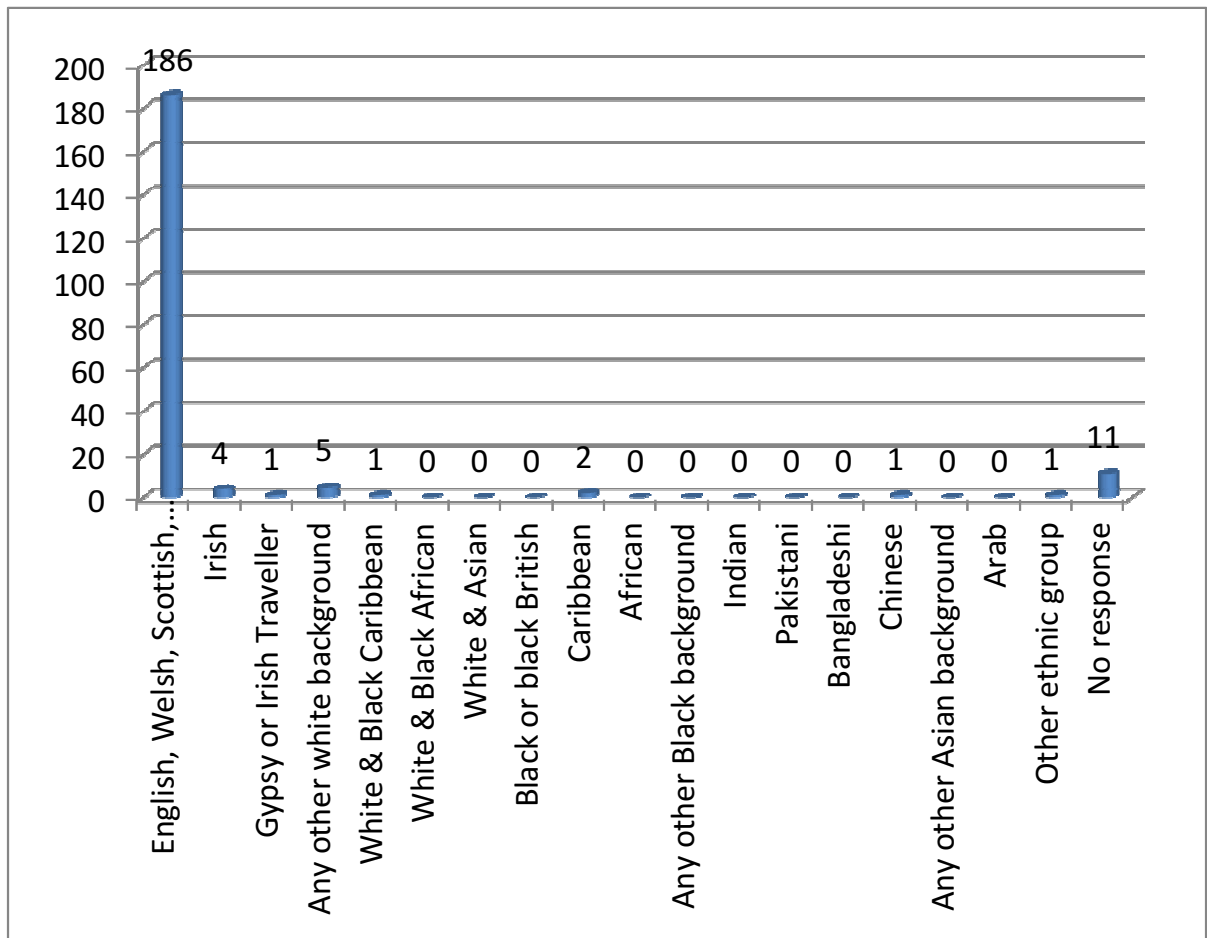
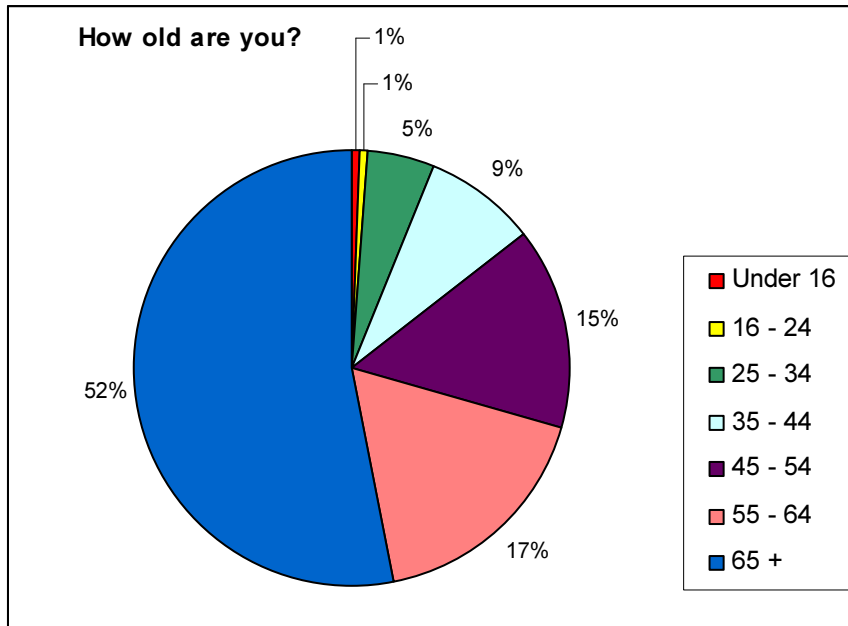
It should be based on 1. amount of adults working or not in the property. ie, they pay more for more adults 2. if they have children who use resources within the scheme they should pay more 3. i feel you should pay for what you use. ie if less people in a smaller, cheaper property you should pay less. as obviously they have less in equity of their property and amount of people in the home to use the resources we pay for well if people have got over £16000 in the bank, then they should not get a tax reduction and over that they should pay full council tax

Yes, about the amount what you expect me to pay is a total rip off - as i want you to look at this again. as i am not paying this until you have looked into this again. as when i tell you that i've got other bills to pay other than council tax, you people just say that you dont take into consideration about other bills i've got - but you people should - as there is things i would like to buy for myself and my wife but i cant as all i gets throwed in my face is bills same as my wife

sounds like you are going to do what the previous tory government did, take percentage of social security money of pension credits away.

I dont understand this so would prefer to have more information

About you:



Other groups (1 response each): European, German, Latvian, American, Maltese, Angloarab

Othe

West Oxfordshire District Council Survey Results

There were 56 responses to the consultation document. This is quite low considering that we publicised our website survey and posted 200 forms directly to current Council Tax Benefit recipients and could be an indication that there is no opposition to the proposal to adopt the current Council Tax Benefit scheme as our local scheme in 2013/14.

The number of responses for the key questions is broken down as follows:

Statement 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to adopt the current Council Tax Benefit scheme as the local Council Tax Support scheme for 2013/14?

- 25 people (45%) Agree or Strongly Agree
- 14 people (25%) Neither agree or disagree
- 13 people (23%) Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 4 people (7%) indicated that didn't know

Note: Of the 25 that agreed that the current CTB scheme should be adopted, 5 (9%) indicated that they are currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.

Further questions asked for views on aspects of the local scheme that we will need to design for April 2014.

Statement 2: We should reduce the amount of savings that someone can have and claim Council Tax Support from the current limit of £16,000.

- 38 people (68%) Agree or Strongly Agree
- 4 people (7%) Neither agree or disagree
- 12 people (21%) Strongly Disagree
- 2 people (4%) indicated that they did not know

Statement 3: We should reduce the maximum Council Tax Support award for properties in higher council tax bands. For example, anyone in a band E to H property would be awarded entitlement equivalent to a maximum of a band D property.

- 43 people (77%) Agree or Strongly Agree
- 5 people (9%) Neither agree or disagree
- 5 people (9%) Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 3 people (5%) indicated that they did not know

Statement 4: We should reduce the amount of Council Tax Support that everyone receives (excluding Pensioners, who are protected) by a fixed percentage.

- 23 people (41%) Agree or Strongly Agree
- 13 people (23%) Neither agree or disagree
- 16 people (28.5%) Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 4 people (7.5%) indicated that they did not know

Statement 5: Where there are other adults in the household (not including spouses and partners) the current scheme reduces the entitlement to take account of the fact that this 'Non-Dependant' should make a contribution to the household finances. We should reduce entitlement by more than the current levels in the local scheme.

- 41 people (73%) Agree or Strongly Agree
- 6 people (11%) Neither agree or disagree
- 7 people (12.5%) Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 2 people (3.5%) indicated that they did not know

Comments: The individual comments are of course available for inspection. However, they can be summarised into three general areas:

- Only help those that truly need help,
- Families with young children should be protected,
- Don't over burden those that are already working and therefore paying income tax,
- Drastically reduce the amount of capital that people can have and still claim.

People Profile

Current CTB Recipients: 16% of all responses were from people who indicated that they are currently receiving Council Tax Benefit.

Gender: The male/female split of those responding was 51% male/49% female.

Age: Responses were from people across most age groups:

- 16 to 24 year olds made up 1%
- 25 to 34 year olds made up 14.5%
- 35 to 44 year olds made up 24%
- 45 to 54 year olds made up 24%
- 55 to 64 year olds made up 22%
- 65+ year olds made up 14.5%

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS & EXEMPTIONS ACROSS OXFORDSHIRE

| Based on 2012/13 Taxbase and Provisional grant figures | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Cherwell | Oxford City | South Oxfordshire | Vale of the White Horse | West Oxfordshire | County | Police | All areas |
| Background information (£m) | | | | | | | | |
| 2012/13 taxbase before discounts (Band Ds) | 50,478 | 47,134 | 55,652 | 49,076 | 41,186 | 243,526 | 243,526 | 243,526 |
| Reduction in Band D taxbase due to discounts | -4,747 | -6,447 | -3,755 | -3,592 | -3,179 | -21,720 | -21,720 | -21,720 |
| Percent change in taxbase | -9% | -14% | -7% | -7% | -8% | -9% | -9% | -9% |
| 2012/13 taxbase after discounts (Band Ds) | 45,731 | 40,687 | 51,897 | 45,483 | 38,007 | 221,805 | 221,805 | 221,805 |
| Band D tax including parishes £ | 204.28 | 267.05 | 191.43 | 177.03 | 140.90 | 1161.71 | 154.30 | |
| Reduction in council tax income before inflation £m | -0.970 | -1.722 | -0.719 | -0.636 | -0.448 | -25.233 | -3.351 | -33.078 |
| Add 1.5% increase in claimants to above figure £m | -0.984 | -1.747 | -0.730 | -0.645 | -0.455 | -25.611 | -3.402 | -33.574 |
| Grant funding £m | 0.886 | 1.559 | 0.671 | 0.578 | 0.416 | 23.112 | 3.070 | 30.292 |
| Savings target £m | -0.098 | -0.188 | -0.059 | -0.067 | -0.039 | -2.499 | -0.332 | -3.282 |
| Existing cost of discounts (£k) | | | | | | | | |
| Second Homes (10%) | 47 | 94 | 74 | 59 | 115 | | | 388 |
| Class L - Repossessed houses | 22 | 21 | 17 | 16 | 14 | | | 89 |
| Class A - Unoccupied, require or undergoing major repair | 114 | 286 | 268 | 146 | 143 | | | 957 |
| Class C - Unoccupied and unfurnished | 861 | 707 | 734 | 688 | 715 | | | 3,705 |
| Total | 1,044 | 1,108 | 1,092 | 908 | 986 | | | 5,138 |
| Share of Countywide total | 20% | 22% | 21% | 18% | 19% | | | 100% |
| Options illustrating possible changes (£k) | | | | | | | | |
| Option 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 25% discount for Class A (repairs) and 25% for Class C (unfurnished and unoccupied) | | | | | | | | |
| No discounts for Second homes or Class L Repossessed property | | | | | | | | |
| Target at authority level | -98 | -188 | -59 | -67 | -39 | -2,499 | -332 | -3,282 |
| Extra council tax raised | 104 | 145 | 98 | 79 | 71 | 2,920 | 388 | 3,805 |
| Net effect (- shortfall) or (+ surplus) | 5 | -43 | 40 | 11 | 33 | 421 | 56 | 523 |
| Transitional Relief Grant | | 42 | | | | | | |

RISK REGISTER

| No. | Risk Description Link to Corporate Objectives | Gross Risk | | Cause of Risk | Mitigation | Net Risk | | Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Av oid | |
|-----|---|---------------|---|---|---|----------|---|--|---|
| | | I | P | | | I | P | Action: Reduce Owner: : | Outcome required: |
| 1. | Challenge to consultation process | 3 | 3 | Community and stakeholders concerned about proposals | Validation received by Legal Team. Major precepting authorities involved from the beginning of the process. Wide range of community and stakeholders able to take part following joint advert and using on-line functionality. As proposed scheme replicates existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme shorter consultation period justified. | 2 | 2 | Head of Customer Services | Robust consultation process established. |
| 2. | Unforeseen budget pressure | 3 | 3 | Increase in the number of residents successfully claiming Local Council Tax Benefit | Adequate financial contingency provided As proposed scheme replicates existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme likelihood of unforeseen increase in claim volume is reduced. | 2 | 2 | Head of Customer Services Head of Finance | Scheme delivered within budget. |
| 3. | Difficulty in collecting council tax | 3 | 3 | Changes to exemptions and discounts levels may result in small Council Tax Bills | Ensure discounts and exemptions are set at a level where likely charges are large enough to warrant the costs incurred in collection. | 2 | 2 | Head of Customer Services Head of Finance | Council Tax collection performance meets target. |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 4. | Income projected from changes to discounts and exemptions levels is not realized as customers claim alternative discounts or exemptions | 3 | 3 | Change in customer behaviour, for example there could be more single person discount applications if there is no longer a second home discount. | Ensure accurate calculation of council tax base calculation. Monitor and review position and adjust council tax base calculations for future years as required. | 2 | 2 | Head of Finance | Robust council tax base calculation. |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|--------------------------------------|

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Initial screening EqIA template

1. Which group (s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

None – the draft Council Tax Support Scheme is to replicate the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme and avoid adverse impacts.

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

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

The proposed draft scheme replicates the provisions of the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme, and as a consequence will negate any adverse equality impacts.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

A joint approach to consultation has been conducted across the County. Each district has carried out a postal survey with a representative sample of 500 council tax payers. The survey has also been made available on-line for other residents who may wish to respond and for stakeholders also invited to participate.

The consultation was carried out between 27th August and 5th October. As there

is no change proposed to the existing Council Tax Benefit Scheme, a 6 week period of consultation is considered adequate.

A joint media release has ensured messages are consistent, with each authority having their own member statements included.

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

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

Not applicable as there are no adverse impacts.

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

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

The Council Tax Support Scheme will be reviewed each year. If changes are proposed residents will be canvassed for their views.

In addition, the County and Oxfordshire districts will be meeting regularly during the year to monitor the impact of the scheme administratively and financially.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Helen Bishop

Role: Head of Customer Services

Date: 12th October 2012

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Amendment to Council Tax Exemptions & Discounts – Briefing Note

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 makes provision for Local Authorities to amend a number of Council Tax Exemptions and Discounts. The aim of this briefing note is to explain what changes can be made, to examine what proposals have been made elsewhere, and to consider the implications of the changes.

The exemptions and discounts which can be amended are as follows:

Exemptions

Class A: This applies to properties which are undergoing major renovation or otherwise uninhabitable. Currently an exemption for up to 12 months can be awarded, and presently the City Council grants a 100% exemption for the whole period. The new legislation allows a charge of anything up to 100%, and the ability to vary the time over which this applies.

Class C: This applies to properties which are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Currently an exemption of up to six months can be awarded, and presently the City Council grants a 100% exemption for that period. The new legislation allows a charge of anything up to 100%, and to vary the time over which this applies.

Class L: This applies to properties where the mortgagee is in possession. Currently an exemption applies for as long as the mortgagee remains in possession of the property, and presently the City Council grants a 100% exemption. The new legislation allows a charge of anything up to 100%, and to vary the time over which this applies.

Discounts

Second Home Discount: This applies to property which is unoccupied and where the owner resides elsewhere. Currently local authorities are able to award a discount of between 10% and 50%. Oxford City Council currently awards a 10% discount in such cases. The new legislation allows a charge of up to 100% to be levied.

Long Term Empty Property: This relates to properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months. Currently local authorities are able to award a discount of between 0% and 50%. Oxford City Council currently awards 0% discount in these cases. The new legislation allows an additional 50% premium to be levied after a property has been in this state for two years.

Proposals from other Local Authorities

The table below collates the proposals from a number of authorities. The Councils have been anonymised as some of these proposals are not yet in the public domain. The Class L exemption has not been included, as there are insufficient incidences of this exemption to merit comparison. In only two cases below has consultation been carried out specifically in respect of these proposals.

| Council | Proposed Class A Exemption | Proposed Class C Exemption | Proposed Second Home Discount | Proposed Long Term Empty Discount |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Oxford City Council | 25% | 25% | 0% | 0% |
| Council 1 | 25% | 2months @100% then 0% * | 10% | -50% ** |
| Council 2 | 25% | 2months @100% then 25% | 10% | -50%** |
| Council 3 | 0% | 0% | 0% | -50% |
| Council 4 | 50% | 25% | 0% | 0% |
| Council 5 | 50% | 25% | 0% | 0% |
| Council 6 | 0% | 1month @100% then 0% | 0% | -50%** |
| Council 7 | 50% | 2months @100% then 0% | 10% | -50%** |
| Council 8 | 0% | 0% | 0% | -50% |
| Council 9 | 100% | 1month @ 100% then 0% | 0% | -50%** |

- ***Represents 50% levy on top of normal charge*

Implications

The application of a tax has two main functions, to raise revenue and/or to alter behaviour. The Government's intention with these amendments is to firstly encourage taxpayers to bring empty properties into use, and secondly to allow local authorities to raise additional revenue to offset the impact of the reduction in grant linked to the localisation of Council Tax Support.

Because of the behavioural changes that may result from the application of these changes it can not be assumed that the same level of revenue will be raised in subsequent years. For instance if no discount was available for circumstances which give rise to a Class C exemption, then an owner may be inclined to advise us that there is a single person living in the property. This would attract a discount of 25%.

Class C Exemptions and Second Home Discounts - Generally these awards are for short periods of time, usually due to people moving in and out of the same property. Consequently any charge raised will be relatively small, costly to collect and fall outside of minimum levels for recovery action. For this reason some councils have opted to retain a Class C exemption for one or two months. However, this is not possible with Second Home Discounts.

New properties are brought into use by serving a Completion Notice which specifies the date that the property will be entered into the Council Tax list. The Completion Notice is usually issued shortly before the property is complete to ensure that buildings are not left partially completed. From this point a Class C Exemption can be awarded which currently provides for six months before a charge becomes due. If a charge is due immediately from the date a property is entered into the Council Tax list, then the process of serving the Completion Notice becomes more contentious and could result in more cases for the Valuation Tribunal.

To: Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27th November 2012

Report of: Head of Environmental Development

Title of Report: Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing – an update

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To update the Committee with regard to the progress and impact of the HMO Licensing Scheme in Oxford

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ed Turner, Finance and Efficiency

Report Approved by: Head of Environmental Development

Finance: Paul Swaffield

Legal: Jeremy Franklin

Policy Framework: Meeting Housing Need

Recommendation(s): Members are asked to note the contents of the report and to ask Officers to provide to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee the results of a landlord survey when they are published.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The mandatory licensing scheme for HMOs introduced by the Housing Act 2004 successfully improved the condition and management of 551 larger three or more storey HMO properties containing five or more tenants. However, this was only a small part of the HMO stock in the City and the majority therefore went unregulated. An additional licensing scheme for HMOs using powers contained in the Housing Act 2004 was considered the best option to improve this situation and a scheme was approved by the Council in October 2010, after Housing Minister John Healey issued a 'general consent' allowing authorities to pursue their own additional licensing schemes. The scheme was introduced in two stages.

1.2 The first stage commenced on the 24th January 2011 and required the licensing of all three or more storey HMO properties and the larger two storey HMO properties that contained five or more tenants. The second stage commenced on the 30th January 2012 and required all remaining HMO

properties in the City to obtain a licence. Until very recently Oxford was the only local authority in the UK to require every HMO throughout its area to be licensed, and this will involve an active process of intervention, rather than paper licensing.

1.3 The programme will include a first cycle of over 6 years so by 2017 the entire HMO stock will have been licensed.

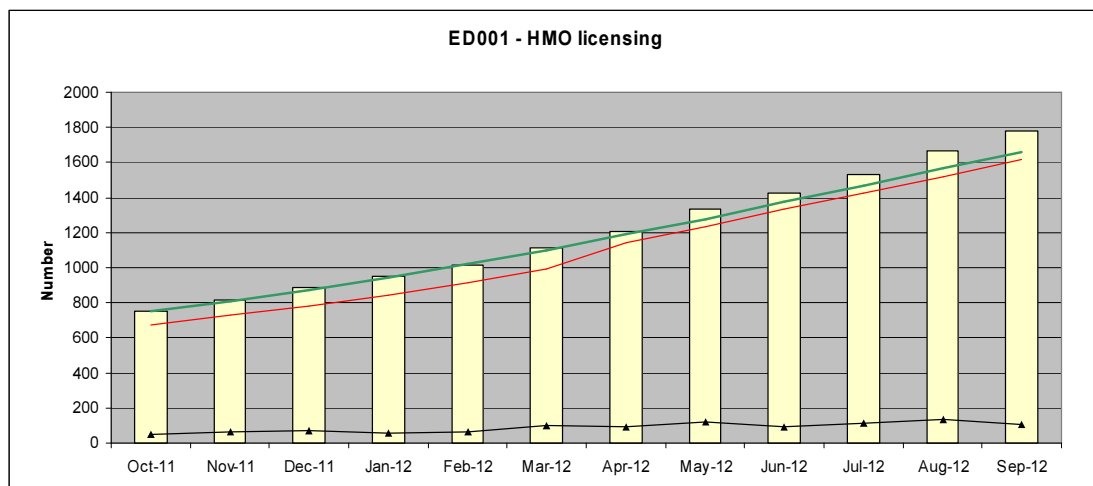
1.4 The scheme is totally self funding so the cost of reducing the fee would mean either a reduction of the resources going into it, or the council would have to fund the shortfall.

2.0 Progress to date

2.1 Since the introduction of the scheme a total of 1219 applications have been received by Environmental Development for larger HMOs and 1068 applications for smaller HMOs. There have also been 115 applications for mandatory licensable HMOs. The Environmental Development service has already received 25% more applications than originally estimated in the period, and this figure is likely to rise to 40% by the end of March 2013.

| | Estimated applications Jan 11 - Mar 13 | Actual applications to date Jan 11 – Sep 12 |
|----------------|---|--|
| Mandatory HMOs | 51 | 115 |
| Large HMOs | 918 | 1219 |
| Small HMOs | 973 | 1068 |
| Totals | 1942 | 2402 |

2.2 The impact of the planning restrictions on HMOs introduced by the Article 4 Directive can clearly be seen as 1113 applications were received between 1st January 2012 and the end of February 2012 when it came into force. This was 40% more than the expected total for the entire 2011/12 year. Another indication of the scale of the applications being dealt with is that in the 5 years before the scheme began, a total of 722 applications had been processed resulting in 551 licensed HMOs.



| Month 2012 | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Target | 1190 | 1280 | 1375 | 1470 | 1565 | 1660 |
| Intervention | 1145 | 1235 | 1330 | 1425 | 1520 | 1615 |
| To date | 1208 | 1330 | 1422 | 1534 | 1670 | 1779 |
| Periodic | 95 | 122 | 95 | 112 | 134 | 109 |

2.3 To date 1228 licences have been issued since the scheme began and the corporate target is on track.

3.0 Enforcement

3.1 A strict enforcement line has seen Oxford become one of the toughest local authorities in the UK for private sector housing standards. There is a significant amount of enforcement work being carried out on the non-compliant part of the HMO stock involving following up on service calls from tenants, councillors and residents and for checking suspected licensable HMOs. To date 165 cases have been investigated and closed and a further 148 are still under investigation.

3.2 Since the scheme commenced in January 2011 a total of 19 cases have either been successfully prosecuted in the courts or dealt with by way of issuing a formal caution. In addition one HMO has been the subject of an Interim Management Order where the Council has taken over the landlord function of the property. There are currently a further 8 cases pending legal action.

3.3 The Housing Act 2004 makes it a requirement that the applicant and persons associated or formerly associated with the applicant must be fit and proper persons to hold a licence. This excludes close family members and business associates or employees who have committed relevant offences. Each case must be determined on its own merits, but a man found not fit and proper cannot simply use his wife, brother or son to hold the licence for example.

3.4 Each applicant has to sign a declaration as part of the application form that they have given true answers to questions regarding their fit and proper status and whether they are associated to anyone who has been convicted. This is further checked on our databases prior to the issue of the licence to establish whether there is a history of non-compliance. Property ownership and Council Tax records and web searches are also used to establish links to people who are considered not fit and proper. This system helps identify family members and links to businesses.

3.5 This fit and proper test for landlords has proved a deterrent for non-compliant landlords who have to resort to using letting agents or other fit and proper people to hold the HMO licence on their behalf. Two letting agents have been declared not fit and proper organisations to manage HMOs.

3.6 To date all the landlords who have been advised that they are not fit and proper when they apply for a licence have amended their application and secured the services of a fit and proper person rather than have the Council formally refuse their application. Those landlords who make an application whilst a legal case is underway are also informed that they will lose their fit and proper status if convicted and advised to amend their applications accordingly.

3.7 This is an area where there is currently very little case law and we are expecting legal challenges where we have declared a person to be not fit and proper by their association with someone who has been convicted of relevant offences.

4.0 Impact on standards

4.1 The impact of licensing on standards within HMOs is significant. The decision to inspect every HMO prior to issuing a licence has proven valuable with very few HMOs being found to be fully compliant with national minimum standards. The House Condition Survey of 2005 estimated that 70% of Oxford's HMOs were non-compliant, but to date, over 90% of HMOs inspected have required additional conditions on the licence to secure compliance.

4.2 The primary cause for additional licence conditions is improving fire precautions to the minimum standards required by national guidance.

4.3 The Council has a Facilities and Amenities Guide which provides guidance for landlords on what are considered acceptable standards for facilities such as kitchens, toilets etc. There have been allegations from some landlords that the Council has been gold plating these standards, but the guidance has been compared with other similar authorities guidance and found to be broadly in line.

4.4 The average cost for upgrading a property to minimum legal standards is £1,552, which is significantly lower than the £4,200 average cost for a mandatory licensable HMO.

4.4 There has been a noticeable impact on service requests related to the private rented sector. A before and after comparison of service request codes reveals the following:

| | 23/5/09 – 23/1/11 | 24/1/11 – 28/9/12 | Change |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Tenancy Issues | 781 | 792 | No real change |
| Noisy parties | 396 | 225 | Down 43% |
| Rubbish | 2283 | 1312 | Down 43% |
| Poor Conditions | 1046 | 791 | Down 25% |

5.0 The impact of licensing on the availability of rental accommodation

5.1 It is difficult to obtain accurate and complete data on the availability of rental accommodation. Our experience at the start of mandatory licensing was that landlords said that they would move out of the HMO market and there would be a significant shortage of HMO accommodation in Oxford. What happened was that some sold up and others moved in to take their place because of the profitability of renting HMOs in Oxford.

5.2 Very few HMO licence applications drop completely out of the system. There have been 102 withdrawals and of these approximately one third have been rented to a family, one third have been sold and a third have been withdrawn by the council because the applicant failed to pay the fee. These withdrawals are being followed up to check for occupancy.

5.3 A total of 117 mandatory licensable HMOs have come forward which is nearly 80 more than estimated by this stage which means that properties previously occupied by four tenants have now been licensed for more. There have also been a significant number of additional HMOs that have come to light that were not on the Environmental Development database, which indicates that there are more HMOs in Oxford than initially estimated.

5.4 There have been concerns that the small bedrooms found in typical 1930's houses built for families would all fail the space requirements. In answering a recent Freedom of Information request, it was noted that only 40 bedrooms have been found to be too small to be used as a bedroom. This shows the pragmatic approach being taken by officers from Environmental Development.

5.5 There have been anecdotal stories of tenants not having their tenancies renewed because the landlord did not want to licence the property as an HMO, but no accurate data on the numbers can be provided. Those that have come to our attention for a response number approximately 25. There have also been a handful of cases brought to our attention by tenants regarding the difficulty of finding smaller three person HMOs to rent. Our experience with mandatory licensing was that landlords claimed to have reduced tenant numbers to avoid licensing, so it was inevitable that there would be instances of landlords making a choice whether to licence or not wherever the bar was set for licensing. It is the officer's view that if the bar was set at four or five persons, exactly the same issues would be being raised.

5.6 There have also been comments from some agents that there are some landlords with smaller HMOs, not rented to students, who are avoiding licensing and waiting to be caught. These will be dealt with when large scale proactive work begins next year to root out unlicensed HMOs. There have also been instances where a large property has been rented out to a family

who are then forced to sublet to pay the rent and by doing so they create an HMO. We have advised agents to ensure they carry out suitable financial checks to satisfy themselves that prospective tenants can afford to pay the rent.

5.7 According to Housing Options the only impact they have noticed from HMO licensing is a small increase in the number of larger four bed properties for families owned by landlords who do not want to licence their HMOs.

6.0 Have rental prices in the private sector increased in the last year and could this be due to HMO licensing?

6.1 Oxford has a particularly buoyant rental market and has the highest rents outside London. Nationally rental levels have gone up and Oxford is no exception. The Housing Options team view is that the main reason for this is the lack of first time buyers who either do not want to buy or more likely cannot get a mortgage and are choosing to rent in the private sector instead. This additional demand is the chief driver for rent increases as many of these frustrated first time buyers are young professionals who can and are prepared to pay the higher rents asked for by letting agents.

6.2 It is very difficult to ascertain exact figures regarding what is happening with rents. The problem with data from the Rents Officer is that it includes rents from about two thirds of the County so does not actually indicate what is happening in Oxford. The exception is the shared room rate as most of this information is derived from Oxford data and this shows a small increase for the last year.

6.3 Benefits Officers have tried to compile their own data using websites such as Gumtree and Right Move and this tends to show more of an upward trend in rents. However The Rent Officer tells us that this is inaccurate as often sitting tenants end up renegotiating the rent to keep it the same. As such it is difficult to know exactly what is happening. What is certain, is that HMO Licensing has not had a significant impact on rents when compared to other factors. This is because the fees are relatively low costs. The initial fee of £378 equates to £1.82 per week per room for a four person HMO and the annual renewal fee of £157 is less than a months rent for a private parking space in Gloucester Green Car Park.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 HMO Licensing is progressing well and the corporate performance indicator is on track. The scheme has received a significantly higher than expected number of applications and by the fall in service requests it can demonstrate some early progress with regard to the improvement of the condition of the HMO stock and an improvement in its management.

7.2 At this stage there is little evidence of the potentially negative effect of significantly reducing the availability of accommodation in the city and it also appears to have had little impact on rental values.

7.3 A telephone survey of private sector landlords is due to take place in October in conjunction with the Home Choice Team and this will be used as an opportunity to find out the views of landlords regarding a number of issues, including HMO licensing.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 That the Committee notes the report Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing – an update.

8.2 That the results of the telephone survey of private sector landlords are provided to the Principal Scrutiny Officer to be reported back to the Committee.

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Background papers:

Version number: 1.0

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To: Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28 November 2012

Report of: Member Review Panel on the Covered Market

Title of Report: Covered Market Scrutiny Review: Next Steps

Lead Members: Councillors Fooks and Van Nooijen

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Review Panel (RP) on the Covered Market, and to make recommendations for the next steps.

Report Approved by: Councillor Jean Fooks and Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen

Recommendations:

1. The Review Panel advises the committee to:

Extend its brief to encompass:

- Pre-scrutiny and engagement with the developing Covered Market Strategy and Leasing Strategy
- Work to engage with representatives of the Covered Market Traders' Association;
- Review the leasing decision in respect of the unit formerly occupied by Palm's delicatessen;
- Consideration of comparative data from similar markets elsewhere

2. Councillors Campbell, Clarkson and Benjamin have been helpful in the Review Panel's work to date and the committee is asked to invite them to be part of a future Panel.

3. The Review Panel will report on progress at the January meeting of the committee with a full report before the end of the programme.

Introduction

1. The Review Panel (RP) was constituted in the early summer of 2012 and has held several meetings with officers and other members. Councillors Fooks and Van Nooijen are grateful, on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, for help which has been afforded them by Sarah Claridge and Steve Sprason in particular.
2. This report sets out:
 - Information considered by the RP
 - Current work underway in the Council
 - Proposals for the way forward for the Scrutiny Committee

The Brief

| |
|--|
| To consider the economic health of the covered market and in particular the effects of rents on the diversity of traders |
|--|

3. The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee set the members a brief to gather data and suggest lines of inquiry for a “Select Committee” to be run in January 2013.
4. Without doing a full review into the economic wellbeing of the Oxford retail sector, it is almost impossible to consider the full ‘economic health’ of the Covered Market. Notwithstanding this, the RP decided to concentrate on the following issues:
 - Council’s rent review process.
 - Maintaining diversity in the Covered Market.

Setting the Scene

5. “The Oxford Covered Market is the Council’s single most valuable investment property asset, generating a gross rental income of £711,000¹ per annum exclusive”. (Covered Market Leasing Strategy, 2006)
6. It is also considered an iconic tourist attraction, often referred to as the jewel of Oxford, it offers a unique retail experience of high quality boutique goods and independent stalls which are sadly missing from the high street. It is an Oxford institution and is recognised by the Council as such in the many Council plans and strategies written to protect its diversity and status.
7. Notwithstanding the market’s status as a community asset, the Council requires a financial return from the Market to fund and be able to

¹ Figure from 2005

maintain and enhance the asset so that the long term community objectives can also be met.

8. During the course of the initial scoping work for the inquiry, it became apparent that significant work is already underway to develop a future strategy for the Covered Market. After discussions with Councillor Clarkson, Councillor Campbell, Steve Sprason, (Head of Corporate Property) and Chris Wood, (Corporate Property) the RP discovered that:
 - The current rent review is the last one before the Covered Market leases end in 2017.
 - The Covered Market Leasing Strategy (responsible for maintaining the diversity in the market) is being replaced in 2013 with a protocol more suited to the aspirations of the Council and the Covered Market Traders.
 - A draft 5 year Covered Market Strategy focussing on the future commercial viability of the Market is in development and is expected to be agreed in early 2013.

Outline of information considered by the RP

Rent reviews

9. The Council reviews and sets the rents in the Covered Market on a 5 year cycle. Rents are based on market evidence and conditions at the time of the review. They then remain unchanged for 5 years.
10. The rent review process often causes publicity in the local media with traders outlining their frustrations at what they perceive to be significant and unaffordable rises and the Council holding the position that rents need to rise to maintain the asset for the future and provide a reasonable income.
11. The Council is currently reviewing rents for 52 leases for 2012 which has caused similar comments in the media with a particular emphasis on current economic conditions. A local independent Chartered Surveyor has been appointed to advise the Council on the rental value of each unit under review. Rents are calculated based on the evidence of open market lettings and other property transactions on comparable properties. The full review process is attached as Appendix 1.
12. Most leases in the Covered Market end in 2017 so this will be the last rent review before leases are re-negotiated.

Maintaining the diversity of traders

13. The Council strictly controls and maintains the diversity of traders at the Covered Market through the Covered Market Leasing Strategy 2006 which details the leasing structure of the stalls and outlines the

Council's vision for the market to remain a destination retail centre, fully occupied and trading to its full potential.

14. The strategy maintains the overall diversity of the market by setting guidelines on who can lease a stall in the market. It maintains the balance of traders by grouping stalls into categories based on type of trade and restricting the categories to set percentages. This strategy is outlined in Appendix 2. It encourages sole traders, independents and local traders and the continuation of boutique and specialist stores.
15. There has been recent criticism of the Council for allowing a chain store to open in the Covered Market. The strategy does not prohibit chain stores from trading in the market but it does discourage them unless "*there is a real and positive benefit to the balance of trades/diversity*". High Street trades that detract from the Market's special character are discouraged for example electrical/white goods, mobile phones and travel agents.
16. Although the Leasing Strategy does protect the diversity of the Covered Market, economic return does play a part.
17. The chain store in question, opened at the Market when a change of use license was granted in December 2011. The timeline outlining this decision for the change of use is attached as Appendix 3.
18. The Covered Market Leasing Strategy 2006 is due to be reviewed in 2013 and is part of current review and negotiation arrangements with Traders.

Current work under way

The Oxford Covered Market Strategy

19. The Council's Economic Development Team are leading a project to create a five year strategic plan for the future commercial success of the Covered Market. The group is comprised of Covered Market Traders, Councillors, Council Officers and other stakeholders and has been holding quarterly meetings to identify the economic issues facing the Market and ways to overcome them.
20. This strategy's overall goal is to provide a basis for substantive actions to meet the aspiration (endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee and stated in the latest version of the Asset Management Strategy) that the Covered Market should be 'preserved' as 'one of the jewels' of Oxford's cultural, historic and retail offering.
21. The group is currently finalising the draft strategy and this will be available for wider consultation in early 2013.

The Covered Market Signage Policy

22. A new signage policy is being developed to improve the visibility of the Covered Market entrances.
23. The RP would like to do more work to fully understand the ramifications of this proposed policy and where it fits into the larger Covered Market Strategy.

Conclusion and recommendations for the way forward

24. Given the nature of the proposed policy changes, it has become clear to the RP that further time is needed to engage closely with the emerging proposals. This would mean that a full 'select committee' in January 2013 would be both premature and unhelpful. Instead the RP suggests that the Committee establishes a Panel to pre-scrutinise the draft Covered Market Strategy and the reviewed Leasing Strategy due in 2013.
25. The additional time which this report recommends would allow the Scrutiny Committee, through the RP, to engage in effective pre-scrutiny of the emerging proposals as well as to engage in a proportionate retrospective consideration of the current position of the Covered Market.
26. The Review Panel advises the committee to:
 1. Extend its brief to encompass:
 - Pre-scrutiny and engagement with the developing Covered Market Strategy and Leasing Strategy
 - Work to engage with representatives of the Covered Market Traders' Association;
 - Review the leasing decision in respect of the unit formerly occupied by Palm's delicatessen;
 - Consideration of comparative data from similar markets elsewhere
 2. Councillors Campbell, Clarkson and Benjamin have been helpful in the Review Panel's work to date and the Committee is asked to invite them to be part of a future Panel.
 3. The Review Panel will report on progress at the January meeting of the committee with a full report before the end of the programme.

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Rent Reviews at Covered Market

There are 52 rent reviews due on 25th March 2012 at the Covered Market. The leases are all similar and set out the procedure for activating and agreeing the reviews and the basis on which the rents are to be assessed. The leases require the determination of the open market rental value of the individual units as at 25th March 2012.

In August 2011, the council invited tenders from five surveying firms (including two local firms) to act on its behalf in respect of the 52 reviews. Five tenders were received and each firm was interviewed before it was decided to appoint Marriotts, a firm of Chartered Surveyors based in Oxford

Marriotts provided the most competitive tender. They were also appointed because (a) the person carrying out the reviews is a Chartered Surveyor with 23 years experience of carrying out rent reviews in central Oxford (b) the surveyor has extensive experience of preparing Expert Witness evidence in rent review disputes and (c) the surveyor has acted for the Council on previous reviews at the Covered Market and consequently has a thorough understanding of the Market.

Marriotts provided their report in January 2012. It was agreed they should delay reporting until the letting of 84, 85, 86, 87 and part of 55 to Cards Galore had completed as this would provide the best evidence on which to assess the new rents for the 52 reviews.

Following discussions with Marriotts it was decided we should obtain updated pedestrian flow counts as this would help to further inform their view on the appropriate rents for the different units. The issue of pedestrian counts was discussed with the Covered Market Traders' Association (CMTA) as they had also been obtaining their own counts and there was the potential for both parties to jointly commission the work. However, this was not possible and the counts were commissioned by Marriotts and carried out in March.

Meetings were held with the CMTA and we attempted to set up a meeting between the respective agents to discuss the reviews and the evidence on which Marriotts would be relying when assessing the new rents. A meeting did take place in March but the agent acting for the CMTA did not attend as he did not feel it was appropriate to do so.

Marriotts provided a further report following completion of the pedestrian counts in May.

The reports from Marriotts set out the principle evidence they were referring to when assessing the rents. This includes the abovementioned letting to Cards Galore and also the letting of unit 16 to The Creperie and an open market letting in September 2011 of unit 15-16 Golden Cross Walk.

The reports consider the other issues affecting value including the shape and size of the units, the user restrictions and the position of the units.

The reports make reference to the Covered Market Zoning Plan that has prevailed in previous rent review negotiations to form the basis of adjustments to rental value based on the position of the various units.

The Zoning Plan is an historic plan that divides the Covered Market in to five different zones, each zone reflecting the relative strength of the different trading positions within the Covered Market. The units have increasingly larger reductions applied to the rent depending on which zone they are located within.

For the purpose of serving the rent review notices, the reports confirmed a rent figure for each unit.

A meeting was held at the end of May 2012 with CMTA representatives and the Council (Cllr Cook, Cllr Price, Steve Sprason, Chris Wood). The council explained it wanted to try and instigate discussions between Marriotts and the tenants' appointed agent before serving rent notices so that the two sides could try and find common ground before the formal rent review procedure was commenced.

There was reluctance from the CMTA and their advisor for such discussions to take place and so formal rent notices were served on the tenants in July 2012.

Since serving the notices, Marriotts have had detailed dialogue with the agent acting for the CMTA which we believe encompasses 43 reviews. A different agent is acting on 4 other reviews and the other tenants are representing themselves in the negotiations.

The negotiations between the relevant parties are on going.

Chris Wood
Property Manager
12 November 2012

Note: Figures are from 2005

COVERED MARKET LEASING STRATEGY 2006

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 OWNERSHIP

The Oxford Covered Market is the Council's single most valuable investment property asset, generating a gross rental income of £711,000 per annum exclusive of business rates. The next review of rents (upwards only) is due in March 2007.

However the Council's ownership of the Covered Market extends beyond pure investment purposes. It is also perceived as an asset to the wider Community, fulfilling a primary retailing function, but also acting as a tourist destination. In this respect, it serves needs at several levels – local, regional and national/international through student and tourist customers. The Council is committed to maintaining its unique and historic character through planning policy COM9 of the Local Plan.

Notwithstanding the diverse objectives of the various stakeholders with interests in the building, the Council requires sufficient financial return from the Market to justify the costs of holding, maintaining and enhancing the asset so that the long term community objectives can also be met. Examples of recent and proposed investment made by the Council include new fire alarm systems, new lighting and paving in the Avenues, external decoration and the resurfacing of the Yard.

1.2 PRESENT LEASING STRUCTURE

The present building was rebuilt and enlarged throughout the 19th century and is now listed Grade II. Designed on a grid basis with 4 cross-sectioned north-south avenues, the Market comprises 152 individual shop units. These units are the subject of 55 separate leases, under which the tenants are responsible for the internal repair of their units and shop fronts.

The Council provides all other cleaning, maintenance and repair services to the avenues and structure, as well as providing porters who deal with housekeeping and low level security issues.

Many of the units have been extended beyond their original building line into the Avenues and a large number have been annexed to form larger units. The result of these changes has produced a range of shop sizes ranging between 65 sq ft and 1,167 sq ft. With a total ground floor retailing area of around 25,000 sq ft, the average size of unit in the Covered Market based on its current configuration is 450 sq ft.

The small size of the units provides space for many smaller, locally based, independent traders who would otherwise find difficulty in obtaining a retailing presence in the centre of Oxford. Originally designed as a meat market, the Covered Market now contains a highly diverse range of traders, from the traditional services such as butchers, florists, fishmonger, cobbler and jeweller to the more modern retailing trends of fashion, home products and cafes and sandwich bars.

At present there are only two units in the Market leased but unoccupied, representing 1.7% of floor area.

1.3 BALANCE OF TRADES

An analysis of the Market as at November 2005 based on floor area (and including the vacant units on their current permitted users ie ignoring approvals for change of use given but not yet implemented) shows the balance of trades as follows:-

| Sector whole | Area (Sq ft) | % of |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Fashion - Clothes | 3,687 | 14.77 |
| Fashion - Shoes & Accessories | 3,023 | 12.11 |
| Traditional Services | 4,531 | 18.15 |
| Literary, Arts and Crafts | 370 | 1.48 |
| Home Products, Gifts and Toys | 1,785 | 7.15 |
| Non Food Total | 13,258 | 53.11 |
| Raw Foods | 3,802 | 15.23 |
| Food Products | 2,495 | 9.99 |
| A1 Food Outlets | 846 | 3.39 |
| A3 Food Outlets* | 4,425 | 17.73 |
| Food Total | 11,706 | 46.89 |

* Includes those units that would now be classed as A5 following the revisions to the Use Classes Order in 2005.

This analysis shows that the traditional uses, which once dominated the market, are now in a minority, reflecting the general trend in retailing. Butchers, fishmongers and greengrocers now occupy only 15% of the floor space, whilst fashion (clothes and shoes/accessories combined) comprises the biggest sector at nearly 27% of floor space. The fastest growing sector is home and gifts, most of whom have taken space in the market comparatively recently, although there is continuing pressure from food retail outlets, both A1 and A3, for more space.

2.0 BROAD STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The following reflects the principles.

2.1 MISSION

The Council wishes to see the Market remain a destination retail centre, fully occupied and trading to its full potential.

2.2 BALANCE OF TRADES

The Council considers that there is a reasonably healthy balance of trades at present, with no one sector dominating to the exclusion of others.

The Council would broadly like to see the current balance of trades maintained, particularly as between food and non-food uses, with a further shift towards non-food uses, say up to 60%, acceptable.

The Council would like to maintain and enhance further the variety and diversity of the retail offer that exists at present.

2.3 TRADING STYLE

The Council wishes to encourage the continuation of the boutique style of the market, with the emphasis on specialist or otherwise high quality products, which differentiate the trader from normal high street operators.

The Council recognises that there has been a trend in the Market towards dominance by individual traders, some of whom occupy more than one (enlarged) unit. Generally, it is felt that further domination by existing traders beyond the present levels is to be discouraged, in favour of new tenants not already represented in the Market.

2.4 UNIT SIZE

The Council wishes to ensure that the Market continues to offer a range of size of units, both larger and smaller. The trend towards greater annexation of individual stalls needs to be closely managed, and only permitted in exceptional circumstances where clear benefits will accrue to the Market overall. Single units within blocks are particularly vulnerable and should generally be protected.

2.5 USES

Recognising that the traditional uses which underpin the Market's historic characteristics as a market rather than a shopping centre – butchers, fishmongers and other fresh produce retailers – are generally declining, the Council wishes to support and encourage the remaining traditional uses, and to seek new/replacement tenants within this sector group into the Market.

A3/A5 uses are already limited by planning policy (RC.7) to 20% or less of the ground floor area of the Market. However, it is felt that limits also need to be set in relation to A1 food outlets (where food is sold for immediate consumption), in order that the number of food outlets overall can be controlled.

3.0 GUIDELINES

3.1 USE

- Food Uses (as a broad category) should not be permitted to exceed 50% of the total floor area.
- Only uses within Classes A1 (retail), A3 (restaurant and cafes) and A5 (Hot food takeaway) of the Use Classes Order 2005 will be permitted.
- New uses should complement and enhance the existing character of the market/retail offer. Trades not already represented in the Market, which add to the variety and diversity of the retail offer and which meet this criteria are to be encouraged. Literary, arts and crafts are particularly unrepresented as a sector following the closure of some units when the majority of leases were renewed in 2002.
- Uses which detract from the Market's special character will be discouraged, for example, electrical/white goods, mobile phones, travel agents and other 'high street' type operators.
- No one sector should exceed 20% of total floor area.
- No one defined trade should represent more than 10% of ground floor area, except where sufficient diversity is able to exist within a trade e.g. clothes.
- A1 (meaning food outlets for immediate consumption) and A3 food uses taken together, should not exceed their present levels of total ground floor area occupancy, currently just under 22% including outstanding approvals not yet implemented. Within this limit, A1 food and A3 uses can generally be interchangeable, subject to the proposed use satisfying the other criteria of diversity of trade and specialist offering etc and the upper limit on A3 of 20%.
- New specialist food product shops in trades not already represented would generally be welcomed subject to the wider balance of trades issue between food and non-food uses. Such use would generally be preferable to an A1 or A3 food outlet use.
- Traditional market uses (Butchers, fishmongers and greengrocers) are unlikely to be permitted to change the use of their units unless they can reasonably demonstrate that they are unable to find

another tenant who complies with the existing user clause to take over the lease and therefore show that it is unviable for them to continue trading.

3.2 OCCUPIERS

- The Council wishes to encourage occupation by sole traders, independents and local retailers. Proposed tenants who meet this criteria, will generally be accepted on assignment, subject to receipt of satisfactory references/financial investigations and completion of the necessary Licences. The provision of acceptable surety (i.e. guarantors and/or rent deposits) will almost always be sought from incoming tenants before consent is given in principle.
- Applications for change of use where the lease is to be assigned to a high street multiple will generally not be permitted unless there is a real and positive benefit to the balance of trades/diversity.
- No Tenant (including family members) should own or control more than 3 separate leases/units within the Market, nor more than 10% of ground floor area.
- Where a change of use is approved, the new use will be substituted in place of the previous use.
- Applications to enlarge an existing user will be subject to the same criteria as a change of use proposal.
- The Council will seek to market any vacant units that revert to its control in a timely manner

3.3 PHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Further amalgamation of adjoining units will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances and unless the proposed use is perceived to offer a particular benefit in terms of the balance of trades or unless it is required to support or retain a traditional market use.
- The re-division of larger units will generally be encouraged and permitted, especially where the proposed user offers a positive contribution to diversity of trades.
- Tenants with larger units to be encouraged through shop-fitting to create the illusion of separate units.
- Alterations, decoration and signage should conform to planning and conservation requirements and should generally be sympathetic to the special character of the Market.

3.4 AVENUES

- Further requests for licences for encroachments in the Avenues will be considered on their merits, and particularly having regard to health and safety/disability issues.
- No Licence will be granted for encroachments in the centre of Market Square, or in the centre of any other avenue or cross avenue, other than those already existing.

4.0 GENERAL

- Following the adoption of an agreed leasing strategy, the Council should review the consultation arrangements with the tenants on proposed changes of use.
- The Council's constitution should be amended to allow all changes of use to be determined at officer level, instead of requiring Executive Board approval, (except where officers propose a substantial departure from the guidelines above).
- The Council should continue to support the concept of Sunday trading or Bank Holiday opening, if desired by the tenants, providing that any additional costs incurred by the Council are recouped from the traders.
- The Council should take a more pro-active role in marketing the Covered Market, with an allocated budget, and to making environmental/marketing improvements, such as improving the entrances, a floor plan display, contributing towards Christmas decorations etc.
- This strategy should have an approximate 10 year life, but it should be reviewed and re-assessed, if appropriate, within 5 years of adoption.
- The adoption of this strategy would replace the existing 10 year plan approved by the Estates Committee in March 1998.

Covered Market Current Percentages

Covered Market - current balance of trades as at 21/12/11

Retail trading areas based upon Arbitration Award for 2007 rent review

Non Food

| | Unit | Retail Trading Area (sq ft) | % of whole of market |
|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Fashion - Clothes | | | |
| Red Opia | 101-102 | 332 | 1.44% |
| Watsons | 137-141 | 517 | 2.25% |
| Mercer Childrens Clothes | 118-120 | 568 | 2.47% |
| Mercer Womens Clothes | 115-117 | 740 | 3.22% |
| Total | | 2157 | 9.38% |

Fashion - Shoes & Accessories

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Macsamillion | 1-4 | 649 | 2.82% |
| Bangles | 5-6 | 369 | 1.61% |
| Macsamillion | 11-15 | 585 | 2.54% |
| Macsamillion | 26,27,42,43 | 619 | 2.69% |
| Next to Nothing | 142-155 | 1145 | 4.98% |
| Pingui | 65-66 | 383 | 1.67% |
| The Hat Box | 76 | 145 | 0.63% |
| Total | | 3895 | 16.94% |

Traditional Services

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Oxford Cobbler | 7 | 424 | 1.84% |
| Jemini | 28-29 | 429 | 1.87% |
| John Gowing Jeweller | 110-112 | 185 | 0.80% |
| Oxford Engraver | 31 | 252 | 1.10% |
| The Market Barber | 67,68,74,75 | 695 | 3.02% |
| Prices Pet Supplies | 106-107 | 337 | 1.47% |
| The Garden | 99-100 | 360 | 1.57% |
| Total | | 2682 | 11.67% |

Literary Arts & Crafts, hobbies

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Cards Galore | 55,84-87 | 614 | 2.67% |
| Covered Market Arts | 81-82 | 358 | 1.56% |
| Norton Riding Shop | 52-53 | 444 | 1.93% |
| Tourist/walking Shop | 30 | 266 | 1.16% |
| Total | | 1682 | 7.32% |

Home Products, Gifts & Toys

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Red Opia | 64-64a | 347 | 1.51% |
| Helen Douglas House | 69-73 | 343 | 1.49% |
| The Farmhouse, gifts & toys etc | 113-114 | 462 | 2.01% |
| Auto Models | 130 | 244 | 1.06% |
| Cardew & Co coffee etc | 131-136 | 609 | 2.65% |
| Dragon Den | 39 | 181 | 0.79% |
| Oxford Aromatics | 44-45 | 295 | 1.28% |
| Wooden gifts | 38 | 200 | 0.87% |
| Dragon Den 2 | 40-41 | 400 | 1.74% |
| Total | | 3081 | 13.40% |

Non Foods

Total 13497 58.71%

Food

| | Unit | Retail Trading Area (sq ft) | % of whole of market |
|------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Raw Foods | | | |
| McCarthy Bros | 18-19 | 288 | 1.25% |
| Bonnors, grocery | 20,49 | 375 | 1.63% |
| Alden Fishmonger | 21-23 | 570 | 2.48% |
| Feller Butchers | 46-48 | 502 | 2.18% |
| Feller Butchers | 54,55,88 | 391 | 1.70% |
| Hedges Butcher | 60-62 | 567 | 2.47% |
| Total | | 2693 | 11.71% |

Food Products

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| Oxford Cheese Co, cheese & wine | 17 | 184 | 0.80% |
| Nash Bakery | 24-25 | 339 | 1.47% |
| Chocology | 32 | 257 | 1.12% |
| Palms Deli | | | |
| Fasta Pasta | 121 | 202 | 0.88% |
| Cake Shop Ltd | 123-127 | 905 | 3.94% |
| Chocology | 37 | 224 | 0.97% |
| Total | | 2111 | 9.18% |

A1 Food - Immediate Consumption

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|------------|--------------|
| Wards - confectionary | 16A | 63 | 0.27% |
| Market News - newsagent | 16B-C | 108 | 0.47% |
| Moo Moo's | 34-35 | 135 | 0.59% |
| Oxford Sandwich Co | 50 | 151 | 0.66% |
| Alpha Bar | 89 | 172 | 0.75% |
| Bens Cookies | 108-109 | 130 | 0.57% |
| Michels Creperie | 16 | 77 | 0.34% |
| Total | | 836 | 3.64% |

A3/A5 Food

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Sofi de France | 33,36 | 603 | 2.62% |
| Ricardo's | 51 | 196 | 0.85% |
| Pieminister | 56-58 | 557 | 2.42% |
| Brothers Coffee Shop | 63,77-80 | 1005 | 4.37% |
| Browns Cafe | 92,128-129 | 854 | 3.71% |
| Mortons | 103-103A | 319 | 1.39% |
| Mortons | 104-105 | 319 | 1.39% |
| Total | | 3853 | 16.76% |

Foods Total 9493 41.29%

Whole Covered Market Area sqft 22990

Non Foods should be **60%** Maximum
 Foods should be **50%** maximum
 No one sector should exceed **20%**
 No one defined trade should exceed **10%**
 A1 & A3/A5 should not exceed current level of **20.42%**

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Timeline for former Palms shop letting

April 2010 – Corporate Property were notified informally Palms Delicatessen Limited were entering into liquidation.

June 2010 In house marketing of the unit commenced and an early offer from the tenant who runs Chocology was received. This offer was to continue trading the shop as a delicatessen. This offer was rejected as a more thorough marketing process was required in order to achieve best consideration for the Council.

June 2010 – OCC took back formal possession of the property.

July 2010 – CMTA began to use the window spaces for display of tenant goods. This occurred for 5 months.

October 2010 - Marriotts were appointed as independent letting agents to act for the Council.

November 2010 – Temporary letting commenced to the Calendar Club for the Christmas period whilst marketing continued.

February 2011 – CMTA began using the window space again for displays following the temporary Christmas letting.

March 2011 – Offer received from Macs-amilion for unit to be used as a Foot clinic, negotiations were advanced when the tenant withdrew their offer and stated they did not wish to proceed.

April 2011 - A round up of enquires at this stage showed that of the enquires received many were not good quality and many were unsuitable due to the restrictive user constraints within the leasing strategy. Investigations were made into splitting the unit but this was not assessed to be cost effective or practical.

June 2011 – Offer received from Cards Galore. Internal approval to the letting was given 24 June 2011. This offer was then progressed by solicitors.

November 2011 - Asbestos was found to be present in the property and so this caused delay to the completion of the lease. Therefore additional approval was granted to change the original terms to reflect the delays caused by the asbestos works and associated loss of Christmas trading.

November 2011 – Asbestos removal completed at the end of November.

December 2011 – Completion of lease to Cards Galore.

February 2012 – Queries commenced with regards to how the letting fits in with the Leasing Strategy.

Summary

In summary, 42 enquiries were made and those that did not comply with the leasing strategy were not considered. All but two of those enquiries were for uses that were considered not to be compliant with the leasing strategy, and as a consequence were not pursued further. Of the two that remained, one was from Cards Galore and the other was discounted as not offering the best consideration. The Council has a statutory obligation to obtain best consideration in accordance with section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The negotiations on a lease were therefore taken forward with Cards Galore and other factors which were considered when agreeing to the lease included;

- The tenant's financial standing.
- The sale of cards and related gift items were not fully represented in the Market at the time.
- The strategy's comment that "A further shift towards non food uses, say up to 60%", is mentioned as acceptable.
- The strategy's wording in respect of National Chains is as follows;
"Applications for change of use where the lease is to be assigned to a high street multiple will not generally be permitted unless there is a real and positive benefit to the balance of trades / diversity"

Therefore in light of the above, national chains are not precluded and the view was taken that Cards Galore would indeed add to the diversity of the market.

There was also a similar decision made when Timpsons took a lease in the Market. Timpsons added to the diversity of trades and brought in a trade not already fully represented.

To: City Executive Board

Date: 5th December 2012

Report of: Head of Business Improvement and Technology

Title of Report: Procurement Strategy 2013 - 2016

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval from the City Executive Board to adopt the Council's new Procurement Strategy 2013 to 2016.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Ed Turner

Policy Framework: An Efficient and Effective Council

Recommendation:

(1) That the City Executive Board approves the new Procurement Strategy 2013-2016 as set out at Appendix1.

Appendices:

- (1) Draft Procurement Strategy
- (2) Risk Register

Background Papers;

- (1) Procurement Commissioning & Supplier Management Strategy 2010-2014
- (2) Localism Act 2011
- (3) Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This strategy replaces the current procurement strategy which was written to cover the period 2010 – 2014.

- 1.2 During this time the profile of procurement within the Council as well as within the sector has been raised and the demands put on the procurement team have significantly increased.
- 1.3 This strategy outlines the future direction of procurement within the Council and creates a sound base for an efficient and compliant service that meets the Council's GOLD (Greater Outcomes, Leaner Delivery) aspirations.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 The Council's second Procurement Strategy was approved by the Executive Board in 2010. It sought to define how procurement would support the council in achieving the ambitious efficiency targets set out in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review and the Gershon and Varney reports. It also concentrated on how the Council approached sustainable procurement in light of the Simms and Glover reports.
- 2.2 The proposed new strategy builds on the good work to date and focuses on delivering new efficiencies and benefits to the community and economy, our commitment to carbon reduction and delivering affordable housing. It also builds in new legislative requirements.
- 2.3 The Procurement Strategy inter-relates with the Council's Constitution. Therefore all purchases must be compliant with the contract procedure rules and, where appropriate the EU procurement regulations.

3. **Key Changes Reflected in this Strategy**

- 3.1 The revised strategy reflects the Council's objective of continuous improvement. The key changes to the strategy are listed below:

Legislative changes

- The Localism Act and the Community Right to Challenge which enables "relevant bodies" to express an interest in running council services.

The strategy lays out the Council's approach to the Community Right to Challenge, which is to ensure that all contracts which might be suitable for a not for profit organisation to tender for and deliver are reviewed before being advertised. The tender evaluation criteria will also be reviewed to ensure any added benefit that such an organisation can offer are properly reflected.

The Council does not propose to create a specific timetable of suitable tender opportunities for organisations to make expressions of interest against but will consider any application if received.

- The Public Services (Social Value) Act has also come into force this year and this requires the Council to consider the social benefits that a procurement may bring. For example, the requirement in a tender for the supplier to provide jobs for local people.
- There is now a statutory requirement for local authorities to publish all spend over £500. The strategy sets out how the Council complies with this requirement and makes its spend and procurement activity transparent to all.
- In preparation for EU procurement legislation due to come into force in 2014 regarding electronic tendering, the Council has fully implemented and rolled out an electronic tendering (e-tendering) system. As well as being a comprehensive platform for running EU tenders on, the system enables officers to run quick and efficient competitive quote exercises.

Other Changes

- The council's Living Wage policy and its expectations on suppliers in relation to this policy is clearly outlined.
- The work that the Council does in order to develop suppliers and achieve the procurement income target has been updated. The proposed training programme for officers regarding contract management and certification in public procurement is also included in this strategy.
- The strategy supports the Council's position on supporting the local economy, in particular, the requirement to create as many local apprenticeships and jobs as possible.
- The Procurement Hub was in its infancy when the current strategy was written. This refresh details the many positive outcomes that the Hub has achieved and sets out the Council's approach to further collaborative procurement going forward.
- The Strategy sets out the Council's approach to outsourcing and market testing.
- The strategy also details how procurement will support, and help achieve, the challenging savings targets that are placed upon the council.

4. Future of the Strategy

- 4.1 Although this strategy is intended to cover the period 2013 – 2016, it will be necessary to review it in terms of performance and to take into account any new situations, for example: an upturn in the economic

climate, or new legislation or initiatives that may affect its content. It is proposed that the Procurement Strategy should be reviewed on an annual basis.

5. **Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications directly related to this report.

6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 It is best practice for Councils to have in place a Procurement Strategy. Higher value procurement activity is governed by the EU Procurement Regulations.

7. **Risk**

7.1 The risks associated with the implementation of this strategy are minimal. A risk register is attached at Appendix 2.

Appendices to report

- (1) Draft Procurement Strategy
- (2) Risk Register

Background Papers

- (1) Procurement Commissioning & Supplier Management Strategy 2010 – 2014
- (2) Localism Act 2011
- (3) Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

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PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2012 - 2016

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Executive Summary

This strategy provides the Council with a framework for embedding good procurement practice to deliver savings to the Council and provide benefits to our local economy by increasing spend with local businesses. In addition the strategy set out how our procurement activity will deliver wider social benefits for the residents of Oxford by requiring key contractors to pay the Living Wage and create apprenticeships and jobs.

This strategy reaffirms the Council's commitment to delivering these wider benefits through working with our suppliers and explains how it supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

The commitment to delivering financial savings continues and these will be delivered through the activity of the Procurement Team working closely with services and gaining value from the leverage of working with the other councils in Oxfordshire via the Procurement Hub which continues to deliver financial savings to all the member councils.

Supporting the Council's Ambition – “Good to Great”

The Council's ambition is to become a great council, externally recognised for delivering excellent services using a lean and agile approach. This strategy outlines the future direction of procurement across the Council to support our “Good to Great” aspiration to achieve greater outcomes through leaner delivery.

The Strategy fully integrates with, and supports, the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012 – 2016 and the corporate priority of “an efficient and effective Council”.

Specifically the Procurement Team, through its work developing and training local suppliers and third sector bodies, is able to develop skills in local organisations to bid for and win Council work.

Introduction

This strategy replaces the Procurement Strategy which ran from 2010 to 2014. The main reason for its revision is to keep pace with the changing economic climate and recent changes in central government legislation. This revised strategy also reflects the Council's objective of continually improving procurement.

Almost 50% of the Council's annual spend is now spent through an agreed contract which has been put in place with clear terms and contract and expenditure deliverables. Around 42% of these contracts have been awarded to local companies.

It is essential that the Council continues to focus on delivering further savings and efficiencies by managing these contracts, and putting in place better spending arrangements for expenditure categories not yet being managed effectively.

Equally important is the need to commission and deliver quality and value-for-money public services, through the development of a mixed supply arrangement, utilising the not-for-profit as well as the private sector, according to who is best placed to provide these services for local people. The Council is committed to leading by example - using its spending power and influence to encourage other organisations to deliver wider outcomes and benefits across the city.

There are many challenges facing local government, arising from the changing needs of our citizens and communities as well as the central government's agenda. Some of the key challenges and opportunities in relation to procurement include:

- Continuing to drive efficient and effective service delivery against a backdrop of reducing budgets by working with our supply chains to increase the value of the Council's spend.
- New legislation, most notably the Public Services (Social value) Act and the Localism Act, enabling local groups to bid to take over services in their areas.
- Localisation and an increased demand by citizens for greater choice in determining local services in their community.
- Radical changes for partner organisations that will have an impact on local government e.g. reforms in the health service.

Continuing to do things the same way as they always have been done is not an option. The Council will need to continue to transform, to become a leaner and more agile organisation. The Council will have to work differently, to deliver better and more focused services for less and will need to work closely with partners across the city to find solutions to complex problems.

Procurement is not a standalone activity; it encompasses a range of core business activities and processes. While it is widely accepted that procurement decisions contribute directly to delivering the total cost of our services, quality of outcomes and the use of the Council's internal resources, they also contribute indirectly in other areas including:

- The environment, through encouraging the reduction of carbon emissions and pollution generated by the Council's suppliers.
- The reduction in spend, freeing up funds which can then be used to help the Council fulfil its other policy priorities.
- The wellbeing of local businesses which in turn determines the prosperity of the local economy. A successful award of contract, particularly to a local supplier, supports the Oxford economy and helps to keep local jobs and creating new training opportunities and apprenticeships.
- Great procurement can create jobs at all levels. Every tender that exceeds the EU threshold, where appropriate, will ask the tenderer if, as a result of being awarded the contract, they would create new apprenticeships. The tender document, for all opportunities over £100,000 will explore the tenderers' appetite for developing employees. This is achieved by asking them about their training policies and demographics of their work force.

Operating Environment

Public Procurement Policy and Legislation

Public procurement operates in a highly regulated environment that is governed by legislation and policies set by the European Union (EU), nationally through statute and case law and locally by the Council's Constitution.

Role of the European Union

The EU Consolidated Public Procurement Directive was adopted into UK law on 31 January 2006. The Directive gives detailed instructions on how public procurement over a certain threshold should be carried out.

The detail behind the legislation and regulations is complex, and since their inception has been supplemented by a raft of case law.

In December 2009, the Remedies Directive provided additional regulations which provide suppliers with additional powers to arrange for a contract award to be set aside under certain conditions.

This means that public procurement is carried out in a dynamic environment that requires public sector procurement practitioners to keep abreast of new case law and ensure that all procurement is carried out in accordance with the regulations.

Further reform to the EU procurement legislation is expected during 2014. The Council is ready to embrace this reform which is expected to centre on procurement tendering processes.

Failure to adhere to the provision of the EU Directive can result in the Council becoming subject to Court action or enforcement action by the European Union.

Central Government Legislation

During March 2012 the government introduced the Public Services (Social Value) Act. The Act amended Section 4 of the local Government Act 2000 and local authorities are now required to include proposals for promoting engagement with social enterprise in their area. The Council has always given a high weighting to corporate and social responsibility provisions within its tender documentation, and therefore the introduction of the new legislation has required very few changes to our current procurement process. The Council is insisting, on larger contracts, that the Procurement Strategy takes into account the provision of local jobs and apprenticeships.

On June 27th 2012 the Community Right to Challenge came into effect. This enables “relevant bodies”, for example voluntary and community groups, Parish Councils etc. to challenge to take over local services that they think they can run differently or better.

Additional information on this is available on page 17.

Oxford City Council Procurement

The Council's procurement activity is governed by the Council's Constitution. The relevant sections are both the Contract Procedure and Financial Rules. <http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD263&ID=263&RPID=536702&sch=doc&cat=13045&path=13045>.

The key procurement principles that the Council adheres to which are also included in national frameworks and examples of good practice are set out below:

- The Council will provide potential suppliers with clear specifications of our requirements at the earliest possible stage and ensure these are understood. Wherever required European or equivalent standards (e.g. British Standards Institute) will be included.
- Our purchasing procedures will encourage competitive pricing and solutions to be proffered by suppliers, having due regard for the urgency

of the requirement and its value. In cases of urgency or where there is a unique requirement we may not require multiple quotes.

- For high value purchases (over the EU procurement thresholds) we will always publish our tender evaluation criteria to make clear to prospective suppliers the basis on which we intend to award a contract. We will follow and keep abreast of legislative changes and case law and provide continuous learning opportunities for procurement staff and other officers involved in the procurement of goods services and works.
- Where the Council is undertaking market testing of an in house service, we will ensure that all potential tenderers are made aware of the objectives of the market testing and the Council's core requirements in relation to TUPE, two tier workforce, Living Wage, pensions, commitment to the creation and development of apprenticeships, carbon reduction targets and customer service focus. The in-house team will be fully involved in the market testing and form part of the tender evaluation panel. Final tenders will be evaluated against an in-house comparator and will consider all issues which could distort any evaluation to ensure that a 'level playing field' is created between the tenderers and in-house team.
- The Council will offer a full debrief (in writing or face to face) to all parties following a tendering process setting out why they were or were not successful. Feedback will always be meaningful, open and constructive to enable unsuccessful bidders to develop their knowledge and skills in bidding for future supply opportunities.
- Contracts will only be placed on the Council's standard terms and conditions or appropriate industry standards (e.g. JCT/INEC₃ for works contracts), except with the authority of the Council's Monitoring Officer.
- The Council will only contract with suppliers who are committed to continuous improvement and all contracts (other than for one-off supply) will include agreed KPI (key performance indicators) improvement programmes, which will be subject to regular review. The contract will be proactively managed and supported by the Procurement Team who will support the contract beyond the date of award. This continuing assistance is always available to contract managers either through the Procurement Team or by adhering to the Contract Manager's Handbook.
- The Council will promote prompt payment discounts in order to achieve our aim of supporting the economy whilst achieving savings. The Procurement Team have taken a proactive approach and whilst supporting suppliers with cash flow have successfully negotiated 1% - 5% in discounts. This continues to deliver increased savings and benefits to many suppliers and will be incorporated into future tenders.
- The procurement process eliminates the potential for fraud or favouritism towards any supplier. The officers involved in recommending contract

awards will be appropriately qualified and supervised to ensure the highest ethical standards. All contract awards over £10k have a clear sign off arrangement which always include a member of the Procurement Team.

- Every published procurement opportunity draws the suppliers' attention to the Council's "Avoiding Fraud, Bribery & Corruption" Policy.
- The Shared Procurement Hub managed by the Council's Procurement Team will continue to work collaboratively with other local procurement groups and public sector organisations in order to be able to deliver best value to our residents. The Council is also part of a wider group of councils who manage county-wide procurement hubs and uses this collaboration to share best practice and consider the best collaborative approach to different spend categories.
- During the life of this strategy the Council will positively consider opportunities to expand the benefits of the Procurement Hub to other Councils beyond Oxfordshire.

Collaborative Procurement

The Council has led on the Oxfordshire Procurement Hub Project since it was first set up in 2008. 2011/12 saw savings achieved in excess of £220,000 across the 6 councils.

The Hub has, to date, justified its role in terms of the commercial savings that have been delivered. Oxfordshire County Council have not been able to contribute financially in 2012/2013, however they have pledged to give support in kind by providing procurement officer time. It is anticipated that the Hub will continue to function providing that partners continue to have the appetite to work together.

The main areas the Hub will focus on over the next 4 years include:

- Fencing tender
- CCTV tender
- Home improvement agency tender
- Renegotiation of existing long term contracts as appropriate
- Providing assistance to Direct Services to find opportunities to promote commercial offerings
- Regular review of commodity contracts to stay on top of the markets

The Council is currently seeking opportunities to widen the scope of the Hub and deliver its services to Councils in neighbouring counties.

Efficient, Effective Council

Minimising Costs and Maximising Value

Through the use of a competitive process the Council is able to understand what the market (suppliers) can offer in delivering any solution. The Procurement Team work with services to seek opportunities to minimise costs and maximise value at all stages in the commercial cycle thus enabling the delivery of savings. This is an essential part of a robust commercial approach and assists the Council in delivering a balanced budget.

The Council is able to achieve greater savings by operating corporately and where beneficial to the Council, collaboratively with other partners to leverage increased savings.

As a part of its tender process the Council always evaluates its major tenders using the Most Economically Advantageous Tender evaluation approach. This requires the Council to evaluate the tender both on price and quality. The Council's standard evaluation criterion is 60% quality and 40% price, however, due to budget pressures there are some categories that can benefit from a higher weighting on price, for example stationery purchasing.

Contract Management

Contract management is the management of contracts made with customers, suppliers, partners, or employees.

The Council is taking a new more proactive approach to contract management which is under-pinned by a new Contract Management Handbook. A key part of this approach will be the provision of specific training for officers with contract management responsibilities, clarity about roles and responsibilities and the creation of a contract managers' forum to share issues and learning.

A copy of the Contract Management Handbook and User Guide can be found on the Council's intranet.

Benefits of Great Contract Management include:

- Improved supplier delivery through regular communication and clarity of requirements. Reduction in requirement to implement contract penalties from non-compliance as early intervention with the supplier.
- Reduction in risk of non-delivery of contract requirements.
- Effective management and up to date management information to better understand the market.
- Improved supplier relationships leading to increased innovation being brought to the table and discussed.

Contract Specification

In order to achieve maximum benefits from contracts with third parties, the Council will focus on improving the specification of contracts and contract terms. Early supplier involvement through the issue of Prior Indication Notices will be used to help shape and understand better what the market can provide. Where required, specialist advice will be sought in the drafting of major contracts to support and guide our own officers. Whenever possible the Council will encourage contractual arrangements which provide the flexibility to respond to changing needs over the term of the contract. Lessons learned from the preparation of contracts will be captured and shared internally and across the Oxfordshire councils.

The Procurement team work closely with other procurement colleagues to ensure that all learning and any innovative new arrangement is shared.

Where a shared contract is put in place the Council will ensure that it is fully involved in the management and development of the supplier.

The Oxfordshire councils share a large number of supply and service arrangements which have been set up using a single contract specification. The councils are close to developing standardised tender documentation and aligning (where possible and suitable) a range of procurement documentation and information to simplify our processes for potential suppliers. This will be in place by the end of 2012.

E-Procurement

Another way of achieving efficiency is to embrace new technologies that can make the procurement process slicker and more user-friendly. E-Procurement is integral to the overall development of procurement processes and involves the use of electronic system(s) to acquire and pay for supplies, services and works.

By embracing e-procurement the Council aims to:

- Reduce transaction costs;
- Make processes more efficient;
- Improve management information and visibility of spend;
- Increasing control and consistency of processes;
- Improve spend compliance;
- Meet the requirements of the updated EU Regulations expected in 2014.

To date the Council has implemented a full e-tendering system and is working towards implementing a fully integrated Procure to Pay system by December 2012.

Risk

Risk in procurement is the potential exposure to financial, legal and

reputational damage through either an unplanned event or an unwanted outcome. There are three key activities that form the basis of risk management:

1. Risk Analysis is the process of examining everything that can go wrong with an activity, and then estimating the probability of that happening. The Council carries out a thorough investigation of all risks prior to any procurement activity, which ensures that the appropriate sourcing strategy will be chosen.
2. Risk Assessment is the process of assessing the likely impact of a risk on the Council. Each risk is assessed and given a probability score of that risk occurring, for example low, medium or high. The Council will then take the decision on how to control or eliminate that risk.
3. Risk Mitigation is the process of allocating an owner who will be responsible for planning and managing mitigating measures which are undertaken.

As part of any large procurement (i.e. over the EU threshold) the project team will use PRINCE2 project management methodology to ensure the project delivers the project objectives and outcomes. A project risk register and issues register will be set up and regularly monitored.

The procurement Team is responsible for identifying any corporate risk from procurement and contract management activity and this will be added to either the Corporate or Service Risk Register. These registers are monitored by the relevant Service Head and/or Director.

Business Continuity

Business continuity is the process of preparing for and responding to a disaster, event or situation that could have a serious impact on the delivery of the Council's services. All contracts for key service provision have approved business continuity plans in place which may be invoked in the event of service disruption.

The Procurement team holds a list of all key suppliers and these suppliers are required to provide their updated business continuity plans annually. The plans are held on the Council's intranet.

These plans are reviewed as part of the regular contract management reviews and are included in the annual review of key supply arrangements by the Head of Technology and Business Improvement and Corporate Secretariat Manager.

Any key supply arrangement that does not have a satisfactory plan for dealing with business continuity will be identified and added to either the Service or Corporate Risk Register and a plan for mitigating the risk put in place.

Vibrant, Sustainable Economy

Supporting the development of the economy through practical activities is a key task for the Procurement Team. The team support local businesses and third sector bodies and are committed to investing time in fostering effective supplier relationships and encouraging local businesses to supply to the Council.

Managing & Developing Suppliers

Supplier diversity is essential to achieve a competitive and diverse economy.

The Council needs to continuously interact with the market and its suppliers in particular to understand their views and what enables and encourages diverse parts of the market to bid for work with the Council. At the same time the Council needs to ensure that relationships with suppliers are mutually productive and that goals are understood and shared.

The Procurement Team and key contract managers aim to develop an ongoing relationship between the Council and its suppliers to create mutually advantageous, flexible and long term relations based on continuous improvement of quality of performance and financial savings.

The Procurement Team will analyse and research supply markets for different services, and will maintain regular dialogue with potential providers, including organisations from the community and voluntary sector.

This activity will be used to develop market intelligence as to what suppliers are now able to deliver and aid the design of any new procurement.

Supply Chain Development

The supply chain is the integration and co-ordination of all companies, stakeholders, departments, communities involved in the delivery of goods, works and services.

The Procurement Team will encourage the supply chain to conform to the Council's policies, ethos and goals along the complete chain of supply. This subject is covered in depth at the supplier training sessions so that businesses can understand the Council's ethics and expectations.

Equalities and Supplier Diversity

As a Council we recognise and value difference and respect our staff and service users as individuals.

To ensure that the Council procures goods, works and services in a way which promotes equality and diversity, we strive to:

- have a fair, transparent and accessible procurement process
- make sure that where contractors deliver services on our behalf, they do so in a way which meets the needs of all our residents and/or employees
- encourage Black and Minority Ethnic, Small Medium Enterprises and voluntary groups to apply for suitable contracts and create evaluation criteria that do not disadvantage these groups.

By being proactive in these three areas, the Council will achieve its vision of building and safeguarding a fair, open and compassionate community. We will also be meeting our statutory duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote disability, race and gender equality.

The Council will ensure a fair and accessible procurement process by continuing to:

- simplify the guidance available to potential suppliers about how we procure goods, works and services
- make information about the Council's procurement opportunities more accessible including, for example, holding regular 'Meet the Buyer' events and frequently updated information on the website
- engage with suppliers and offer training to them

When we use contractors to deliver services on our behalf, we will make sure that they do so in a way which meets the needs of all our residents and/or employees by:

- seeking information from tenderers about their equality and diversity policies and practices and using this to help short-list suitable candidates
- requiring officers to consider any equality and diversity issues when they are procuring goods, works or services
- including equality and diversity clauses as a standard feature in contracts to ensure contractors meet relevant statutory duties
- consulting our major contractors on any statutory equality and diversity policies/schemes we develop. This will be facilitated through the monthly procurement newsletters

Development of Skills and Supplier Training

The Procurement Team have delivered a successful programme of training for suppliers and have an income target of £2,000 in 2012/13 to deliver. The

Team are therefore marketing their services to a wider external audience, with a focus on delivering sessions on-site at supplier premises.

The Team will continue to look at further training delivery opportunities, including training on behalf of other Councils.

As the procurement profile has been raised internally, there is an increased need to develop an in-house training programme. This will be developed in conjunction with the contract management training being delivered in the third quarter of 2012/13.

During 2013, the Council will host a training cohort for the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply award in Public Sector Procurement. This will be certified. The course requires officers to undertake 18 modules of specialist training over a year. At the end of the course provided the officers pass, these officers will be given authority to manage tendering activity within their own service.

Strong, Active Communities

Oxford Living Wage, Pay and Performance Policies

The Council's policy is to ensure that a Living Wage is paid to any employee who is employed by an organisation providing a contract on behalf of the Council. This is already in place in contracts for many key contracts, including the provision of our Leisure Services, Materials Recycling, Supply of Building Materials, Pay by Phone, Construction Consultancy, Benefits Resilience, Cash Collection, Occupational Health, Play area Refurbishment, Street Scene & Reconnection Services, Treasury Management, Legal Services and Out of Hours call handling.

For suppliers who have contracts preceding the Living Wage policy, the procurement team will work with those suppliers to assist them in achieving this requirement.

The Council has identified that working with suppliers who share like minded ethical arrangements is important to the success of the relationship. The Council is also keen to support organisations that have in place transparent and fair pay and performance policies for all staff including senior management.

It is imperative, when conducting procurement projects, that the Council takes into account the diversity of the population it serves. If a project impacts on, or is for the benefit of, the wider population, a period of consultation is built into the timetable.

Cleaner, Greener Oxford

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability

“Sustainable procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole-life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, while minimising damage to the environment.”

Key factors informing the sustainability agenda in respect of procurement include:

- Savings can be realised through the design of new property and refurbishment of existing property with lower through-life operating costs, better management of demand (including re-use, recycling and standardisation) and the acquisition of products that are more efficient in their use of energy, water and other resources.
- The environmental imperative to reduce CO2 emissions and the amount of waste going to landfill.
- Socio-economic benefits include the creation of employment and training opportunities for the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities, and the elimination of child labour within supply chains.
- Through better coordination and challenge of demand and consumption locally, regionally and across the wider public sector, and improved engagement with suppliers, procurement activity can be harnessed to stimulate product and process innovations that deliver improved environmental performance and further savings. This includes the engagement of SMEs, BMEs and voluntary sector organisations.

Summarised below are examples of procurement practices implemented by the Council to promote the sustainability agenda.

- If a product contains wood, the Council insists on Forest Stewardship Council certified wood. When procuring a supplier to run the Town Hall café, the Council insisted that Fair Trade tea and coffee is included on the suppliers' menus. For any new build or refurbishment project the Council will specify an appropriate Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) to ensure that its buildings are designed to the most appropriate sustainable standard.
- When purchasing fleet, the Council adheres to The Cleaner Road Transport Vehicles Regulations 2011. This legislation takes into account the operational lifetime energy and environmental impacts that a vehicle has. Examples of this include energy consumption and the amount of emissions a vehicle produces.

Equally important is the necessity to consider whole-life costing with every procurement decision that the Council makes. This is achieved during the options appraisal stage. The following list is not exhaustive but provides examples of areas to take into account:

- indirect costs
- direct running costs
- administrative costs
- spending in order to save
- recyclability and disposal costs.

Where relevant and suitable, the Council secures commitment from bidders to offer training, apprenticeships etc. in the event that they are awarded the contract. This approach has proved successful with construction-type contracts. The procurement Team will seek to widen these opportunities.

The Council will facilitate supplier performance reviews which address sustainability improvement as an element of more general continuous improvement, and targets suppliers as appropriate on established/recognised local government high-yield priority spend areas:

- Construction and FM (building and refit, highways and local roads, operations and maintenance)
- Waste management
- Energy
- Transport (business travel, motor vehicles)
- Food

All new contracts for service delivery to housing tenants now include a stage in the tender process for representatives of those who will receive the service to provide feedback on the short-listed bidders and their solutions offered.

Performance of Oxford City Council Services

There are occasions when the Council has the capability to carry out functions in house that could be delivered by another supplier, so sometimes there is no need to run a competitive procurement exercise.

In order to check that these services offer value for money the Council will commission fundamental service reviews. The Oxford Improvement Model provides the performance framework within which services can identify future service improvements. The procurement team will also work with service

areas to conduct market testing exercises to determine the most effective procurement route.

Community Right to Challenge (The Localism Act)

It is necessary for this strategy to highlight a particular element of the Act concerning the Community Right to Challenge.

The Community Right to Challenge enables community groups or members of staff to express an interest in providing local authority services. It came into force on 27th June 2012. The regulations require local authorities to consider any expressions of interest to run services made by 'relevant bodies': these are defined as voluntary and community bodies, parish councils and two or more local authority staff. If the expression is accepted the authority is obliged to run a procurement exercise for the service in question.

Under the regulations relevant bodies can submit an expression of interest in partnership with other relevant and/or non-relevant bodies. This creates the possibility of private sector and communities bidding in partnership.

In order to meet this new requirement the Council will review all contracts prior to advertisement to determine whether they might be suitable for delivery by a 'relevant body' either individually or in partnership. As part of this exercise the tender evaluation criteria will be amended as appropriate to take account of any added benefit that such an organisation(s) could offer.

The Council does not propose to create a specific timetable of suitable tender opportunities for organisations to make expressions of interest but will consider applications as received.

Procurement Team Work Plan

It is expected that the upskilling of officers within the service areas will enable the procurement team to concentrate on a real change in commercial focus. The Council needs to achieve an additional 2% savings target. This 2% is likely to be leveraged from the larger supplier spend categories where there are commonly contracts in place. A programme for re-negotiating existing larger contracts will be identified and efforts will be concentrated on finding savings from larger subjective spend categories rather than focussing on lower value spend. During 2013 a full procure to pay module will be implemented. This will mean that the procurement team will have greater visibility of the corporate spend and be more easily able to target these subjective spend categories. Suppliers will also benefit by the slicker payment capabilities that the system will enable.

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Appendix 2 - Procurement Strategy Risk Register

| Risk ID | Date raised | Project | Risk Category | Description of Risk | Current Gross Risk Rating | | | Mitigating Actions | Action Due Dates | Action Owner |
|---------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|---|---------------------------|---|-------|--|------------------|--------------|
| | | | | | P | L | Score | | | |
| PS01 | 26/10/2012 | Procurement Strategy | | City Executive Board do not adopt the strategy. | 2 | 1 | 2 | Set up a working group to agree revised content prior to resubmission. | 6/12/2012 | Nicky Atkin |
| PS02 | 26/10/2012 | Procurement Strategy | | The strategy is agreed but is then overtaken by new legislation or other changes. | 2 | 2 | 2 | The strategy is updated and will be brought back to City Executive Board. | Variable | Nicky Atkin |
| PS03 | 26/10/2012 | Procurement Strategy | | The strategy is adopted but not communicated and therefore not adhered to. | 1 | 1 | 1 | The strategy will be communicated at CMT, MPG and will be summarised in Council Matters. The Council will also be facilitating training for Officers through the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Public Procurement Module. | 6/12/2012 | Nicky Atkin |
| PS04 | 26/10/2012 | Procurement Strategy | | The organisation is unable to deliver the benefits detailed in the strategy | 2 | 1 | 2 | The Head of Service will review resources and prioritisation of benefits. | Quarterly | Jane Lubbock |

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VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday 19 September 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chair), Rowley (Vice-Chair), Abbasi, Fooks, Fry, Gotch, Haines, Kennedy, McCready, Simmons and Sanders.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer), Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services), Helen Bishop (Head of Customer Services), Nigel Kennedy (Head of Finance), Jane Lubbock (Head of Business Improvement) and Tim Sadler (Executive Director Community Services)

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anne-Marie Canning, Sajjad Malik and Oscar Van Nooijen (Councillor Gill Sanders attended as a substitute).

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee agreed to amend its programme of meetings to meet as follows:

Monday 5th November 2012 – Special meeting at 5.30 pm

Tuesday 27th November 2012

Monday 28th January 2013

Wednesday 3rd April 2013

All meetings would be in the Town Hall and start at 6.00pm unless otherwise stated.

15. STANDING ITEM: WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated and now appended) updating the Committee on the work programme for the current year.

Pat Jones from Law and Governance introduced the item.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) That Councillor Pat Kennedy would replace Councillor James Fry on the Finance and Performance Panel;
- (b) That a special meeting of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee would be held on Monday 5th November 2012 at 5.30pm to consider the call-in of the “Parking in parking areas adjacent to Parks – monitoring” report considered by the City Executive Board at its meeting on 12th September 2012;
- (c) That the following items would be added to the agenda for the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 27th November 2012:
 - (i) Complaints Monitoring
 - (ii) Covered Market Briefing Paper

16. STANDING ITEM: REPORT BACK ON THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMITTEE

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a paper (previously circulated, now appended) which detailed recommendations made from the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee and its Panels to the City Executive Board, between June and September 2012 and where available the responses received.

The Committee was informed of the responses from the City Executive Board to recommendations made from:

- (i) The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 25th June 2012;

Treasury Management Annual Report 2011/12 and Revised Treasury Management Strategy 2012/13

Recommendation: To request the City Executive Board to keep under review the effects of “Right-to-Buy” within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, with particular regard to income streams, and our ability to be flexible within the funding of the capital programme so as to allow the Council to use all of the capital receipts from any sales.

City Executive Board Response:

- (1) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2011/12 as set out in sections 1 - 48 of the report;
- (2) RECOMMEND Council to agree the changes to the Treasury Investment Strategy as referred to in sections 49-51 of the report;
- (3) To keep under review the effects of right to buy on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and to ask the Executive Director, Organisational Development and Corporate Services to report in the Autumn in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy review on the effects on the HRA Business Plan of right to buy take-up.

Financial out-turn for the year ending 31st March 2012

Recommendations:

- (a) That all carry forward requests are supported taking into account that the Committee had noted that in some service areas, had the money been spent as planned in year, it would have placed them in a position of overspend. The most significant of these being the Museum request from Policy Culture and Communications and brings into sharper relief the under achievement of income in the Town Hall.
- (b) To request that the £0.5m surplus be placed in reserves and its use considered during the up and coming budgetary process rather than earmarking it at this stage for capital;
- (c) To request Board Members and Senior Officer consider the effects of delays in recruitment on services and plans and to allow for any “catch-up” required within future planning.

City Executive Board response:

- (1) Note the financial outturn for 2011-12 of £25.3 million which was £0.5 million favourable compared to the approved budget for 2011/12;
 - (2) Approve the transfer of the £0.5m surplus to Earmarked Reserve for funding Capital subject to further discussion in the Autumn in the context of the review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
 - (3) Approve transfers to the General Fund and HRA Working Balances of £0.8 million and £0.6 million respectively;
 - (4) Approve the carry forward requests as detailed in Appendix B to the report;
 - (5) Note partnership payments to staff as detailed in paragraphs 37-40 of the report;
 - (6) To note advise given by the Executive Director, Organisational Development and Corporate Services on recruitment (paragraph 7 of the Scrutiny report refers) and to ask Executive Directors to consider the effects of delays in recruitment on services and plans in terms of planning work programme delivery.
- (ii) Asset Panel held on 24th September 2012

Paper from the Asset Panel appended to these minutes.

Response – The City Executive Board note the Scrutiny comments and agreed to recommend the Asset Management Plan 2011-14 to Council for adoption.

(iii) Finance and Performance Panel held on 28th August 2012

Changes to Business Rate

Recommendation: The Finance and Performance Panel of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee felt that the levy being 82% was too high and noted that this would form part of the City Councils response to current Government consultation.

City Executive Board response: Accepted the Scrutiny recommendations and agreed to adopt the report recommendations.

April to June 2012/13 - Quarter 1 Corporate Plan Performance report

Recommendation: To request that the indicators for a Vibrant and Sustainable economy be reviewed as the Panel felt that it was clear if the Councils policies were sufficient enough to fully capture a vibrant and sustainable economy as it felt that only having 3 indicators was not sufficient.

City Executive Board response: Accepted the Scrutiny recommendations and agreed the report recommendations.

(iv) Youth Ambition Panel held on 10th September 2012

Recommendation 1 - That a clear outcome framework for this programme is set now. This should include long term aims and short term measures and targets towards those aims. This framework should provide for links to each investment made through both expectations for the individuals involved and overall.

Recommendation 2 - That the steering arrangements for the project are concluded as a matter of urgency to allow for clear focus.

Recommendation 3 - A minimum of a three year programme is set that has a mixture of sustainable provision and space for one off activities linked to clear need and outcomes. These principles should be passed into the consideration of all matched or grant funded activities that are commissioned.

Recommendation 4 - To have robust and clear commissioning processes that ensure programme providers share our ambitions, have the skills to deliver and can demonstrate they have the pathways and trust of the communities and individuals we want them to work with.

Recommendation 5 - To identify at the earliest opportunity isolated groups of young people outside of the target areas and bring forward suggestions of how support can be provided to these in a cost effective way.

City Executive Board response: Accepted the Scrutiny recommendations and agreed the report recommendations.

17. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT SCHEME

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which provided an update on the City Councils approach to Local Council Tax Benefit Scheme and the transition to the Universal Credit.

Helen Bishop, Head of Customer Services presented the report and highlighted that Officers had been working on a consistent approach to a scheme across the County as a whole. The Council was expecting a 10% reduction in its cash grant which on current estimates could lead to a deficit of £190k in 2013/14.

In response from to questions Helen Bishop said that the design of the scheme would be the same as now for those in receipt of Council Tax benefit and that no decision had been taken on any possible changes to the exemption classes to Council Tax.

With regard to questions concerning a possible reduction in the amount of second home discount, Helen Bishop said that there could be scope for people to claim that they are the only one in the property and so claim the 25% single person discount, when in fact it is not their main home.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To support the agreement by the Leaders Group to retain the current benefit levels;
- (b) To note and support that the Council could if it wished change the exemption classes should there be the need to “plug” any funding gaps;
- (c) To request the Head of Customer Services to provide a list detailing the exemptions that other Local Authorities offered;
- (d) To request the Head of Law and Governance to write to the Leader of the Council requesting modelling information to be made available;
- (e) To thank Helen Bishop for updating the Committee.

18. TRANSITION TO THE UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Head of Customer Services submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which updated the Committee on the City Councils approach to the transition to the Universal Credit.

Helen Bishop, Head of Customer Services presented the report and highlighted that the Council was in the process of preparing its client base for the change. She said that across the country, six demonstration sites had been chosen of which the City Council was one. It was felt that in order to provide the best service it was right to be in at the beginning so as to iron out any problems before the full scheme was introduced.

Helen Bishop said that the Councils bid was based on co-ordination of the advice available and support to the claimant to help them reduce their dependence on benefit.

In response to questions on the risk profile, Helen Bishop said that claims when received were passed to an agency which used information to give a risk rating. She added that the Council did not have access to the information that the agency used.

Helen Bishop said with regard to rent arrears that there was approximately £60k of arrears on the accounts of tenants on the pilot scheme and that it was very unlikely that tenants on the pilot would be switched back the current system when the pilot ended. Any administration costs were covered by the Administration Grant, but this grant would reduce over the coming years.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To thank Officers for attending the meeting and for their work on the pilot scheme;
- (b) To request that when the most up to date information on the rent arrears levels was available this was made available to the Committee.

19. LOCAL PROCUREMENT

The Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a paper (previously circulated, now appended) which responded to the Committees inquiry into the extent of the Councils local procurement in support of the local economy and the potential to do more.

Jane Lubbock, Head of Business Improvement and Technology presented the paper.

In response to questions Jane Lubbock said that the current contract procedure rules stated that a minimum of one quote had to be obtained for contracts under a certain amount, but more could be sought. She added that it was a case of being able to manage the number of responses received, taking into account the value of the contact.

With regard to the local definition, Jane Lubbock said that the Council used the OX postcode or that the company/organisations headquarters was based in Oxfordshire.

Members asked which contracts could not be let locally and why. In response Jane Lubbock said that the Council had to ensure that it did not discriminate in the tender. The Council did however build into the tender specification that the living wage for Oxford would be required, a need for apprentices and carbon reduction measures etc. She further added that the fact that many of the Councils services were provided in-house, did help to achieve a higher rate of local spend.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To thank Jane Lubbock for updating the Committee and for attending the meeting;
- (b) To request that the Procurement Strategy, currently being produced was submitted to the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee for comment, before it was considered by the City Executive Board.

20. MINUTES

The Committee agreed to approve the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting held on 25th June 2012.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.40 pm

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VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 5 November 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chair), Rowley (Vice-Chair), Fooks, Gotch, Haines, Kennedy, Malik, McCready, Sanders, Simmons and Van Nooijen.

OFFICERS PRESENT:

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Anne-Marie Canning (Councillor Gill Sanders attended as a substitute) and James Fry (Councillor Beverley Clack attended as a substitute).

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

23. CALL-IN - PARKING IN PARKING AREAS ADJACENT TO PARKS - MONITORING

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) following a call-in by the Chair of the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee of the decision by the City Executive Board held on 12th September 2012 concerning Parking in Parks Review. An extract from the minutes of this meeting plus additional information concerning income and penalties was also submitted.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and outlined the reasons for the call-in that should have been taken into consideration when the original decision was taken:

- (i) The impact on neighbouring areas;
- (ii) The balance between revenue from charges and penalties;
- (iii) Whether there are other factors in play which might be distorting the comparison of user numbers.

The Committee had invited local residents to attend the meeting to give information on the affect of the charges in their neighbourhoods. A number of residents had chose to submit details in writing (appended to these minutes) while others who had also submitted responses in advance (details appended to these minutes) chose to come to the meeting and address the Committee.

Suzanne Mclvor, from the Harbord Road Area Residents' Association spoke and highlighted the following:

- (i) Main cause of the problems in Harbord Road was the charging for parking in Cutteslowe Park;

- (ii) Parked cars blocking resident's driveways;
- (iii) Informed that a review was to be funded by the Council and did not understand why this had not taken place;
- (iv) Complaints made to both City and County Councillors;
- (v) No thought had been given to the wider issues before the charging had been introduced.

Barbara Hossier a local resident spoke and highlighted the following:

- (i) Cars were parking on both sides of the road turning the road into a single track;
- (ii) Residents were unable to reverse out of their driveways because of the parking;
- (iii) The issue was made worse during the weekends, school holidays and days when events took place in the park;
- (iv) A white line in front of resident's driveways along with a single yellow line on the road would help the situation;
- (v) Large vehicles including many Council vehicles used the road to access the park.

Following the presentations by the local residents, the Committee debated the call-in reasons and the issues raised by the residents. Comments raised included:

- Parking got worse since the introduction of the charges;
- County had proposed a scheme which was too restrictive to residents and so a new proposal was being worked on;
- The Park was not used by commuters;
- Nearly £10k had been raised from penalties, but only £2k from charges;
- An hour free parking would help the situation;
- Council had to introduce charges due to the cut in grant funding from Central Government;
- County Councillors could use the Area Stewardship/Locality Funding to help the situation;
- There is a displacement problem and it was clear this had been taken into consideration by the City Executive Board;
- Cutteslowe seems to have a particular problem;
- City Council underspent in 2011/12 by £500k and some of this should have been used to ease the problems such as a free first hour.

Councillor Colin Cook, Board Member, City Development attended the meeting as his portfolio included car parks. He said that charging had to be introduced to balance the budget due to the cut in Government funding. He highlighted that only 2 complaints had been received by the Council and 3 by the Police, although 2 of the 3 received by the Police were in the previous year. He said that the money raised from these charges helped the Council to provide front line services. The Council was no longer in a position to provide some services free of charge. He added that the charges formed part of the Council's budget which was being cut year on year and he hoped that the City Council could work with the County Council on the parking issues as the County Council was the enforcing authority.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To disagree with the call-in.
- (b) To recommend the City Executive Board:
 - (1) To allocate additional funding to allow for improved signage at the car parks adjacent to Parks, better explaining the charges;
 - (2) To continue to monitor the charges and to undertake a review with the next six months.
- (c) The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee to revisit the issue, six months from the date of this meeting.

The meeting started at 5.30 pm and ended at 6.20 pm

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Minute Item 23

Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee: Monday 5th November 2012

The following comments are submitted by Suzanne McIvor as representative of The Harbord Road Area Residents' Association. The car park referred to is the main Cutteslowe Park car park at the end of Harbord Road.

BACKGROUND

- During the "consultation" prior to the introduction of parking charges a large number of representations were made to the Council and to this Scrutiny Committee. The concern was that park-users would simply park for free in the side roads adjacent to the park. (This concern was also recognised by the Council in the City Executive Board Report which initially proposed the charges (dated 8th Sept 2010)).
- **As predicted parking charges have caused real problems for residents of the roads adjacent to Cutteslowe Park. Many park-users choose to park on side roads and walk just a few steps to avoid the parking charges. Although Harbord Road has the greatest problems many other roads are also affected, for example in the Kendall Crescent Area.**
- In view of the large number of park-users and peak usage at certain times this causes serious congestion in Harbord Road. **Park-users park either side of narrow driveways and opposite driveways. As Harbord Road is only three cars wide residents cannot get their cars out of their driveways with the problem being greater for the more elderly residents of which there are many.**
- **The area close to the park gets especially congested and the mixture of pedestrians and cars opposite the turning to Park Close is dangerous.**
- For those who do not know this area, as well as being used for leisure purposes by many people, a large number of groups use Cutteslowe Park. Examples are Summertown Stars (in very large numbers on Saturday), runners for the growing Saturday Parkrun, other footballers, a large number of dog walkers, CPMR – the miniature railway (can have 400 visitors on a busy afternoon). It is also used as an overflow car park for the BRN hockey / tennis club.

COMMENT ON THE REPORT "PARKING IN THE PARKS REVIEW" (dated 12th Sept 2012)

- **The Customer Feedback Section 7 of the report produced by Mr Summers is not accurate. The complaints made to local Councillors have been relentless from the time the charges were introduced.**
- **There has been no review of the effects of the introduction of parking charges and any small enquiry would have quickly revealed the extent of the problems.**
- **It is not merely a claim that park-users are using Harbord Road as an alternative to parking within the car park, it is the truth. The effects on residents are considerable, worsening and widespread.**
- As the report states, The County Council is currently consulting with residents in Harbord Road. However, the consultation actually covers a much wider area than just Harbord Road and the proposals are currently being extensively rewritten as a result of the responses received.
- **During this consultation, most people of the many who responded cited the introduction of parking charges as the main reasons for the parking problems in the area, particularly Harbord Road.**
- The County Council has stated that there are insufficient funds for a Residents' Parking Scheme so the outcome may well be an unsatisfactory compromise.

PROPOSAL

- **It would not be unreasonable to expect a review of the current situation rather than this inadequately researched report.**
- **Residents would like to see the parking charges abolished because this would have an immediate and beneficial impact on surrounding residential areas.**
- A less satisfactory alternative would be to remove the charges for parking 0 – 1 hours as this would take a lot of users out of the charging bands so they would use the park car park rather than the residential streets.

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Comments from local residents who are unable to attend the meeting in person – Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee, 5th November 2012

From Pete Goodgame, Templar Road

This council must be naive to think that people will pay to park their cars when they can park for nothing in the side streets.

Since the meters have been in the Park the parking problem in the side streets has got worse and worse. I have asked people where they have come from. Some as far as Wantage friends and family have told them to park in the side streets so they don't have to pay.

People that use the pavilion are now parking in the side streets as are the Saturday runners and the Summertown all stars.

There was no forward thinking on behalf of this council. They have caused this problem so it is down to them to sort it out, as it is only going to get worse in the future.

From Denise Daly, Cavendish Road

Many people use the park who don't live within walking distance and have to drive there, particularly older people (with or without dogs); for them it is a pleasant sociable outing, especially for those who live alone.

We are encouraged to keep healthy and exercise - what better place to do it than in our local park. Car parking charges will put people off enjoying what should be a free facility. Already people are using side roads to park to avoid charges. This has led to an unsatisfactory situation for the residents there. I understand that now there is a plan for private residential parking to be considered – would the Council please drop the parking charges, and give us all a free walk in the park.

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